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NEW EARLY PARENTING CENTRE ON THE WAY FOR GEELONG

New mums and dads will soon have better access to early parenting support in a purpose-built facility, with construction now underway for a new multi-million-dollar Early Parenting Centre in Geelong.

Premier Daniel Andrews today turned the first sod on the new Early Parenting Centre at Barwon Health's McKellar Centre in North Geelong, marking the start of construction.

Designed to help families with children up to four years of age enhance their relationships and achieve their parenting goals, the new centre will have 10 residential family units, four day-stay places, a kitchen and dining area, playrooms and outdoor play areas.

The new Early Parenting Centre will provide parents and carers with the advice and care they need, including support with sleep and settling, feeding and extra care for babies and toddlers with additional needs.

Sleep and settling is one of the biggest challenges facing new parents, with around one in two Victorian parents who are attending the early parenting centres reporting problems with their child's sleep.

This can lead to post-natal depression, isolation and stress for parents and affect a child's behavioural, mental and physical development.

The final designs for the multi-million-dollar centre released today reveal the facility's exteriors, kitchen and dining area and residential family units, which have been carefully considered to create a safe and serene environment where families can feel at home.

The project's architects, Brand Architects, consulted childcare experts, local community groups and traditional owners as part of the design process to ensure the design reflects the community it serves.

Natural light, rooms suitable for various family arrangements and a domestic feel were some of the priorities included in the final designs. The colour palette was developed to mirror the landscape in Geelong and the wider Barwon region, featuring colours inspired by the native flora and environment of the area.

The centre is being delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) in partnership with Barwon Health and the Tweddle Child and Family Health Service, with construction expected to be complete at the end of 2023.

It is being delivered as part of the Andrews Labor Government's \$148 million investment to expand and upgrade the early parenting service network. The program will upgrade two existing centres and build eight new centres in growing areas across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This new centre will deliver flexible, targeted services to help parents in Geelong and the surrounding areas with sleep and settling issues, supporting hundreds of local families a year."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"We're giving new parents from across the region the support they need, close to home, by building a new early parenting centre here in Geelong. The new centre will offer parents that expert support that many of us need."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"This is about helping local families get the support they need to give their children the best start in life."

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