

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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NATION'S FIRST DEDICATED WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE OPENS

The Allan Labor Government has delivered Australia's first dedicated public women's mental health service, a landmark initiative making it easier and safer for Victorian women to access the specialist care they need in a private setting.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today opened the service, thanks to a more than \$100 million investment by the Labor Government – completing another key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

The Royal Commission found many women experienced gender-based harm or abuse in the mental health system and this unique health service will support women to recover in an inclusive, respectful and welcoming setting that meets the level of acute care they require.

The Specialist Women's Mental Health Service – which will now be known as Women's Recovery Network (Wren) – will enable more than 750 women each year to access tailored and dedicated therapeutic mental health care and has been co-designed in consultation with women with lived experience of the mental health system.

Operated by Alfred Health and Goulburn Valley Health, alongside private provider Ramsay Health Care, the service will deliver inclusive care for women who have experienced trauma and sexual abuse, present with eating disorders or have experienced perinatal mental health concerns.

Located in Melbourne and Shepparton, the innovative service model combines a mix of inpatient beds and Hospital in the Home care, giving women the option to receive high-quality treatment, care and support in the safety of a facility or in the comfort of their own home.

The Melbourne service on Albert Road includes 35 mental health beds – 24 inpatient beds and six Hospital in the Home beds – while Shepparton women can access one of five hospital beds.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invested a further \$776 million to support the vital ongoing work of building a responsive and compassionate mental health system and providing the dedicated staff to support it.

This builds on the record \$6 billion investment in Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system over the past three years, and the work well underway on 90 per cent of recommendations from the Royal Commission.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"The Royal Commission highlighted that the mental health system wasn't delivering the care that women need – that is why we have established a dedicated service, designed in consultation with women with lived and living experience, to meet their specific needs."

"This Australian-first public service will transform how we care for women when they may be at their most vulnerable –giving Victorian women the care and services they deserve."

Quote attributable to Member for Albert Park Nina Taylor

"This new service in the heart of inner Melbourne is an example of the meaningful steps we have taken to ensuring women can access the dedicated care and treatment they need to live a full life."

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