

Friday, 21 May 2021

REBUILDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR YOUNG VICTORIANS

Young people in Bendigo will get access to the mental health services they deserve with a multi-million dollar refurbishment of the local youth prevention and recovery care thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

The *Victorian Budget 21/22* invests \$3.8 billion towards decade-long mental health reform, delivering more community based services, more help for those with acute needs, more early intervention and a new dedicated system to support our kids. An estimated \$700 million of this landmark package will flow to the regions.

The Budget includes \$842 million in mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people – including \$141 million to deliver five new, and upgrade three existing, Youth Prevention and Recovery Care units (Y-PARCs).

The is expected to create approximately 400 jobs, with all projects expected to be completed by 2024.

Offering a short-term 'step up' from community care or 'step down' from hospital, Y-PARCs are staffed 24 hours, with support offered in a home-like setting, with shared kitchen, dining, lounge room and activity spaces.

Bendigo is one of three existing Y-PARCs, alongside Dandenong and Frankston, that will share in \$18 million in funding to undergo a significant refurbishment.

The facilities will be designed to create a welcoming, safe and therapeutic environment with private bedrooms complete with ensuite bathrooms. Communal kitchens, dining and living areas, breakout spaces and an outdoor garden will provide ample space for leisure, recreational activities and family visits.

The five new Y-PARCs, totalling 50 beds for young people aged 16 to 25 years, will be located in Melbourne's North Eastern Metropolitan region, as well as the Barwon South-West, Gippsland, Grampians and Hume regions.

Delivering better support for young Victorians is one of the key's to the Labor Government's plan to rebuild the state's mental health system. It's why the Budget also includes a \$200 million School Mental Health Fund, which schools will use to deliver programs, staff and other support specific to their school community's needs.

The Fund will be rolled out to all regional and rural government schools as a priority from Term 3, 2022, with metropolitan schools to follow from 2023. Schools will be able to draw from a range of evidence-based measures proven to work – from the 'Positive Education' model to therapy dog programs to mental health first aid training.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"Our mental health system is failing young Victorians – and their families. This is the case right across the state including right here in Bendigo. All the research tells us it's critical we give our young people the mental health support they need, early and that is exactly what we are delivering."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

"This investment means more young people will be able to receive treatment and care close to their family, support networks and local community – which we know contributes positively to clinical and personal recovery."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

"We know from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System that our system isn't coping. This is why it's essential we upgrade existing youth prevention and recovery care units – and build new ones."