

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Mental Health



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## DESIGN UNDERWAY FOR THOMAS EMBLING HOSPITAL UPGRADE

The Andrews Labor Government is one step closer to delivering expanded forensic mental health capacity at Thomas Embling Hospital with the design team for the massive expansion project now appointed.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today announced Guymer Bailey Architects and Aecom (Engineering) will help deliver the \$349.6 million expansion of the Fairfield hospital, with work now underway on detailed designs which will implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Royal Commission recommended codesign be put at the heart of new mental health infrastructure – with the experiences of patients, consumers, carers, clinicians and researchers to inform the best facilities for patients and the community.

With growing demand for mental health beds in the justice system, this expansion will address critical bed shortages at the hospital – with an additional 82 secure mental health beds, including a dedicated 34-bed women's precinct and a 48-bed medium security men's facility, as well as clinical administration facilities and more car parking.

The project will 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.

Construction on the first stage of the Thomas Embling Hospital expansion is set to commence in mid-2022 and is expected to be completed in 2024, creating around 550 construction jobs.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* has invested \$3.8 billion to ensure Victorians have the mental health support they need, when they need it. As the single largest investment in mental health by any state government in the nation's history, it will transform our mental health system from the ground up.

### Quotes attributable to the Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

*"This landmark project will change the way forensic mental health services are delivered in Victoria – with more in-demand capacity to make sure Victorian forensic patients get the treatment they need immediately."*

*"In response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, we're ensuring that Victorians most at risk can access mental health services in a secure and recovery-focused environment."*