

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THROUGH AND BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

As lockdown ends thanks to the incredible efforts of Victorians stepping up to get vaccinated, the Victorian Government is providing more mental health support for the community as the state recovers from the pandemic.

The Government's 20 pop-up mental health services are now open and taking referrals for in-person and telehealth appointments to reach those who need support right across the state – with locations in every region to ensure everyone can access quality care, no matter where they live.

On top of the \$247 million the Government has invested in the mental health of Victorians during the pandemic, a further \$5.68 million will deliver more specialised care for vulnerable people who need intensive support.

Services to receive extra funding include the Royal Melbourne Hospital's Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders, which supports Victorians and their families living with eating disorders.

An increase in eating disorder presentations has been noted Australia-wide in recent years, and this support will provide an increase in specialist clinicians – not only to deliver direct world-class care to Victorians living with an eating disorder, but to share their knowledge and skills with mental health professionals right across the state.

The Brain Disorders Unit at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre is a specialist bed-based unit for younger Victorians living with acquired brain injuries and mental illness, for whom long-term residential or even nursing home care may otherwise be their only option.

This funding will increase the capacity of the Brain Disorders Unit team, making sure more Victorians and their carers can regain as much of their independence as possible and live in the least restrictive settings.

Victorian Transcultural Mental Health at St Vincent's Hospital builds capacity across the mental health sector through training and education programs to deliver culturally sensitive mental health services for all Victorians.

CALD communities are less likely to engage with mainstream mental health services, and this extra support will allow the service to deliver their training more widely and reach more diverse Victorian communities whose members are living with mental illness.

Other services to receive funding include the Dual Disability services at The Alfred, St Vincent's Hospital and Monash Health, the Alfred's Psychiatric Intensive Care Services, the Neuropsychiatric Unit at The Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Koori Statewide Inpatient Service at St Vincent's and the Personality Disorder Services (Spectrum).

Support of \$545,000 will also go towards developing a new service delivery model for these intensive state-wide services, helping them increase their outreach in rural and regional areas so more Victorians can access the care they need, closer to home.

These investments are all part of the Government's work to rebuild the state's mental health system from the ground up – delivering a responsive service that delivers the tailored support every Victorian and their family needs.

The unprecedented investment of \$3.8 billion in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* will deliver every recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System – the first step on a decade-long journey to create mental health services that Victorians deserve.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"Whether people need localised support or high-acuity intensive inpatient treatment, we're investing to support each and every Victorian who needs support with their mental health."

"As our lockdown comes to an end, our mental health support for Victorians is far from over – we're rebuilding our state's mental health system to make sure everyone can get the support they need, close to home."

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