

Media Statement

For immediate release

From: Bill Lane, Media Manager, Mercy Health

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The people of the west of Melbourne are being heard!

Mercy Health has welcomed the Victorian Government's allocation of \$4.8 million in yesterday's state budget to complete planning for the third stage of Werribee Mercy Hospital.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen said that the funding is a clear sign the voices of the people of the west of Melbourne are being heard and Government is committed to meeting these.

"It is satisfying to see that the extensive service and architectural planning for the next stage of the hospital, which commenced with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority in 2016 is now coming to fruition.

"Our current and future patients can now look forward to the establishment of a major hospital to serve their needs local. Expansion will also improve our capacity to retain and attract some of Australia's most skilled doctors and nurses to support the establishment of other health services in the West.

"In today's terms the next stage of Werribee Mercy Hospital construction requires funding of \$300 million to ensure the people of Wyndham receive the level and quality of health services they deserve and need.

"For that to occur, an upgrade of the existing Werribee Mercy Hospital needs to start within the next three years and really there isn't a minute to be lost," Adj. Prof. Cornelissen said.

"With the population growth at its current rate, it's projected by 2026, our Emergency Department presentations will have increased by more than 107 percent.

"We have 15 cubicles in our existing Emergency Department, many of which are frequently occupied by patients waiting for mental health inpatient placement or community transfer. We are also treating increasingly more complex health issues at our hospital as a result of having an Intensive Care Unit.

"It is well documented that the City of Wyndham is growing much faster than the rest of Victoria.

"There's a projected 28 per cent growth in the population of Victoria between 2016 and 2036, but of that increase, 45 percent of the population growth will occur across Melbourne's West," he said.

“At times, though, we cannot provide care for patients at Werribee Mercy Hospital because we do not yet have the specialist services required to treat certain conditions.”

If the Victorian Government commits to the development of a third stage of Werribee Mercy Hospital, the people of Melbourne’s West will have the following new or enhanced services on their very doorsteps:

- new expanded Emergency Department and short stay department with satellite medical imaging
- an increased capacity for maternity and birthing services, special care nursery, and a postnatal inpatient ward to allow for current and future demand
- consolidating acute services to improve critical access
- space for improved outpatient clinics
- a modern pathology laboratory and pharmacy
- expansion of renal services (including 6 additional dialysis chairs)
- increased diagnostic endoscopy rooms

“When the Victorian Government delivered on its promise to construct on Stage 2 of Werribee Mercy Hospital – the Catherine McAuley Building – with an eight-bed Intensive Care Unit and additional surgical capacity, the development was a win for the City of Wyndham and for the west of Melbourne. We are thankful that the Hospital and the needs of its community remain front of mind of Government

“Werribee Mercy Hospital was established as a public hospital 25 years ago in a growing community. I remember when they used Werribee Mercy Hospital to play the part of a small country hospital, Mt Thomas Hospital, for the series *Blue Heelers*. In 2020, the City of Wyndham can no longer be mistaken for a country town and our hospital needs to grow to deliver modern healthcare to the people of the west,” Adj.Prof. Cornelissen said.

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