

Victorian Budget 2021/22

# Creating Jobs, Caring for Victorians



**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Acting Premier

Minister for Mental Health

Thursday, 20 May 2021

## PROVIDING EARLY CARE FOR VICTORIANS, CLOSER TO HOME

Victorians will be able to access support in their own communities, and before they are in crisis, thanks to a massive funding boost from the Andrews Labor Government.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System told us that when it comes to accessing care, Victorians often don't know where to turn, or who to turn to.

It means – too often – Victorians are denied the mental health support they need, until it's too late.

That's why the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invests more than \$1.5 billion in community-based care, including \$263.8 million for a 'front door' for care, with 20 new local services across Victoria – the first of up to 60 across the state.

As a recognisable entry point into the system, these services will focus on prevention and early intervention, ensuring Victorians get the care they need much sooner and much closer to their families and communities.

Importantly, these services will be able to connect Victorians to the support they need – including after-hours care – ensuring people are no longer getting lost or falling through the gaps in our system.

This investment includes the initial six fast-tracked sites at Benalla, Brimbank, Frankston, Greater Geelong, the Latrobe Valley and Whittlesea.

Three of these sites will open from mid-2022, with all six sites open by the end of 2022. The next 14 sites will be identified shortly, with priority going to areas experiencing the greatest levels of unmet need.

Providing a step up in care for those with more complex needs, this Budget also invests \$954 million to establish 22 reformed area mental health and wellbeing services, replacing existing services across our state.

Helping to meet the needs of the 'missing middle', these local services will deliver a broader range of services for adults with complex mental health challenges, using an updated model of care – ensuring people are no longer falling through the gaps in our system.

Critically, these services will be set up to respond to Victorians in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week – including with crisis outreach teams or emergency service responses which can be deployed as needed to ensure people are no longer falling through the gaps.

The Budget invests \$5.1 million towards improving non-government helplines and connections with mental health and wellbeing services, including funding for Beyond Blue and Lifeline.

And because it's an issue that touches all of us, \$6 million will go towards initiatives including the creation of dedicated tools and resources specifically designed to support occupational mental health – just one of a raft of reforms to support the wellbeing of workers and workplaces.

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

*“The Royal Commission made clear that when people need help, they don’t know where to turn or who to turn to.”*

*“It’s an idea as simple as it is powerful – by creating a front door for the system, we’ll be able to connect Victorians to care in their own communities.”*

*“With 22 reformed services across our state, we’ll also Victorians with complex mental health challenges a pathway to recovery in their own community – close to home, friends and family.”*