

Media Statement

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Families in Melbourne's north are one step closer to being able to access culturally safe parenting support, with construction now underway at Mercy Health's new early parenting centre in Whittlesea.

The City of Whittlesea has the second largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria and Mercy Health is continuing to work with Community to ensure the service is culturally safe and welcoming.

Victorian Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today presented designs for the new early parenting centre at 34 Anchorage Drive, South Morang.

The new early parenting centre will provide parents and carers with the advice and care they need, including support with sleep and settling, feeding and extra care for babies and toddlers with additional needs.

Mercy Health is already a respected provider of early parenting services at Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre in Melbourne's east, a centre established by the Family Care Sisters (known as the 'Grey Sisters') in 1930 to provide mothercraft and respite for vulnerable women.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Angela Nolan said Mercy Health has a proud legacy of caring for women and families through its maternity hospitals and services, as well as existing early parenting centres established by the Grey Sisters almost a century ago.

"I have no doubt that our enduring commitment to caring for Victorian women in need contributed to Mercy Health being chosen as the new service provider at Whittlesea," said Ms Nolan.

"We are grateful for Minister Thomas and the State Government's acknowledgement of Mercy Health's expertise and achievement in this field over many years."

Mercy Health Chief Executive Health Services Prof Jason Payne said Mercy Health is committed to providing culturally safe and welcoming care and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Mercy Health acknowledges the unique challenges that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experience as a result of intergenerational trauma and injustice," Prof Payne said.

"We are privileged to be able to care for and support parents in the early years of their child's life, which are so important and formative for families."

Delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) in partnership with Hutchinson builders and Mercy Health, construction on the new Whittlesea site is expected to be completed in mid-2023.

(ENDS)