

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



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DESIGN UNDERWAY FOR WARRNAMBOOL MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with delivering more mental health beds at Warrnambool Base Hospital, with designs for the important project to deliver better care to south-west Victorians now underway.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino and Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney today announced Hames Sharley has been appointed to design the \$10.9 million project – delivering an additional five acute mental health beds for the region.

The investment will redesign the hospital's acute mental health inpatient unit – improving the model of care and creating a dedicated area for vulnerable groups, including women, older people and those who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Warrnambool Base Hospital is the designated mental health service provider for the region and has been experiencing a steady increase in demand for mental health care services. Victoria's south-west has the highest incidence of patients presenting with mental health concerns across the state.

Responding to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, this project will improve access and recovery outcomes for locals experiencing mental ill health in a contemporary and therapeutic treatment setting that's close to their homes.

Construction is expected to start in mid-2022 and be completed in 2023, with the mental health investment building on the Government's \$384.2 million redevelopment of the Warrnambool Base Hospital.

The redevelopment will deliver a new multi-storey tower incorporating a bigger emergency department, more operating theatres, an additional 22 inpatient beds and dedicated areas for pathology services, medical imaging and dialysis to help meet the health needs of the growing community.

To build a new mental health and wellbeing system from the ground up that meets the needs of all Victorians, the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invested a record \$3.8 billion in mental health and wellbeing services and support.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"Demand for quality inpatient mental health services in our state's south-west is growing – and we're delivering to improve care, cut wait times and ensure people can get the support they need in their own community."

"We're implementing every recommendation of the Royal Commission – to fix our broken mental health system and save lives by making sure all Victorians have better access to support, closer to home."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney

"This is a really important initiative for south west locals – by delivering more mental health beds, we're ensuring Victorians can get the high-quality local healthcare they need whenever they need it."