

Media Release

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



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NEW REGIONAL CHAIRS TO GUIDE MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

The Andrews Labor Government has appointed expert community leaders to head up new interim regional bodies, that will provide grass-roots advice on critical mental health and wellbeing priorities across Victoria.

Minister for Mental Health James Merlino today announced the Chairs of the eight Mental Health and Wellbeing Interim Regional Bodies, which have been established in response to a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Interim Regional Bodies will guide and advise the Labor Government on the unique needs of their local community and how to deliver the Royal Commission's long-term vision for regional governance and better services for Victorians who need support, in their own communities.

The Chairs range from health experts to people with lived experience, with skills in community engagement, governance, leadership and knowledge of the health sector.

With Chairs now appointed, the search is on for the other five members of each Interim Regional Body, which will include 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.

Interested members of the Western Metropolitan, North East Metropolitan, South East Metropolitan, Loddon Mallee, Hume, Gippsland, Grampians and South West regions' communities are encouraged to visit www.fisherleadership.com.

The Interim Regional Bodies form an integral part of the Labor Government's response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, which set out a 10-year vision to rebuild the system from the ground up and identified a need to deliver stronger local and regional approaches to service delivery.

More than 85 per cent of the Royal Commission recommendations are underway, backed by the Government's record \$3.8 billion investment in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"Our new Mental Health and Wellbeing Interim Regional Bodies will help guide us as we continue to reform the mental health and wellbeing system from the ground up, ensuring it is more responsive, accessible and safe."

"It's critical we have local voices and people with lived experience to help shape the future of our mental health and wellbeing services and tailor them to the specific needs of local communities across Victoria."

Mental Health and Wellbeing Interim Regional Bodies Chairs:

- **Western metropolitan region** – Jim Williamson
- **North East metropolitan region** – Malcolm Hopwood
- **South East metropolitan region** – Tass Mousaferiadis
- **Loddon Mallee region** – Paul O’Neil
- **Hume region** – Emma Reid
- **Gippsland region** – Kellie O’Callaghan
- **Grampians region** – Melissa Field
- **South West region** – Kathy Wilson