

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
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MORE SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure Victorians seeking treatment for mental health concerns and substance addiction have better access to the support they need, with a new statewide specialist service and more trained addiction specialists.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino and Minister for Health Martin Foley today announced Turning Point, Australia's leading addiction treatment and research centre, will run a new \$13.3 million statewide service – delivering more accessible care for Victorians with co-occurring mental health and substance or addiction issues.

New addiction specialist hubs will form a key part of this service – with the Labor Government investing \$21.5 million into an initial four hubs to be opened across Victoria, making sure people across the state have access to the support they need, close to home.

To grow a strong workforce in the addiction space, the Government will also deliver grants and scholarships to trainee addiction specialists and nurses – encouraging more new workers to specialise in this field of mental healthcare.

As well as improved treatment and care, the new service will coordinate and deliver training to the existing mental health workforce – making sure they are better equipped to care for Victorians with a broad range of mental health concerns.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* has invested more than \$42 million over four years to boost integrated services for Victorians living with co-occurring mental health and addiction or substance abuse concerns.

These reforms deliver another key milestone in the delivery of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recommendations – helping to build a system where every Victorian, no matter where they live, can get the treatment and care they need, when they need it.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

“People with co-occurring mental health concerns often need unique, tailored care – and we’re making sure that’s available to every Victorian who needs it, with more specialist workers and addiction hubs across the state.”

“I’d encourage anyone who’s embarking on a career in mental health to consider joining our addiction workforce – with grants and scholarships on offer, there’s never been a better time to join a rewarding and fascinating sector.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

“Taking an integrated approach to mental health and drug addiction services will deliver better care for these highly vulnerable people ensuring they can access the care they need, at the times they need it most.”

“The new statewide service will ensure we’re delivering a more consistent level of care that is also modelling best practice not only in Australia, but internationally.”