

Media statement

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Minister praises Werribee Mercy Hospital staff for efforts to reduce COVID waiting lists

Mercy Health's Werribee Mercy Hospital (WMH) has stepped up to reduce the back log of patients waiting for a planned endoscopy across Melbourne's west, prompting praise from Victoria's Minister for Health, Mary-Anne Thomas.

A designated team at WMH has now performed the first of between 600 to 800 endoscopy procedures in upgraded endoscopy suites, known as the Rapid Access Hub (RAH) as part of the Victorian Government's COVID-19 catch-up plan.

While visiting WMH this morning and touring the upgraded RAH, Minister Thomas said the Victorian Government could not be prouder of the hospital's hardworking staff.

Minister Thomas said: "It's initiatives like the new Rapid Access Hub and the doubling of the hospital's Emergency Department which will allow them (Mercy Health) to keep delivering the world class care it's renowned for.

"Melbourne's west is one of our biggest growth corridors and it's imperative we provide this growing community with the sort of healthcare services they rely upon."

The RAH has been developed in partnership with other health services in Melbourne, namely Western Health and the Royal Melbourne Hospital which means more patients will be treated across Melbourne's west.

Its primary function has been to reduce the long waitlist times for endoscopic procedures that have been delayed due to COVID-19.

WMH RAH Nurse Unit Manager Melissa Fox said the project was an amazing collaboration between many organisations with the sole aim of delivering care to patients who have had their endoscopy delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The collaboration involving other health service providers is both a significant and exciting element of the initiative, with patients from Melbourne's west standing to be the beneficiaries".

Under the existing schedule the WMH Rapid Access Hub hopes to deliver in excess of 750 endoscopies by the end of June this year.

The specifically designed new RAH is located on the Ground Floor of WMH and will provide easy access for all patients coming to the hospital for care.

The Victorian Government's overall plan includes a \$1.5 billion investment that will see more than 240,000 public patients receive surgery each year by 2024 – more than 40,000 additional procedures per year than pre-pandemic levels.

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