

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Inquiry into the 2024-25 Financial and Performance Outcomes

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health**

**Hearing: 9.30am, 28 November 2025**

**Witnesses**

Jenny Atta, Secretary, Department of Health

Naomi Bromley, Deputy Secretary, Hospitals and Health Services, Department of Health

Nicole Brady, Deputy Secretary, System Planning, Department of Health

Pam Anders, Deputy Secretary, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Department of Health

Catherine Rooney, Deputy Secretary, Budget, Finance and Investment, Department of Health

Zoe Wainer, Deputy Secretary, Community and Public Health

Ryan Phillips, Deputy Secretary, People, Operations, Legal and Regulation, Department of Health

Jordan Emery, Chief Executive Officer, Ambulance Victoria

Priscilla Radice, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Health Building Authority

Siva Sivarajah, Chief Executive Officer, Hospitals Victoria

**Legend**

All questions are in **red text**.

The responses to the questions, including source details **black text**.

**PAEC Inquiry into the 2024-25 Financial and Performance Outcomes**  
**Department of Health Questions on Notice**

**QUESTION 1:** The Royal Melbourne Hospital has, through the RMH Foundation, invested in a Security room which will come online soon. Whilst offsetting some cost, significant challenges will remain. How much additional funding is required before it becomes operational? When will it become fully operational? How much did the foundation provide?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Richard Welch

**HEARING DATE & TIME:** 9.30am, Friday 28 November 2025

**RESPONSE**

Capital requirements of the new security centre at Royal Melbourne Hospital are fully funded by the Royal Melbourne Hospital Foundation. Operational funding is provided through Royal Melbourne Hospital's base funding allocations – no additional operational funding is required. The new security centre is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2026.

**QUESTION 2:** Could we get a list of the number of security personnel at each of Victoria's (74 for the 24-25 year) health services across Victoria? I think what would be particularly helpful would be to see what the trend is perhaps over the last five years on that dataset.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Richard Welch

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**RESPONSE**

The department does not hold data on security officers engaged through external agencies or contracted services for public health services.

**QUESTION 3:** Can you give me a breakdown of how many vacancies there are in the regions then (for 2024–25 graduate nursing)? Would that be possible?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Roma Britnell

**HEARING DATE & TIME:** 9.30am, Friday 28 November 2025

**RESPONSE**

As at 1 December 2025, there were 24 graduate positions remaining in the 2026 Graduate Nursing and Midwifery Program. The vacancies across the regions are as follows:

- **Hume** – 8 positions
- **Barwon Southwest** – 3 positions
- **Gippsland** – 3 positions
- **Grampians** – 3 positions
- **Loddon Mallee** – 6 positions
- **Metropolitan** – 1 position

These positions are actively being recruited to. Please note that this data reflects a point in time and is subject to change.

**QUESTION 4:** Are we able to get a progress report on where the recommendations and the implementation are up to (for the royal commission)?

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**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Jade Benham

**HEARING DATE & TIME:** 9.30am, Friday 28 November 2025

**RESPONSE**

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's provided a set of 65 comprehensive reform recommendations, in addition to the 9 provided in the interim report. The Chief Officer for Mental Health and Wellbeing publishes an annual report that includes information about progress on the mental health and wellbeing reform. The 2024-25 Annual Report is due to be published in early 2026.

**QUESTION 5:** how many Victorians last year waited longer than 24 hours in an emergency department for a mental health bed?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Jade Benham

**HEARING DATE & TIME:** 9.30am, Friday 28 November 2025

**RESPONSE**

Across 2024-25 there were 1,024 Emergency Department presentations who departed to a Mental Health bed that had a length of stay longer than 24 hours.

**QUESTION 6:** Only 16 per cent of acutely unwell prisoners accessed a forensic bed within seven days. How many individuals waited longer than 30 days, and what was the longest wait recorded?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Jade Benham

**HEARING DATE & TIME:** 9.30am, Friday 28 November 2025

**RESPONSE**

This data is not collected by the department.

**QUESTION 7:** Can you supply the daily wait list for forensic mental health beds?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Jade Benham

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**RESPONSE**

As of 30 June 2025, 14 men were waiting in custody for a bed at Thomas Embling Hospital to become available for the making of a Custodial Supervision Order.

**QUESTION 8:** How many people have accessed the free Virtual Women's health clinic? Of those people, how many accessed the service for abortion care? Does this service collect demographic data of patients? Is there any relevant information to be provided to the Committee (requesting breakdown of demographics)?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Aiv Puglielli

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**RESPONSE**

- Between 2 June 2025 (when the free Virtual Women's health clinic opened) and 30 November 2025, the virtual women's health clinic had 511 clients.
- The Department is unable to release highly sensitive, confidential data relating to categories of women's reproductive health care. However, between 2 June 2025 and 30 November 2025, the service has provided a total of 1206 consultations overall for various women's health conditions and concerns.

The service collects client demographic data for each consumer including, postcode, consumer age, consumer sex and gender, if the consumer is a holder of a concession card, if the consumer is of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander background and if the consumer is of CALD background. The vast majority of consumers were concession card holders. Consumers were between the ages of 12 to 80 years, with the majority being in the 30-39, 20-29 and 40-49 age group in a descending order.

**QUESTION 9:** Was there not enough funding in this budget period to cover that list of items for the Royal Women's? If you are bringing material on notice, of those items that I have listed, which will be in the transcript, are you able to come back to us to see if any of those items were funded in this budget period for the Royal Women's?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Aiv Puglielli

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**RESPONSE**

All health services receive their core funding from the Victorian Government through their modelled budgets to deliver an ongoing suite of services to the community. Health services can also generate revenue streams through their own hospital and community initiatives.

**QUESTION 10:** How many additional acute mental health in regional Victoria beds were delivered in 2024-25 period? Is there any further information/specific figures that you can provide for mental health beds?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Aiv Puglielli

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**RESPONSE**

Six new mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) hub beds opened at Latrobe Regional Health in February 2025. Information regarding the delivery of new services, including mental health beds, for the previous 12 months is reported on in the Chief Officer for Mental Health and Wellbeing annual report. There were a number of additional mental health beds under construction across regional Victoria in 2024-25, including five new acute mental health beds based at Warrnambool base hospital and five 10 bed Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC) centres in Traralgon, Geelong, Shepparton and Ballarat.

**QUESTION 11:** How many health services in Victoria have dedicated AOD addiction units?

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**RESPONSE**

There are two health services with dedicated AOD Residential Rehabilitation services, specifically tailored for individuals experiencing co-occurring AOD and mental health diagnosis: Bendigo Health and Western Health. In addition, there are 10 health services with dedicated AOD Residential Withdrawal services: Albury Wodonga Health, Bairnsdale Regional Health, Central Gippsland Health Service, Eastern Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Goulburn Valley Health, Monash Health, Northeast Health Wangaratta, St. Vincent's Hospital, and Western Health.

**QUESTION 12:** How many detections of nitazenes were there in the State for the 2024-25 period? How many of those detections occurred following presentations at drug checking services? Of the detections of nitazenes for the budget period, in which settings were these occurring? In relation to drug checking, can you provide a list of substances that were found to also contain nitazenes during this reporting period? How many presentations for drug checking were of a substance expected to be heroin to testing?

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION:** Aiv Puglielli

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**RESPONSE**

There was one detection of a nitazene in 2024-25, resulting in a Drug Alert. This detection arose from Victorian hospital emergency department testing.

There were no detections of nitazenes at the mobile Victorian Pill Testing Service in 2024-25. Detailed pill testing service reports are published regularly and available online at vpts.org.au