

MEDIA RELEASE

From: Catherine Butterfield, Media and Communications Consultant, Mercy Health

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New unit helps to destigmatise mental health

In the lead-up to World Mental Health Day on October 10, Member for Werribee Tim Pallas officially opened the Clare Moore Building, a 54-bed inpatient mental health unit at Werribee Mercy Hospital.

The purpose-built building houses two inpatient wards for the region's most vulnerable mental health patients. It also has women's only areas, ensuring safe environments for women accessing acute mental health treatment. Group CEO Mercy Health Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen says it has been designed with the people who use it very much in mind.

"Clients and carers have told us the Clare Moore Building feels warm and peaceful," Adj Prof Cornelissen says. "Individual rooms are spacious and sensitively designed, and areas within the building have been named to destigmatise mental health and promote recovery. For example, 'seclusion rooms' are named 'personal safety rooms'. These small but significant design decisions respect the dignity of the people we care for here at Clare Moore."

There are no shared patient rooms in the Clare Moore Building, and each room has an ensuite, ensuring privacy. Natural light floods through the building and five courtyards provide welcomed outdoor spaces.

Adj Prof Cornelissen says the statistics around mental health are alarming. Mental illnesses are the third-leading cause of disability burden in Australia, and about one in five Australians will experience an episode of mental illness during any one year. For some of these people, they may require an admission to an acute mental health unit, and Mercy Health's service helps to address this growing need in the Wyndham community.

"More can and must be done to address mental illness in our community," Adj Prof Cornelissen says. "This is particularly important in Wyndham, which is Victoria's fastest growing local government area. There is increasing community demand for specialist mental healthcare. By bringing our total capacity to 54 mental health inpatient beds, the Clare Moore Building enables us to help more families in Melbourne's west."

The Clare Moore Building is named after Sister Mary Clare Moore, friend and confidante of Sister of Mercy foundress Catherine McAuley. Sr Mary Clare Moore was herself a dedicated nurse, who worked alongside Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War.

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