

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee**  
**Inquiry into the 2022–23 Budget Estimates**  
**23 May 2022**

**PORTFOLIO: Disability Ageing and Carers**

**Witnesses:**

- The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
- Mr Argiri Alisandratos
- Professor Euan Wallace
- Ms Brigid Sunderland
- Mr Andrew Minack
- Ms Jodie Geissler

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**QUESTION 1**

**a) Provide information on pension-level Supported Residential Services that closed in 2021–22, resulting in the reduction of 103 ‘Pension-level beds available in assisted Supported Residential Services facilities’. Provide the reasons for the closures, and the locations where beds have been reduced.**

**Mr NEWBURY:** Thank you. Minister, can I take you to page 208 of budget paper 3 and specifically the first line item, ‘Pension-level beds available in assisted supported residential services facilities’. Have you got that? 208—have you got that?

**Mr CARBINES:** Of BP3, did you say?

**Mr NEWBURY:** Page 208 of BP3—

**Mr CARBINES:** Yes.

**Mr NEWBURY:** and the pension-level beds available in assisted supported residential facilities. There is a difference between the target and outcome of 103 places reduced—lower—and there is a note that says the lower target is due to recent closures of some pension-level supported residential services. **Where are, specifically, those 103 reduced pension-level supported residential services beds?**

**Mr CARBINES:** Mr Newbury, we will have to come back to you on some of that detail. We will take that on notice, if that is all right, and we will get you some details in regard to those.

**Mr NEWBURY:** Do the department have any detail with them in relation to that note? I mean, even if you do not have specifically where they are, and I would appreciate if you can take that on notice—and perhaps it is best directed to the department—is there any reasoning behind those closures?

**Mr CARBINES:** No. I think we are going to have to come back to you with some detail about that.

**Mr NEWBURY:** No detail at all—okay. So we are just closing—we just do not know.

**Mr CARBINES:** Well, they are independently operated. We could speculate, but let us take it on notice and provide you with the details that you have requested.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Cutting beds, but they do not know where.

**Mr NEWBURY:** Yes, I know—they are cutting beds but do not know where or what.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** They do not know where; it is amazing.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Newbury, the Minister—

**Mr NEWBURY:** Can I then ask you more generally speaking, Minister, as we do not seem to know why or where: are you concerned that there is a reduction? Just principally speaking, are you concerned that there is a reduction?

**Mr CARBINES:** Supported residential services are operated, in many cases, by a range of different organisations—

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Could you speak up, Minister?

**Mr CARBINES:** and individuals. So as I have said to you, we will take the question on notice and provide you with the details of the specific ones.

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**Mrs McARTHUR:** Thank you, Chair. Back to the Secretary: following on from Mr Newbury's question about the 103 beds, you do not know where they have closed—you are going to confirm this—and why they have closed, **can you also confirm the locations of those closures, please, on notice?**

*Hearing Transcript, p. 8–11*

**Name of Committee members asking question: Mr Newbury and Mrs McArthur**

## **RESPONSE**

### **Answer:**

- There are 117 SRS throughout Victoria, 70 of which receive viability funding through the Supporting Accommodation for Vulnerable Initiative (**SAVVI**) and Pension Level Projects.
- SRS are privately owned and operated businesses that provide accommodation and personal or special care for people with a disability, psychosocial conditions, frail older people, people with drug and alcohol related support needs and other vulnerable Victorians.
- Six (6) pension level SRS facilities that received SAVVI funding, closed between 2021 to date, with 128 pension level beds no longer available. All of the above SRS facility closures in that period involved leases of the SRS sites not being renewed by property owners.
- SRS proprietors make independent decisions regarding continued operations of their business, including closure. Where a property owner or proprietor makes a decision to sell or close a facility, the Department works with the proprietor and local services to ensure residents are re-located to alternative accommodation that is suitable to their needs
- The SRS facilities that were closed were at the following locations:
  - Fairfield
  - Dandenong North
  - Bentleigh

- Wendouree
- Dandenong

## QUESTION 2

**2. For the 38 aged care beds at Orbost Regional Health, are these new beds bringing the total to 76 beds or a replacement, or refurbishment, of the current 38 beds?**

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Thank you very much indeed. That is very helpful. Also, since we do not know where we are closing beds, maybe we will go to where you have got some new beds that you mentioned. Thirty-eight new aged care beds in Orbost—now, Orbost already has 38 beds, so is this 38 new beds in addition to the existing 38, or are you just confirming you have already got 38 beds in Orbost? Are we refurbishing the beds, perhaps? **So is it new beds, refurbishment or repeating that we have got 38 beds in Orbost?**

**Mr CARBINES:** The investment at Orbost is new beds.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** So we are going to have 76 beds in Orbost? Just confirming, Minister: 76 beds in Orbost?

**Prof. WALLACE:** Yes, the \$45 million investment in this year's budget is for 38 new beds in Orbost, and we expect that those are in development and the completion date is yet to be determined based on the planning, but funding for—

**Mrs McARTHUR:** But 76 beds in Orbost?

**Ms SUNDERLAND:** Well, the funding is for 38 new public sector aged care beds.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** And we are going to keep the 38 existing beds—we might refurbish the pillows or something, but we are going to keep them?

**Prof. WALLACE:** Well, the funding of \$45.362 million is for 38 new beds in Orbost.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Good. We are not going to ditch the old ones, though, are we? We are keeping the 38 old beds as well?

**Prof. WALLACE:** As far as I am aware. We will take that on notice and come back to you with certainty.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Can you take that on notice?

**Prof. WALLACE:** Absolutely.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** We want new and old. Great.

**Mr CARBINES:** I would add, Chair, that a \$45.362 million investment at Orbost Regional Health service for 38 new beds is a significant investment in the Orbost community. It has been welcomed by the Orbost community. It is part of a \$146 million public sector residential aged care capital upgrade investment by this government for rural and regional communities in some of the most remote parts of our state.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 11–12*

**Name of Committee member asking question: Mrs McArthur**

## RESPONSE

### Answer:

The Victorian Government has invested \$142.845 million in the 2022-23 State Budget for the Rural and Regional Public Sector Residential Aged Care (PSRACS) Revitalisation Stage 1 initiative, to replace and refurbish beds at PSRACS campuses at Camperdown Hospital, Mansfield District Hospital and Orbost Regional Health.

\$45.362 million will fund a new 38-bed facility on Orbost Regional Hospital campus, replacing existing

facilities at Lochiel House and Waratah Lodge with similar capacity.

The new facility will be designed in accordance with the *Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (Interim) Facility Design Guidelines*, which have been developed in reference to the evidence base and objectives of the Aged Care Act (Cwth) 1997 and Aged Care Quality Standards. This will enable delivery of person-centred contemporary aged care practice in line with expectations of residents and the community.

This initiative will significantly improve access to care for the following reasons:

- All 38 beds will be suitable for high care and ageing in place. At present, only 18 beds meet this requirement.
- All 38 beds will be dementia friendly. At present, no beds are suitable and residents typically need to move to services outside their community once their symptoms become more significant. This new build will allow residents to remain in their community.
- The upgrades to the facility will also include features that are more suitable for complex needs, which at present, are limited.

The existing facilities at Lochiel House and Waratah Lodge will be repurposed for other hospital usages following the completion of the new 38-bed facility.