

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Crime Prevention

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Youth Justice

Minister for Victim Support



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CONSTRUCTION SET TO START ON WOMEN'S PRISON UPGRADE

Ageing infrastructure at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre is on track to get a major facelift, with the Andrews Labor Government signing a construction contract to increase capacity and support the rehabilitation of female prisoners.

The \$188.9 million expansion includes 106 new beds, a new reception, and multi-purpose buildings for education, programs and services – as well as expanded legal and telecourt facilities.

The new infrastructure is designed to increase access and engagement with rehabilitation programs and support reforms to help our prisons avoid or minimise harm to female prisoners.

The expansion of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre is expected to create more than 130 jobs during construction, with 10 per cent of construction hours earmarked for apprentices, trainees and cadets.

This upgrade forms part of the Labor Government's \$1.8 billion investment from the *Victorian Budget 2019/20* to provide flexible prison capacity, deliver programs to break the cycle of reoffending and keep people out of prison.

The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre is one of two women's prisons in Victoria and is located at Ravenhall, in Melbourne's north-west.

The facility accommodates a range of prisoners, including women with mental health conditions and cognitive impairment disabilities, as well young children who have been approved to live with their mothers.

The expansion project is being overseen by the Community Safety Building Authority, which delivers infrastructure on behalf of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The head contractor for the project is Watpac Construction Pty Ltd.

Construction of the upgraded facility is expected to be completed in late 2022.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Corrections Natalie Hutchins

"We're continuing to make significant investments in the women's correctional system to improve the rehabilitation of offenders, and help break the cycle of re-offending."

"The expanded facility includes new prison services, and legal and telecourt facilities to improve the delivery of justice services and help rehabilitate female prisoners."