

Media Release

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



Thursday, 21 November 2024

DELIVERING BETTER MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES IN THE NORTH-EAST

The Allan Labor Government continues to modernise Victoria's mental health services, with an important infrastructure upgrade now complete at the residential rehabilitation service in Beechworth.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced the completion of close to \$1 million in upgrades at The Willows, including a new building with communal and activity spaces, operated by Albury Wodonga Health.

Funded through the *Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Facilities Renewal Fund*, the investment has delivered a dedicated space for residents to engage in therapeutic activities and for clinicians to conduct one-on-one assessments outside the residential environment, enhancing the experience for all.

A \$10 million boost in this year's *Victorian Budget 2024/25* sees the fund now worth \$60 million, with additional rounds to be announced, ensuring this vital funding is available to more mental health and AOD facilities across Victoria.

Projects eligible for funding include renewal, reconfigurations and refurbishments that improve staff, consumer, and carer safety, increase quality and efficiency of services and enhance patient experience, while supporting Victorians on their recovery journey.

To date, the fund has delivered more than 200 infrastructure and improvement projects at mental health and AOD care facilities across Victoria.

It is just one part of the Labor Government's response to the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* recommendations to reform, modernise, build service capacity and provide better models of care to give all Victorians the care, treatment and support they deserve.

Previous projects funded at Albury Wodonga Health include amenities upgrades to Nolan House, the Brain and Mind Centre consolidation and the North East Child and Youth Mental Health Service Wodonga office renewal.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"New and refurbished facilities, including communal and activity spaces, at The Willows residential rehabilitation service will ensure that residents can access the best possible care and treatment on their recovery journey."

"Accessible mental health and AOD services are critical – that is why we are proudly investing record funding to support Victorians living with mental ill-health, regardless of where they live."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Mary-Anne Thomas

"By prioritising safety, expanding capacity, and upgrading facilities, these initiatives will enhance consumer care and outcomes but also create safer workplaces for our mental health staff and carers."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"We're investing more than ever to improve access to mental health and wellbeing care, because we know just how important it is that people get the support they need, as soon as they need it."

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