



Media release

From the Minister for Health

Thursday, March 18, 2004

STEPS TO RECOVERY IN NEW MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

The establishment of country Victoria's first 'mid-way house' for people with a mental illness will play a vital role in setting them on the road to recovery, the Health Minister, Bronwyn Pike said today.

Officially opening the Goulburn Valley Prevention & Recovery Care (PARC) centre in Maude St, Shepparton, Ms Pike said it provided a more intensive level of care for up to 10 people at a time who were at a stage of their illness between requiring hospital and returning to home.

The Bracks Government is providing \$1.1 million a year to run the service, she said.

At the launch Ms Pike also announced a new Shepparton-based academic post to boost psychiatric services in the Goulburn Valley.

"The PARC service is a new initiative to provide residential support and clinical treatment to people whose mental illness is in a deteriorating phase, and to keep them out of hospital," Ms Pike said.

"It also provides a half-way step to enable them to be discharged from hospital earlier and continue to receive more intensive support. As they recover from the more acute phase of their mental illness, they are able to prepare to go back to community living.

"PARC centres are a new Bracks Government initiative. Shepparton is the first to open, and is being followed by two other centres in Melbourne's southern and eastern suburbs."

The PARC centre targets adult clients experiencing a significant mental health crisis or illness. They may require short-term residential support and clinical treatment to prevent them becoming sufficiently unwell to require hospitalisation.

They help move patients more quickly out of hospital by offering a less intense treatment as they continue to recover, and act as a bridge between inpatient treatment and community care.

The centre is being run jointly by Goulburn Valley Health and Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria.

Ms Pike said the new Shepparton-based psychiatric post, a joint clinical-academic appointment between Goulburn Valley Health and Melbourne University, would be based at the School of Rural Health.

The Bracks Government is contributing \$100,000 a year to the position, which will provide leadership in rural academic psychiatry in the specialist mental health services run by Goulburn Valley Health.

Media contact: Ben Hart on 9651 5799 or 0407 445 551 www.vic.gov.au