

# Media Release

**The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC**

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday, 16 April 2020

## **NEW BEDS OPEN ACROSS VICTORIA IN PANDEMIC CAPACITY BOOST**

New hospital beds are opening across Victoria as the state's health system gears up to manage increased presentations as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and ensure all patients get the care they need.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos said the Victorian Government's \$1.9 billion health funding boost had allowed the state's hospitals to build more bed capacity and recommission buildings no longer used for healthcare.

When complete, the health system's surge capacity will be boosted by more than 700 beds across Victoria, including at the former Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, the former Geelong Private Hospital, Bendigo Hospital, Shepparton Hospital, the Alfred Hospital, Austin Hospital, Monash Medical Centre Clayton and Casey Hospital.

The additional inpatient and ICU capacity will not only help manage increased demand from the coronavirus pandemic, but also ensure hospitals can continue to treat patients with other conditions throughout this time.

In Berwick, existing patients have begun moving into Casey Hospital's new 128-bed inpatient tower to ensure the hospital has capacity to receive coronavirus patients, while also helping take some of the strain off the major tertiary hospitals nearby. The tower's 12 bed ICU – the first in the area – will open shortly.

Monash Medical Centre in Clayton has also started installing a two-storey demountable unit adjacent to the existing emergency department to provide an extra six resuscitation cubicles. The fully-equipped cubicles - which will be ready to be used within weeks - will allow patients to be ventilated, and if needed, prepared for transfer to the ICU.

New hospital beds have opened at Bendigo Hospital, with 16 of an additional 45 beds already in use, and the remainder to be made available as needed. The new hospital also has built-in capacity for 20 additional intensive care beds if they are required in emergency situations.

The former Geelong Private Hospital has been brought back to life – with the disused building having undergone a rapid renovation to provide a new Acute Respiratory Assessment Clinic with 50 new beds and consulting rooms.

Level 2 of Baxter House is now open for mild to moderately unwell patients 7 days a week. Since it opened, Baxter House has assessed and treated 147 patients.

A further 84 beds will be available at the former Peter MacCallum Cancer, with works already underway to re-establish essential services such as plumbing and power – to get the building ready for patients again.

Shepparton Hospital has also taken advantage of their new \$229.3 million expansion project and has started turning their new emergency department into a temporary Intensive Care Unit.

In addition, construction of the new inpatient tower has been accelerated to make more beds available as demand increases, including two whole wards.

A further 300 intensive care unit beds have also begun to be commissioned at the Alfred Hospital, Austin Hospital and Monash Medical Centre in Clayton – as part of a massive boost to establish an extra 4,000 ICU beds across Victoria to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

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For the latest information and advice on coronavirus visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos**

*“Our hospital admissions for coronavirus have remained steady thanks to the actions everyone is taking to slow the spread – but now is not the time to become complacent.”*

*“By bringing hundreds of additional beds online in just a few short weeks we now have additional capacity available to our health system right across the State to help our hospitals deal with this pandemic and so Victorians will get the care they need – no matter their condition.”*

*“The most important thing though is for Victorians to continue to stay home, so we can continue to flatten the curve - and save lives.”*