

Media Release

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Minister for Mental Health
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FIRST LOOK AT NEW MALLEE RESIDENTIAL REHAB FACILITY

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier for people in the Mallee to access the mental health support and treatment they need, with the community today getting a first look at the new \$36 million residential alcohol and other drugs facility in Merbein.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt revealed the designs for the 30-bed facility at 13 Jenner Street, which will be the first of its kind in the region.

Operated by Sunraysia Community Health in partnership with Mildura Base Public Hospital, Odyssey House Victoria and Mallee District Aboriginal Services, the facility will make it easier for people in the Mallee to access treatment for alcohol and drug use closer to home – without needing to travel long distances or leave the local support networks they rely on.

It will provide a safe and supportive environment for people to begin their recovery, rebuild their lives and stay connected to their community.

Residential rehabilitation is a voluntary program where people stay onsite and receive 24-hour care and support from qualified staff, having already stopped using alcohol or other drugs and focused on recovery.

The designs – shaped by consultation with health services, clinicians, staff, consumers and the broader community – reflect a shared vision for a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment.

The initial impressions highlight the building's single-storey layout, landscaping, planting and screening designed to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood. The facility will also include two short-term support beds, consulting rooms and shared spaces such as a kitchen and activity areas.

To ensure healing and safety, it will feature secure access, controlled visitation, lighting and a 24-hour onsite staff presence – creating a private and supportive environment for residents, staff and the neighbouring community.

The facility is designed by architectural firm Billard Leece Partnership, with the builder appointment process underway and construction set to begin in early 2026.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"This is an exciting first look at a facility that will transform how alcohol and other drug rehabilitation is delivered in the Mallee – making vital care more accessible, local, and tailored to community needs."

"We are building a health system that supports every Victorian no matter where they live, with a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, especially in our regional and rural communities."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"This new facility will be a game-changer for our community – giving locals access to the care and support they need right here in the Mallee, without having to travel hundreds of kilometres away from family and loved ones."