

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Special Minister of State

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria



Friday, 10 July 2026

MORE MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN BARWON

Labor is making sure young people in the Barwon region have access to specialised mental health support and care they need.

Minister Stitt today officially opened the new Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC) centre in Geelong.

The free service will deliver specialist, around-the-clock care for up to 200 young people aged 16 to 25 annually.

The voluntary, referral-based centre is designed to feel like a home away from home – enabling young people to access the mental health care they need, while maintaining connection to their community.

YPARCs provide early intervention and clinical care in a safe and welcoming environment – stepping in before crisis escalates and reducing the need for hospital admission.

The Geelong YPARC includes:

- 10 private rooms
- shared kitchen and dining facilities
- outdoor gardens
- dedicated spaces for visits from loved ones.

Young people can continue to attend work or school, while receiving personalised treatment and support.

The service is delivered by a dedicated team of clinicians and peer-support workers who will also guide group and confidence building activities.

Around 75 per cent of mental ill health emerges before the age of 25 - early access to support can make a significant difference to a young person's recovery and long-term wellbeing.

YPARCs also provide care for young people in the early stages of recovery who need a short period of extra support.

Operated by Barwon Health, the centre is part of the Labor Government's \$141 million investment to double YPARC beds statewide.

A One Nation Liberal Coalition have a \$40 billion cuts plan, putting young Victorians at risk.

If given the chance, they will slash crucial mental health services and put extra pressure on the health system.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"The new Geelong YPARC will transform how young people in the Barwon region access mental health care."

"We are delivering services just like this right across Victoria, because we know how important they are."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Chris Couzens

"The opening of YPARC is a significant step forward for our community. Having access to specialist mental health care closer to home, means young people and their families and loved ones can get the support they need without the added stress of travelling long distances."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant

"I'm proud we're delivering this critical new service, creating a difference for young people and their families."