

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
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Sunday, 13 August 2023

MORE MENTAL HEALTH BEDS ACROSS VICTORIA

The *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* made it clear that Victorians needed more acute, hospital-based mental health beds across the state to give all Victorians the care, treatment and support they deserve.

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on this key recommendation, with eight new mental health beds now open as part of an expansion of the Royal Melbourne Hospital's acute inpatient unit.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today visited the hospital to mark the project milestone that will see a further 14 beds delivered upon completion of the redevelopment, taking the unit's total to 22 beds.

Funded by the Labor Government's \$801 million Mental Health Beds Expansion Program, the beds will help reduce pressure on the busy emergency department and ensure immediate treatment in a safe, high-quality setting.

The 24/7 multidisciplinary care and treatment will be delivered by qualified staff including psychiatrists, mental health clinicians and nurses for people with diagnoses such as schizophrenia, psychosis, bipolar disorder, severe personality disorder and severe depression or anxiety.

Designed in consultation with people who have lived experience of the mental health system, including patients, carers, clinicians, and staff, the facility will see full completion in early 2024.

The new unit is being delivered by reconfiguring and refurbishing the existing building, as well as adding two floors on the existing Northern Tower, and has created a total of 279 jobs during construction.

More broadly, the Mental Health Beds Expansion Program is delivering a total of 260 new mental health beds across the state, providing increased care and specialised support for more Victorians.

Once the program is complete, the new hospital-based beds will provide more than 93,504 days of care, enabling 6,500 more Victorians to access vital mental health services every year.

The Labor Government has embarked on the biggest modernisation of a mental health system in Australian history, including a \$6 billion investment to deliver recommendations from the Royal Commission.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* delivered an additional \$776 million, bringing the total investment across the last three state budgets to \$5.7 billion.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"More mental health beds will help to alleviate pressure on our EDs, freeing up these doctors and nurses to care for other patients, whilst ensuring acutely ill Victorians receive immediate and specialised treatment."

"We've embarked on the biggest reform of a mental health system in our nation's history – we're not wasting a minute ensuring every Victorian receives care as soon as they need it, no matter where they live."