

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 8 September 2022

NEW MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE EASING PRESSURE ON OUR HOSPITALS

Hundreds of Geelong and Barwon residents will have better access to mental health support, with the Andrews Labor Government opening a new mental health facility in North Geelong, easing pressure on the health system.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today opened the new 16-bed acute mental health facility at Barwon Health's McKellar Centre, which will support an extra 355 Victorians each year.

The facility – which supported more than 230 construction jobs – includes inpatient acute mental health services and community-based care in a contemporary, safe and high-quality hospital setting, easing pressure on University Hospital Geelong's emergency department.

The McKellar Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre is part of the Labor Government's \$801 million *Mental Health Beds Expansion Program*, which is delivering 260 new mental health inpatient beds across Victoria – going above and beyond the recommendation from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

The program will also deliver new beds at the Northern Hospital in Epping, Sunshine Hospital in St Albans and the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Parkville – with additional beds to be located in Ballarat, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Footscray, Melton and Frankston.

Once fully completed, the new beds will support 6,500 more Victorians to access mental health services every year.

Designed in consultation with people who have lived experience of the mental health system, including patients, carers and staff – the facilities provide a safe and welcoming environment for people experiencing acute mental health concerns.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* included \$1.3 billion in further support for the state's mental health system, building on the Government's record \$3.8 billion investment in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*.

Matthew Guy's Liberals' track record on mental health speaks for itself. If they got the chance, they would cut \$3.7 billion from mental health services – leaving vulnerable Victorians without the care they need.

Quotes attributable to the Premier Daniel Andrews

"More mental health beds in Geelong will mean more Victorians can access the care and treatment they need sooner, while easing pressure on our hospitals."

"We know our mental health system needs 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 the Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"Only the Andrews Labor Government will deliver every Royal Commission recommendation and only a Labor Government will put patients first – delivering more beds right across the state."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"We know our mental health system needs to be expanded and we're getting on with delivering more support and more beds so Geelong and Barwon residents can get the specialist care they need, when they need it."

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