

Media Release

Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
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BUILDING OUR RURAL AND REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing vital work to ensure Victoria has a skilled, diverse and available workforce that meets the needs of Victorians with mental illness or psychological distress, no matter where they live.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today unveiled the *Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives* program, which aims to attract and retain workers in state-funded mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services across rural and regional Victoria.

The \$13.7 million incentive program will cover regional mental health workforce incentive grants, support for workers and their families to settle in a new community and support for health services to promote priority jobs.

The program aims to attract workers from metropolitan Melbourne, interstate and overseas, offering flexible grants of up to \$20,000 to support costs such as accommodation, relocation, childcare, school fees and vehicle costs.

It will support around 200 grants for workers in Area Mental Health Services and up to 80 grants for community managed mental health services. Additional funding of \$300,000 will go towards a pilot program to trial similar relocation grants for the AOD workforce.

The grants will be administered by Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV).

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System highlighted significant workforce gaps in rural and regional areas and this program delivers on the Commission's recommendation to address these supply shortages.

The Labor Government's *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024* released in 2021 is guiding the government's work to grow the mental health system's most important asset.

An unprecedented investment of \$372 million in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* is supporting delivery of the Strategy, allowing the government to create more than 1500 additional jobs in Victoria's Mental Health System.

Information on the Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives program, including job vacancies and eligibility requirements is available on the RWAV website rwav.com.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"We want to help our mental health workers make a smooth transition to communities that need their dedicated expertise because Victorians experiencing a mental illness deserve the best treatment."

"We're building a robust state-wide mental health workforce to ensure quality care and support is delivered everywhere for all Victorians, close to their home and friends and family."