

Putting Patients First



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Mental Health

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A MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM TO WORK FOR EVERY VICTORIAN

Building Victoria's mental health system from the ground up won't happen overnight. It's a reform that will take years to deliver.

The Andrews Labor Government has started the job, and we're getting on with taking the next big steps to build a mental health system that works for every Victorian.

In the year since the Royal Commission's final report was delivered, new services have opened and more Victorians than ever are getting the help they need – and this Budget will mean work is underway on more than 90 per cent of recommendations.

In the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*, funding of \$1.3 billion for brand-new initiatives will build on last year's record investment of \$3.8 billion.

Without the dedicated professionals who care for Victorians every day, the mental health system doesn't exist – that's why our work to build the mental health system is underpinned by a massive expansion to the mental health workforce.

The Labor Government is investing a record \$372 million in workforce initiatives and hiring more than 1,500 mental health workers this state needs – including 400 mental health nurses, 100 psychiatrists and 300 psychologists.

To make sure people get the ongoing support they need when they're in crisis or seriously ill, the Labor Government will invest more than \$490 million in acute, hospital-based care – reducing waiting times and providing safe intensive care to more Victorians.

This investment will open an extra 82 mental health beds in key growth areas at the Northern Hospital and Sunshine Hospital so an additional 1,600 Victorians will get the inpatient care they need every year, as soon as they need it.

Too many people in country Victoria are still forced to travel away from their communities, families and support networks to seek care. We know we need more acute-level care in the regions.

This Budget invests \$196 million to deliver 15 more acute beds in Shepparton and acquire land and plan for a further 49 beds in Ballarat and Wangaratta.

A further \$10 million will deliver emergency department hubs for regional Victorians experiencing serious mental health and alcohol and drug issues, with a hub at Latrobe Regional Hospital and planning for three further hubs in Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton – giving them wraparound healthcare in a dedicated section of the hospital.

The Royal Commission told us that when it comes to accessing care, Victorians don't know where to turn, and that too often, they are denied the mental health support they need – until it's too late.

So we're investing in early mental health care at a community level too, with an extra \$9.1 million to establish *Social Inclusion Action* groups in 10 local government areas – calling on the community leaders and locals who know their communities best and can develop ways to bring people together.

The earlier we reach someone struggling with their mental health, the better. That's particularly true when it comes to our kids – with 75 per cent of diagnosable mental illness first emerging before the age of 25.

On top of a record \$842 million invested in youth mental health last year, this Budget invests \$12 million in mental health and wellbeing support for families whose infants or children and young people are accessing acute care in regional Victoria.

This will provide parents with group sessions to strengthen relationships with their children and increase their skills and confidence to support emerging mental health and wellbeing challenges.

In the midst of unprecedented global events and the pervasive impact of social media, young Victorians have suffered a surge of new eating disorders and relapses – a statistic that is sadly replicated worldwide.

The Government is investing \$20 million in dedicated, tailored support for those who need it, including a service uplift to deliver 15 mental health beds specifically for eating disorders.

This investment will also support the invaluable work of Eating Disorders Victoria and the Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders to better support people battling eating disorders, as well as a new Victorian Eating Disorder Strategy – strengthening early intervention and prevention for people experiencing eating disorders.

This Budget provides a \$21 million package to support suicide prevention initiatives, including aftercare services and an 18-month pilot of a statewide peer call-back service for families, carers and supporters of people experiencing suicidal behaviour.

An extra \$3.5 million will be invested in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to keep Aboriginal Victorians safe and well, with initiatives they know will make an impact in their own communities.

This year, we'll deliver a brand-new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act*, placing consumers and carers at the centre of everything we do and introducing a new emphasis on prevention and mental wellbeing – catching mental health concerns early.

An investment of \$29.3 million will support the Act's implementation, including training for the mental health sector to deliver new models of care, help for Victorians to understand their rights and an independent review of compulsory treatment criteria.

These investments will be at the heart of Victoria's new mental health system, and the state's recovery. Changing lives, saving lives – and getting more Victorians into work.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

“Building our mental health system from the ground up is a once-in-a-generation reform that will change lives and save lives.”

“The Royal Commission told us that when it comes to accessing mental health care, Victorians don’t know where to turn, or who to turn to – and too often, people don’t get the support they need until it’s too late.”

“These investments will focus on early intervention, intensive care and tailored support in every corner of our state, so Victorians can get the care they need much sooner and much closer to home.”

“Building a new mental health system will require a significant workforce – so as we’re delivering the mental health system Victoria needs, we’re also creating thousands of new jobs.”