



**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Acting Premier

Minister for Mental Health

Thursday, 20 May 2021

## HELPING FAMILIES SUPPORT A LOVED ONE'S MENTAL HEALTH

Our current mental health system is failing Victorians in need – and it's failing their families and carers too.

Instead of feeling supported, loved ones are often left searching in an overburdened and understaffed system.

It's why the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* includes \$93 million to provide dedicated support for families and carers.

This investment will ensure the voices of families are being heard at the heart of our system, while also recognising the additional support they need in caring for a loved one.

A \$54.5 million investment will deliver eight family and carer-led centres across the state by the end of 2022 – providing a point of support for families and carers.

Family peer workers located in these hubs will work with family members and carers to understand their needs, provide tailored help, and connect them to the right information and services.

This work will also include practical help like assisting with short-term respite and supporting local family and carer peer support groups.

A further \$9 million will deliver additional support for parents who have a child with mental health issues, including new online parenting programs and dedicated group-based parenting sessions.

Recognising the unique experience of our younger carers, this Budget includes \$23.4 million to expand the range of support across our state for young people and children caring for a family member, including funding for Satellite Foundation and the Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness program.

This investment will further support young carers with tailored information and support suited to their needs, and funds for immediate practical needs like short-term respite.

The voices of families and carers will also be brought to the heart of our reform, with the establishment of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, including having at least one Commissioner with lived experience as a family member or carer.

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

*"For too long families and carers have had to deal with the consequences of a mental health system that is understaffed and overburdened. The time has come for us to deliver the support our families and carers need."*

*"While carers and families look after their loved one, these eight local centres across our state will look after them."*

*"Sometimes talking to someone who understands what you're going through makes all the difference. Not only will this investment connect families and carers to services and support – it will also help connect them to each other."*

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan**

*“Our mental health system has not only failed Victorians with mental illness – it’s failed their families, carers and friends too.”*

*“These reforms will put the voices of carers and families where they belong, at the heart of our system.”*