

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
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NEW ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH BEDS FOR WOMEN IN SHEPPARTON

The Andrews Labor Government has opened 5 new acute mental health beds for women in Shepparton, as part of the \$100 million Australia-first *Specialist Women's Mental Health Service*.

When fully operational, the 35 bed Specialist Women's Mental Health Service will support more than 750 Victorian women each year with a range of complex conditions including those who have experienced trauma and sexual abuse, eating disorders and women experiencing perinatal mental health issues.

The first five new acute women's beds in Shepparton include two inpatient beds at Ramsay Health Care's Shepparton Private Hospital and three Hospital in the Home beds managed through Goulburn Valley Health. The unique Hospital in the Home program allows women to receive hospital-quality care while remaining safe at home.

The remaining 30 beds will open in late 2023 at the Albert Road Clinic in Melbourne and will be delivered by Ramsay Health Care in partnership with Alfred Health, this central service hub will ensure women get the care and support they need, as soon as they need it.

The *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* heard that many women face gender-based harm or abuse in the mental health system and recommended a specific service for women, ensuring gender and sexual safety for women in acute inpatient settings.

In direct response to the Royal Commission recommendation, the *Specialist Women's Mental Health Service* model was co-designed in consultation with women with lived experience and will help ease pressure on the public system by delivering supports for public patients in a private setting.

This investment is part of the Labor Government's \$801 million Mental Health Beds Expansion Program, which is delivering 260 new mental health inpatient beds across the state - 25 more beds than recommended in the Royal Commission's Interim and Final reports.

Work is continuing on more than 90 per cent of the Royal Commission's recommendations, with \$5.1 billion invested in the last two Victorian Budgets to build a compassionate, inclusive and responsive Mental Health and Wellbeing system for all Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"The Royal Commission told us many women don't feel comfortable seeking mental health support – this women's-only service is one of a number of programs making sure women feel safe and supported in the mental health system."

"This model of care is not only an Australian-first, but also co-designed by women with lived experience of all parts of the mental health system – ensuring the safest and most compassionate care."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"No one should feel uncomfortable seeking help for mental illness, which is why we are reforming the entire mental health and wellbeing system to become safe, compassionate and responsive for all Victorians."