

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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MORE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIANS WITH EATING DISORDERS

More Victorians living with an eating disorder will receive the support they need to recover and live happy, healthy lives, thanks to record investment from the Andrews Labor Government.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* invests more than \$20 million to deliver tailored support for people with an eating disorder, supporting almost 3,200 Victorians – expanding capacity to help more than 1,100 more than the number treated for eating disorders last year.

Because of unprecedented global events in the past years and the pervasive impact of social media, we know young Victorians have suffered a surge of new eating disorders and relapses – a statistic that is sadly replicated worldwide.

Victorians battling eating disorders respond best when mental health supports are provided early – and this investment will deliver a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, as well as expanding capacity at the acute end of the sector.

An investment of more than \$15.5 million will uplift eating disorder services across the state to deliver 15 extra mental health beds specifically to support eating disorders across Melbourne.

This investment will also expand an integrated specialist model in eating disorder inpatient units across the state – delivering specialist multi-disciplinary mental health teams to give every Victorian presenting with an eating disorder the care they need, no matter where they live.

The model will expand teams of doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and dietitians to four regional health services at Grampians Health, Barwon Health, Bendigo Health and Latrobe Regional Hospital – building on the successful model operating at the Alfred, Austin, Eastern, Monash, Melbourne and Royal Children's hospitals.

This year's Budget also includes funding to develop a new statewide eating disorders strategy that means Victoria has a more systemic and coordinated response to support people living with eating disorders – as well as their carers, families and supporters.

The \$4.4 million investment will also provide more support to the Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders and Eating Disorders Victoria, helping them deliver an extra 2,100 wellbeing checks, telehealth services to around 1,800 Victorians and continue delivering life-changing initiatives like their unique Peer Mentoring Program.

The Program is the only one of its kind in Australia; supporting Victorians with an eating disorder after discharge from hospital or transitioning out of an intensive day program, giving participants that recovery is possible with one-on-one mentoring from lived experience employee who has recovered from an eating disorder.

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 the investment of \$1.3 billion in this year's Budget means work is underway on more than 90 per cent of recommendations.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"We're seeing a global increase in eating disorders – that's why we're taking action to intervene early and prevent these illnesses, as well as set Victorians experiencing acute eating disorders on the path to recovery."

"Eating disorders don't discriminate – they can happen to anyone. This massive boost will deliver more hospital beds, more integrated care across the state and more support for the trusted services helping Victorians every day."

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