

# Media Release

**The Hon James Merlino MP**

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health

Acting Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



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## VICTORIANS SHAPING THE NEW MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACT

Hundreds of Victorians have had their say on the Andrews Labor Government's *new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act*, which will enshrine recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* into law and help build the state's new mental health system.

The Royal Commission set out a 10-year vision for creating a balanced, flexible, and responsive system that delivers individualised care for every Victorian who needs it, with a key recommendation that the *Mental Health Act 2014* be replaced with a new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act* by mid-2022.

The voices of those with lived experience in the mental health sector – from consumers, families and carers to mental health workers and service providers – are vital in delivering an Act that delivers the best services, and the Department of Health invited feedback on specific policy proposals through Engage Victoria.

Overall, 283 written submissions were received through the process, and 28 targeted engagement sessions saw more than 500 Victorians provide further feedback on the proposals.

This feedback is included in the new *The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act: What we heard* report released today, and highlights Victorians' desire for the Act to better recognise people with lived experience, the positive role that clinicians and mental health workers play in the system, and the diversity of those accessing services.

The feedback also acknowledges that some more complex issues require more time than the Act's recommended timelines to develop world-class regulations – for example, the criteria around compulsory mental health treatment.

While feedback supported a cultural shift that reduces the need for compulsory treatment and increased oversight, reporting and monitoring, the Labor Government will deliver an independent review of compulsory treatment criteria and alignment of mental health laws with other decision-making laws.

The independent review will begin in 2022, when Parliament has passed the new Act – bringing forward the Royal Commission's suggested five to seven-year timeframe for aligning decision-making laws. The terms of reference for the review will be co-designed with consumers, families, carers, workers in the sector and service providers.

The *What we heard* report is now available on the Engage Victoria website at [engage.vic.gov.au/mhwa](https://engage.vic.gov.au/mhwa).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

*"I want to thank every Victorian with their own experience of our mental health system who shared their stories with such generosity – it's wonderful to see how passionate people are about helping design our new system."*

*"We're listening to everyone's views as we develop this new Act to deliver the care and treatment every Victorian with mental health concerns – and everyone who cares for them – deserves."*