

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 2 December 2021

MORE MENTAL HEALTH BEDS AND BETTER-TRAINED DOCTORS

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on its promise to provide more bed capacity and better-trained workers across Victoria's mental health system – with work underway on a major expansion of mental health beds, and more support to give doctors vital training in psychiatry.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today marked the beginning of construction on a new 22-bed acute mental health facility at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), delivering on a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

The Royal Commission recommended 135 more mental health beds be delivered in health services across the state – but the Labor Government will deliver 144, investing \$492 million to future-proof the mental health system as Victoria grows.

The RMH facility will support an extra 488 Victorians to get the acute care they need each year, while the total 144 beds across the state – to be located at Barwon Health in Geelong, the Northern Hospital in Epping, Sunshine Hospital and in Hospital in the Home as well as RMH – will support 2,500 more Victorians every year.

The new beds have been designed in consultation with people who have lived experience of the mental health system – including consumers, carers and staff – to deliver a safe, welcoming hospital environment for Victorians experiencing acute mental health concerns.

The RMH project will create 237 local jobs in construction, with 1,450 jobs on new mental health beds across the state – delivering good jobs when Victorians need them most.

The Labor Government is also investing more than \$18 million to support 132 junior doctors to undertake psychiatry rotations in 20 health services right across Victoria in 2022.

This support will give more Junior Medical Officers on-the-ground mental health training early in their career, helping them recognise and better support Victorians experiencing mental health concerns – no matter what speciality they eventually choose.

The Government will provide \$285,000 to support the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists to develop a training program to support junior doctors on psychiatry rotations – ensuring they have a positive learning experience and encouraging more early-career doctors to consider specialising in psychiatry.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We know our mental health system needs to grow to care for every Victorian who needs it. That's why we're not wasting a moment in delivering the Royal Commission's recommendations – because lives depend on it."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"More mental health beds in our hospitals, and more doctors trained in psychiatry across our healthcare system, means Victorians will get the specialist care they need, as soon as they need support."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt

"We know our mental health system needs to be expanded – and we're getting on with delivering more beds so people in Melbourne get the support they need, close to home."

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