

Media Release

Mr Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Child Protection and Family Services

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Acting Minister for Mental Health

Acting Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



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GETTING ON WITH THE THOMAS EMBLING HOSPITAL UPGRADE

The Andrews Labor Government's expansion of the state's forensic mental health capacity is taking another step forward, with designs unveiled and a builder appointed for the redevelopment of Thomas Embling Hospital.

Acting Minister for Mental Health Colin Brooks today announced John Holland has been appointed to deliver the landmark \$462 million project, which includes a new dedicated 34-bed women's precinct, a 48-bed medium security men's facility, a new entry complex, onsite carpark and administration facilities.

The upgrade will reduce wait times for mental health assessment and treatment, support the rehabilitation and recovery of patients in a safe and therapeutic environment and increase access to services for female patients – creating around 750 jobs during peak construction.

The designs reveal the new exterior from Yarra Bend Road and the internal fit-outs, including the entrance area and bedrooms, which are designed to be secure, contemporary and focused on recovery.

The *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* recommended co-design be put at the heart of all new mental health infrastructure – with the experiences of patients, consumers, carers, clinicians and researchers shaping the planning and design of the project.

Delivering on a key recommendation from the Royal Commission, the project's co-design and engagement report highlights the Labor Government's dedication to building a new system guided by people with lived experience of mental illness.

Site preparation works are expected to start in the coming weeks, with major construction on track to get underway by the end of the year and be completed by 2024.

Work is continuing on more than 90 per cent of the Royal Commission's recommendations, with \$1.3 billion delivered in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* – building off last year's record \$3.8 billion investment.

The project is being delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) in partnership with Forensicare.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Colin Brooks

"This landmark project will change the way forensic mental health services are delivered in Victoria – with greater capacity to get patients the urgent treatment they need, in a safe and recovery-focused environment."

"It's great to see the exceptional co-design and engagement work taking place on this project – we're setting a new standard in the planning and design of forensic mental health facilities."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"We're getting on with delivering this important project so patients, carers and staff can access state-of-the-art facilities that are secure, modern and recovery-focused, as we rebuild the state's mental health system."

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