



The Hon James Merlino MP

Acting Premier

Minister for Mental Health

Thursday, 20 May 2021

SUPPORTING 3,000 JOBS: BUILDING OUR MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

Not only is our mental health system completely overburdened – it’s chronically understaffed. It’s why our once-in-a-generation reform demands a massive boost to our dedicated mental health workforce.

As part of the Andrews Labor Government’s \$3.8 billion mental health package, the Budget invests \$206 million to build our mental health workforce – investing in more mental health nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and support staff.

Together, these investments will support around 3,000 jobs, ensuring more Victorians are getting the care they need and thousands more have the security of a job.

Helping to build and train our mental health workforce, the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* delivers \$120.4 million in new training and study support.

That includes 120 graduate placements for nurses, 140 postgraduate mental health scholarships, and extra graduate placements for allied health professionals and additional psychiatry rotations for junior doctors.

Funding will also continue our Free TAFE course offering, which has already seen close to 1,900 students enrolling in certificates in mental health and mental health peer work since 2019.

The Royal Commission recommended a system designed and delivered by people with lived experience – and that’s what we’ll deliver, with a further \$40.7 million to expand and support Victoria’s lived experience workforce.

This includes expanding and upskilling our lived experience workforce through dedicated training and career pathways. We’ll also support the organisations they work for as we build the pipeline of our lived experience workforce.

This Budget delivers funding for a statewide Mental Health Workforce Strategy by the end of 2021, fulfilling a key recommendation of the Royal Commission and ensuring we can start planning our mental health workforce needs for the future.

An additional \$11 million will deliver a Rural and Regional Workforce Incentive Scheme, attracting, training and recruiting more mental health professionals to our country communities.

These investments builds on last year’s Budget, which included \$12.7 million for new training opportunities to support students and jobseekers looking to pursue a career in the mental health sector. Of that \$7.7 million was dedicated to begin addressing urgent workforce shortages in the mental health sector.

With this Budget, we’re creating jobs and caring for Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

“Our mental health system has been overburdened and understaffed for far too long. This investment will relieve that burden for our dedicated workforce and create around 3,000 opportunities for Victorians.”

“From ensuring people are getting the help they so desperately deserve, to creating new jobs doing work that really matters – this Budget will change lives.”

“Our Government is investing in the support people need – and the people we need to deliver it.”