

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health



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MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BODIES GIVING COMMUNITIES A VOICE

The Victorian Government is continuing its work to build a reformed mental health and wellbeing system centred around community – giving Victorians access to the support they need, when they need it, close to home.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today announced expressions of interest are now open for Chairs of the eight new Mental Health and Wellbeing Interim Regional Bodies to be established across the state.

The Interim Regional Bodies were a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, and will be based in the three metropolitan regions of North-East, South-East and Western metro as well as in the Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume, Gippsland and South-West areas of regional Victoria.

These Interim Regional Bodies will give a voice to local communities – bringing together people with local knowledge and expertise to advise and guide Government on the unique mental health and wellbeing needs of communities across the state.

Each body will consist of a Chair and five members – including at least one person with lived experience of mental illness or psychological distress, and at least one person with lived experience as a family member or carer.

In its final report, the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System set out a 10-year plan to rebuild the system from the ground up, recommending a significant transformation to the way decisions are made in relation to Victoria's mental health and wellbeing services.

The eight Interim Regional Bodies are an intermediary step towards regional governance, which will be cemented by the establishment of the legislated Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Boards across Victoria by the end of 2023.

For more information, including how to apply, visit boards.vic.gov.au.

To build the state's new mental health system that meets the needs of all Victorians, the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* invested a record \$3.8 billion in mental health and wellbeing services and support.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"Our future mental health system will be responsive to people who need it most, with services that are safe, tailored and localised – and that's why we need the expertise of community members from every corner of our state."

"With community care at the heart of our mental health reform, this is an opportunity to be part of helping us create fit-for-purpose local mental health and wellbeing services that deliver for Victorians."