

# Media Release

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



Sunday, 3 April 2022

## ONE-STOP MENTAL HEALTH HUBS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Victorian families will soon have access to a one-stop shop for mental health support for infants, children and the whole family – with a new network of Health and Wellbeing hubs to support the mental health of young Victorians.

The three new hubs will deliver a range of specialist and allied health services – like paediatricians, psychologists, parenting support and speech pathologists – under one roof, making seeking support for mental health concerns easier for families.

Providing tailored care, the hubs will deliver earlier and better outcomes for children aged 0-11 years who have developmental, behavioural and emotional challenges, as well as their families – including access to free assessments for development issues and autism.

Delivering on a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the hubs respond to the need for a renewed focus on early intervention and age-appropriate care to meet development and mental health challenges in younger children – where there has traditionally been a gap in suitable care.

The three new hubs, delivered with an investment of more than \$54 million, will service Southern Melbourne, Brimbank-Melton, and Loddon areas, and will begin providing care from July 2022.

These three initial locations were chosen based on factors like population growth, early childhood development rates and the projected demand for mental health and wellbeing support in the coming years.

The hubs will be designed in consultation with local community health services, family services, mental health and wellbeing service providers and the community itself – making sure their service offerings are properly tailored to local needs, building on each regions' existing resources and capacity.

The hubs are part of the Labor Government's unprecedented \$3.8 billion investment in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*, kickstarting the decade-long reform of the state's mental health system to ensure every Victorian has access to the care they need, as soon as they need it, close to home.

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

*"For too long, there has been a gap in getting younger children the age-appropriate care they need with their wellbeing – now we'll have three fantastic new services up and running in July to support families."*

*"These hubs will be a one-stop shop for the support families need for their infants and children, whether that's specialist mental health treatment, development and autism assessments or paediatrician-led medical care."*