

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing



Thursday, 1 April 2021

CHANGING THE GAME WITH AUTISM HOUSING SUPPORT IN MANSFIELD

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring young Victorians with autism and their families have access to the support they need with a new residential care program in Mansfield.

The housing project is part of Mansfield Autism Statewide Services (MASS) 'Operation Gamechanger', located on their 100-acre therapeutic care farm. The project includes six five-bedroom self-contained blocks and three two-bedroom pods, providing residents with student, respite, crisis and permanent care.

With capacity for 27 children, and nine support staff, the specialist residential facilities have been designed to be low sensory environments with safe spaces where staff can engage with the children.

The residents will be supported with wrap around services to help develop daily living skills, improve sleeping routines, better self-regulation of emotions, and increase social and communication skills.

The therapeutic care model provided by MASS includes being amongst nature and using best practice design that reduces the sensory stimuli and anxiety. Children also have access to equine facilitated learning and animal assisted therapy.

The residential care program is being made possible thanks to \$6.5 million from the Andrews Government's \$2.7 billion Building Works package – to build the projects and create the jobs that matter to Victorians.

This investment in housing is in addition to the Government's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build which will deliver more than 12,000 new homes and is the largest single investment in social and affordable housing in Australia's history.

A minimum of 25 per cent of the record Big Housing Build investment is being delivered in regional Victoria, ensuring social and affordable housing is being built where it's needed most.

Quote attributable to Minister for Housing Richard Wynne

"Our unprecedented investment in social and affordable housing will change lives – giving thousands of Victorians the security and stability of a home, and tens of thousands of Victorians a job."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"The Mansfield community has a 50-year history of supporting youth with autism and the dedicated team at MASS do an amazing job of ensuring families around Victoria are provided the support they need to thrive."

"I've been working with MASS for several years and know their work with young people with autism, teachers, schools and families is nothing short of extraordinary. I'm incredibly proud our Government is providing funding to support their masterplan and their aim to grow the number of families they can help."