

Media Release

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



Monday, 9 August 2021

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is taking action to ensure young people across Victoria have access to the mental health services they need with a massive expansion of community-based youth centres.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today welcomed Expressions of Interest for Principal Consultant architecture services to lead the design of a \$141 million project to expand and upgrade Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC) centres across the state, thanks to funding from the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*.

As a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, YPARC services provide flexible, around-the clock clinical care for young people aged 16-25 – reducing pressure on hospital beds by providing early intervention care, and an alternative to hospital admission with recovery-focused treatment.

Five new 10-bed facilities will be delivered in the North Eastern Metropolitan, Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians and Hume regions, with the centres in Bendigo, Dandenong and Frankston to receive funding for upgrades.

The new facilities will be designed to create a welcoming and home-like environment with private bedrooms complete with ensuite bathrooms. Communal kitchens, dining and living areas, breakout spaces and an outdoor garden will also encourage rest and recovery as well as support family visits.

Refurbishment of the three existing YPARC centres and construction of five new facilities will create and sustain approximately 400 jobs, with all projects expected to be completed in mid-2024.

The project is being delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority who are currently seeking Expressions of Interest for Principal Consultant (Architect) services, closing at 2:00pm on Thursday, 12 August 2021.

Expressions of Interest can be submitted at tenders.vic.gov.au.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* is investing \$3.8 billion to ensure Victorians have the mental health support they need, when they need it.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"We know from the Royal Commission that Victoria's Mental Health System isn't coping – that's why we're not just upgrading existing youth prevention and recovery care units, but also building brand new ones."

"This investment means more young people will get appropriate treatment and care close to their family, support networks and local community – which we know delivers better health outcomes as they recover."

"These five new facilities will have the capacity to provide prevention and recovery care services for more than 900 young people each year – giving more young Victorians the support they need, when they need it."