

Media Release

The Hon Enver Erdogan MP

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Youth Justice



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WESTERN PLAINS CORRECTIONAL CENTRE READY FOR PRISONERS

The final security clearances and checks are underway at Western Plains Correctional Centre, which is set to begin housing new prisoners within a week.

Minister for Corrections Enver Erdogan officially opened the new prison today and met with staff as they complete final preparations before prisoners arrive.

Corrections Victoria will begin transferring prisoners from Port Phillip Prison to Western Plains from early next week, with more than 900 people expected to be located at the facility by the end of the year.

More than 400 custodial officers are now working on site, including 141 new recruits. Many of these officers have transferred from other prisons – ensuring there is strong mix of new and experienced staff to kick off operations.

As part of operational readiness, staff have participated in more than 100 emergency incident response drills and conducted full checks and sweeps of the site.

Testing is also complete on the facility's advanced security and barrier control systems – including a new AI facial recognition, CCTV and movement system to better monitor prisoners across the prison.

Western Plains includes a flexible design to allow for different prisoner groups across eight accommodation communities, as well as a separate 44-bed close supervision and support unit.

Prisoners will also have opportunities to participate in meaningful work and education, including work in food services, snap frozen food production, metal fabrication, powder coating and ground maintenance.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$1.1 billion to construct the 1,248-bed maximum security prison, which is the first adult prison to be opened in Victoria in almost a decade.

The opening of Western Plains builds on the Labor Government's work to put community safety first, with our tough new bail laws which are seeing remand rates increase and the need for more prison beds across the system.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* invested \$727 million to bring online 1,000 additional adult prison beds and a further 88 youth justice beds.

Twenty beds at the St John's subacute health unit in Port Phillip will be kept open beyond the end of 2025 to increase overall subacute bed capacity across the adult prison system.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Corrections Enver Erdogan

"Western Plains is a modern and secure maximum security prison that protects the community and provides staff a safe place to work."

"I thank Corrections Victoria and all the staff who have worked tirelessly to prepare the prison for opening, which will set our corrections system up for the future."