

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP

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

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Equality



Thursday, 8 October 2020

VICTORIAN HEALTH SERVICES TO RUN NEW EARLY PARENTING CENTRES

Victorian health and family services will be responsible for the Victorian Government's \$123 million new Early Parenting Centres, giving more new parents and their young children the best possible start to life.

The seven new centres will be built in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Frankston, Casey, Wyndham and Whittlesea – providing a critical role in ensuring parents are getting the advice and care they need, including support with sleep and settling, feeding and extra care for babies with additional needs.

Sleep and settling is one of the biggest challenges facing new parents, with around one in two Victorian parents who are attending the early parenting centres reporting problems with their child's sleep. This can lead to post-natal depression, isolation and stress for parents, and impact a child's behavioural, mental and physical development.

The services responsible for each new centre are:

- Ballarat – Ballarat Health in partnership with the Queen Elizabeth Centre
- Bendigo – Bendigo Health, in partnership with Tweddle Child and Family Health Service
- Casey – Monash Health, in partnership with the Queen Elizabeth Centre
- Frankston – Queen Elizabeth Centre
- Geelong – Barwon Health in partnership with Tweddle Child and Family Health Service
- Whittlesea – Mercy Health (O'Connell Family Centre)
- Wyndham – Tweddle Child and Family Health Service

Two existing sites at Tweddle Child and Family Health Service in Footscray and the Queen Elizabeth Centre in Noble Park will be upgraded to meet increasing demand.

The centres will provide day-stays and longer residential stay programs to improve the health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes for children aged up to four-years-old. Each new centre will include 10 residential units and four day stay units – helping more than 5,000 extra families a year.

Construction will be completed in two phases – the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong centres will be delivered in the first phase by late 2022 and the other sites will be completed in 2024.

Community Advisory Groups are being established to help with planning for each new centre.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"We know that parenting can be challenging and stressful at times and some new mums and dads may need a little extra support to give their children the best start to life."

"Early parenting centres deliver flexible, targeted services to help parents with sleep and settling issues. This investment will more than triple Victoria's service capacity – supporting thousands more families a year."

Media contact: Hannah Jenkins 0403 177 892 | hannah.jenkins@minstaff.vic.gov.au