

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



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## GEELONG'S FIRST EARLY PARENTING CENTRE ON TRACK

New mums and dads will soon have better access to early parenting support in a purpose-built facility, with construction progressing on the new Early Parenting Centre in Geelong.

Minister for Health Infrastructure Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the multi-million-dollar facility at the McKellar Centre in North Geelong is on track to be completed in early 2024.

With concrete poured and steel framing underway, the building will start to take shape over the next three months.

Designed to help families with children up to four years the new centre will feature will have 10 residential family units and four day-stay places, providing both short-term and longer residential stay programs to improve the health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes of children.

The new centre will give 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 centre is being delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) in partnership with Barwon Health, the Tweddle Child and Family Health Service, and builder Bowden Corporation.

The Geelong Early Parenting Centre is being delivered as part of the Andrews Labor Government's \$148 million investment to expand and upgrade the early parenting service network.

Once completed, this investment will provide support to more than 5,000 extra families each year meaning that more families with babies and young children can get the early parenting support they need closer to home.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Being a new parent can be hard and the new centre will help parents in the Barwon region with sleep and settling issues, supporting hundreds of local families a year."*

*"The specialist early intervention and prevention programs offer parents targeted support in the first four years of a child's life - delivering lifelong benefits."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Lara Ella George

*"The Geelong Early Parenting Centre will be a great addition to the health services already available at the McKellar Centre in North Geelong, with more support for local families to achieve their parenting goals."*