

Media Release

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Sod-turning marks the start of work on replacement \$162.8 million 60-bed forensic psychiatry facility



A ceremonial sod-turning this week marked the start of the construction process of E Tū Wairua Hinengaro (Quality of Mind) - a \$162.8million 60-bed forensic psychiatry facility at the Mason Clinic in Auckland.

Works are expected to start by mid-March, with construction likely to be completed in late 2025.

E Tū Wairua Hinengaro is one of 16 projects under the Government's Mental Health Infrastructure Programme run by Te Whatu Ora to improve the way mental health projects are planned and delivered.

It will be built on the northern end of the Mason Clinic campus and used to accommodate people who currently reside in units that date back to the early 1990s.

The old units will eventually be demolished – providing further space for expansion.

The new building will include:

- three levels, with a floor area of around 10,000 square metres – almost double that of the existing facilities being replaced
- a total of 60 beds, allowing the relocation of those people who have received care in ageing buildings affected by long-term weather-tightness issues and enabling closure of the Totara, Kauri and Rata units, and the repurposing of Kahikatea unit
- the first high-secure facilities to be built in New Zealand since 1999 – better reflecting contemporary approaches to psychiatric and general health care
- two new low-secure units and one new medium-secure unit; and
- therapeutic activity spaces and facilities for staff training.

The sod-turning on Wednesday involved Minister of Health Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall - alongside Te Whatu Ora staff and kaumatua.

Stephanie Doe, the Waitematā-based Te Whatu Ora Acting Director of Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services, says the development is part of the ongoing renaissance and expansion of the Mason Clinic campus - following the opening of the E Tū Tanekaha unit in 2021 and Te Aka unit in 2017.

“The new E Tū Wairua Hinengaro building will support our people to do their best work. This facility will lead to better outcomes and improved experience for all service-users, whānau who visit and our staff,” she said.

The building has been registered with the New Zealand Green Building Council and will be constructed to achieve Green Star Level 5 certification. Green Star measures a project’s sustainability - awarding points across various credits to rate a building’s performance and environmental impact. Level 5 falls into the “New Zealand Excellence” category.

The Regional Forensic Psychiatry Service based at the Mason Clinic is the largest of its kind in New Zealand and serves the greater northern region.

Ends.

Caption 1: The planned new E Tū Wairua Hinengaro building is designed to incorporate cultural elements to support the wellbeing of tāngata whai i te ora (service-users).

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