

# Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP  
Acting Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Mental Health



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## REBUILDING VICTORIA'S FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in forensic mental health services with a major upgrade of Thomas Embling Hospital.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* will invest \$349.6 million to deliver an additional 82 secure mental health beds and supporting infrastructure, while also supporting new jobs.

These major works at Thomas Embling Hospital include a new dedicated 34-bed women's precinct, a 48-bed medium security men's facility, as well as clinical administration facilities.

This upgrade delivers on a critical recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Thomas Embling Hospital in Fairfield is the leading specialist provider of secure forensic mental health services in Victoria. It provides advanced clinical treatment for patients within the criminal justice system who are either transferred from prison or ordered by the courts to be supervised while receiving psychiatric assessment and care.

With one-in-three prisoners assessed as having mental health treatment needs and the demand for mental health beds in the criminal justice system increasing, the project will address critical need and ensure that more people at risk can access the mental health services they need in a secure and rehabilitation-focused environment.

Responding to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the project will also reduce wait times for mental health assessment and treatment, support the rehabilitation and recovery of patients in a safe and therapeutic environment, reduce incidents of mental health deterioration and self-harm, and increase access to services for female patients.

Last year's Budget provided an extra \$868.6 million to ensure Victorians have the mental health support they need, close to home. This represents the single largest investment in mental health by any state government and lays the foundations as we begin to build our mental health system from the ground up.

### Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

*"We know from the Royal Commission that our mental health system isn't coping. We are building a system from the ground up – including providing specialist forensic treatment."*

*"Access to targeted, clinical care is critical to supporting these Victorians, and setting them on the path towards genuine recovery."*