

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Friday, 11 June 2021

DELIVERING THE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT VICTORIANS DESERVE

Victorians will get the mental health support and care they need, with the Victorian Government to provide additional funding as demand for services increases during current restrictions.

Though they're important and necessary, these temporary measures can affect the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians, including children and young people – which is why the Government will provide \$9.57 million to meet increased demand.

Headspace centres are often the first place young people reach out to for help – so it's critical young Victorians are not turned away or placed on a waiting list for months.

That's why we'll invest \$2.24 million to urgently deliver surge teams of clinicians in each of Victoria's 13 specialist Child and Youth Mental Health Services, each of which will work with their local headspace centres to address significant waiting lists.

And in acknowledgement that headspace centres are a Commonwealth-run service, we'll ask the Federal Government to immediately match this funding until the end of 2021.

We also know that phone helplines and digital connections are important to ensure diverse communities can access mental health support services – so community channels established during 2020 will receive a \$3.1 million boost to help maintain current services and develop new initiatives to support and treat vulnerable Victorians.

This funding will go towards organisations such as Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria (ARCVic), Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA), Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, YMCA and Your Town – Kids Helpline.

The number and severity of eating disorder presentations have increased during the pandemic. The Government announced additional support in January, and will provide a further \$1.5 million to support six metropolitan health services to continue and expand integrated care to persons with eating disorders.

In addition, the Government will invest \$1 million for Beyond Blue, \$1.2 million for Lifeline and \$500,000 for Eating Disorders Victoria helpline to make sure all Victorians can access the timely and appropriate mental health care they need.

Work to rebuild Victoria's mental health system is underway. The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invested \$3.8 billion to transform the way mental health and wellbeing services are delivered in Victoria.

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

"The current restrictions are in place to protect every Victorian – but we know this is a tough time and many are struggling with their mental health."

"This is about delivering the mental health support Victorians need right now, as well as into the future as we recover from the pandemic."

Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Youth Ros Spence

"These investments will go a long way towards ensuring young people get the support they need, when they need it."