

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
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MORE LOCAL MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACROSS VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with the job of building a modern, accessible mental health system for every Victorian – with more Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals set to open their doors to provide free, fast and local care.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today visited the Frankston Mental Health and Wellbeing Local to announce the beginning of walk-in services in the coming weeks, and a weekend service to kick off in the coming months.

The Frankston Local is delivered by Wellways Australia in partnership with Mentis Assist and Peninsula Health – and since opening late last year, this has provided support to hundreds of people in the community with wellbeing and therapeutic group sessions, face-to-face appointments, telehealth and outreach.

Since the first six local services opened last year, over 1000 people have engaged with the services in the Benalla-Wangaratta-Mansfield region, Brimbank, Frankston, Greater Geelong-Queenscliffe region, Latrobe, and Whittlesea.

As part of an overall investment of \$776 million in mental health, the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* will see \$77 million to deliver three new locations – Northcote, Leongatha and Narre Warren – and plan for another 20 Local Services.

A flagship recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* the Locals provide support and treatment for adults aged 26 and older experiencing mental illness or psychological distress in their community, including those with co-occurring substance use or addiction.

A further nine Locals will be open by the end of 2023 in Dandenong, Shepparton, Melton, Mildura, Lilydale, Bendigo-Echuca and Orbost-Bairnsdale – and planning work has started on the next 12 services, in Melbourne, Werribee-Truganina, Ballarat, Craigieburn-Sunbury, Ringwood, Horsham-Ararat and Warrnambool-Hamilton-Portland.

The Locals will remove barriers that many Victorians face when they need treatment, and they will connect them to support – without making them jump through hoops like a GP referral, meeting eligibility criteria or cost.

Delivering on the promise we made to Victorians last year, the Labor Government will deliver 50 Local Services across Victoria by the end of 2026 – giving Victorians free, mental health care as soon as they need it, reducing the need for more acute care down the track.

Funding is also being allocated to continue 19 existing Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs for another year while Local Services are being established across the state.

We promised Victorians we'd build our mental health system from the ground up, and that we'd implement every single recommendation from the Royal Commission – an Australian-first which take more than a decade of reform, and over the past three years we've invested more than \$6 billion to get on with it.

For more information on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals visit health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

“We are delivering the biggest mental health reform in our nation’s history, and the Local services play a vital role in ensuring we deliver the most accessible care for all Victorians, closer to home.”

Quote attributable to Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke

“Opening up walk-ins and support over the weekend will provide greater access for our community to seek the mental health support they need.”

Quote attributable to Member for Hastings Paul Mercurio

“The addition to the Local will make a big difference for our community ensuring greater access for people that can’t get there during the week.”

Quote attributable to Member for Carrum Sonya Kilkenny

“The Locals are making it easier for our community to seek mental health support in a welcoming and accessible environment.”