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New mental health service for Dandenong

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Dr Martin Preston inspecting work on Dandenong Hospital's new mental health building. Picture: Valeriu Campan

NEW jobs and more beds are the hallmarks of Southern Health's revamped mental health service in Dandenong.

The first stage of the new-look David St mental health service, which includes the Acacia (adult), Banksia (youth) and Warringa (long stay) wards is nearing completion.

Martin Preston, acting clinical director of adult psychiatry at Dandenong, said the \$69 million redevelopment would relieve bed stock across the southeast.

"We'll be going from one of the oldest (psychiatry) wards in the state to one of the newest, and the best," Dr Preston said.

The bigger wards - with more natural light - can have a healing effect on patients, he said.

"People can sometimes feel caged (in a darker environment) if they're staying for one or two weeks.

"It will be a nicer experience for staff, patients and their families."

Upgrades will include an electronic patient management system and a three-fold increase in the number of beds, from 38 to 120 at the hospital - with an extra 30 off-site beds for people transitioning back into the community.

The facility is made up of: 20 aged care beds, 50 long stay beds and, two 25 bed short-stay or acute wards with one for 16-25 year-olds.

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