

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 2 May 2023

BIGGER, BETTER EYE AND EAR HOSPITAL FOR ALL VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is making major progress on redeveloping Australia's only specialist eye and ear, nose and throat hospital – with key clinical areas now complete.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today toured the upgraded Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital to see first-hand the world-class clinical spaces the project has delivered to date, as the hospital celebrates 160 years of caring for Victorians this month.

The redevelopment is delivering an eight-storey facility that includes a mix of new build as well as the refurbishment of existing facilities.

The project's latest stage of works will deliver a new inpatient ward, emergency department short stay unit, acute ophthalmology service and an education precinct with a 126-seat auditorium, surgical skills lab and library.

These services will come online from June, and the redevelopment will be complete by the end of 2023 – with the upgrades achieved while the hospital has continued its world-leading and life-saving work for Victorian families while preparing for future growth in demand.

The Labor Government stepped in to save the Eye and Ear project, which was announced by the former Liberal Government in 2010 – but was hugely underfunded and poorly planned.

Since then, the project's costs have blown out by \$153 million, including \$104 million in asbestos removal alone that wasn't discovered until the Labor Government came to office – four years after the Liberals claimed to have started work on the project.

Established in 1863, The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital is the largest public provider of eye and ear, nose and throat services in Victoria. It delivers more than half of Victoria's public eye surgeries.

The hospital sees more than 171,000 patients per year, including more than 38,500 emergency attendances.

Not only will this project keep Victoria on the map for delivering world class health care – it has also created more than 2,500 jobs during its construction.

The Labor Government has made record investments in Victoria's health system, with more than \$158 billion in funding since 2014 – giving every single Victorian access to the care, treatment and support they need.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital delivers more than half of Victoria's public eye surgeries, which is why these redevelopments are vital to ensure the hospital can keep up with demand and deliver world class treatment."

"We're giving our healthcare workers the resources they need to keep giving Victorians the care they deserve."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"This redevelopment is vital to safeguard the hospital's future and ensure it remains Australia's largest public provider of specialist eye and ear, nose and throat services in Victoria."

Media contact: Lily King 0499 791 387 | lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au