

Media Statement

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Date: 15 December, 2021

A second “Early Parenting Centre”, a step closer for Mercy Health

Mercy Health moves a significant step closer to supporting young and vulnerable families in Melbourne’s northern suburbs with the State Government’s identification of land for the building of an Early Planning Centre in the City of Whittlesea.

The Victorian Government’s Minister for Health Martin Foley and Minister for Energy and Member for Mill Park Lily D’Ambrosio this week unveiled signage at Anchorage Drive, South Morang where building of the facility will commence in the New Year.

Comprising 10 residential units and four day-stay units, the project is scheduled for completion by late 2022.

Welcoming the announcement, Adj Professor Stephen Cornelissen said the Government’s decision to allocate the management of the Early Parenting Centre to Mercy Health acknowledges the organisation’s expertise as a respected provider of a highly valued early parenting service.

“Much of Mercy Health’s heritage is built around the provision of services for vulnerable families and young women who strive to overcome hardship.

“The Government’s decision to select our organisation as the facility’s manager is also a reflection of our exceptional team at Mercy Health’s O’Connell Family Centre, one of only three existing parenting centres in Victoria.

“The O’Connell Family Centre’s reputation has been built over many years, providing a range of programs for families with small children, and in particular support for vulnerable families.

“We welcome families, parents or carers who require support with sleep and settling of infants.

“The City of Whittlesea also has one of the highest representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ mothers and children, so one of the specific goals we have set in the design of this centre is to make sure it is accessible and culturally safe for those families. We think this will make it a better service for the whole community,” Adj Professor Cornelissen said.

The new centre is part of the Victorian Government’s \$123 million investment that will deliver seven early parenting centres in major growth areas.

Minister Foley said “sleep and settling” can be among the biggest challenges facing new parents, with around one in two Victorian parents who attend parenting centres, reporting problems with their child’s sleep.

“We also know how scary the first few months of parenthood can be, so we’re giving parents the support they need where they need it by investing in new and refurbished Early Parenting Centres across metropolitan and regional Victoria.”

The centre will provide day-stay programs and longer residential-stay programs to improve the health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes for children aged up to four-years-old.

The new Early Parenting Centre will form an important part of a new development in South Morang that includes housing, and is close to childcare centres, shopping precincts, open space and public transport.

(ENDS)