

# Media Release

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Thursday, 7 September 2023

## GROWING VICTORIA'S MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The most valuable asset to Victoria's mental health system is its workforce, that's why the Andrews Labor Government is doubling the size of the sector by 2031.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams visited Bendigo Health today to officially launch the *Jobs That Matter* mental health workforce campaign – a \$7.4 million investment to attract domestic healthcare workers to pursue a career in Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system.

Ensuring more accessible mental health or alcohol and other drug (AOD) support, a *Jobs That Matter* platform will make it easier for people to enter the workforce, providing a centralised hub for jobs and information.

Delivery is also underway on a wide range of programs to build, support and retain the workforce following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* – this includes more than 300 scholarships in mental health and AOD courses as part of the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Scholarship Program*.

Applications are now open, including fully funded postgraduate mental health nursing qualifications. The scholarships are also helping AOD practitioners and allied health professionals such as occupational therapists, social workers and psychologists, develop and grow their skillsets to support better outcomes for all Victorians.

Additionally, this program includes university scholarships for people with lived and living experience who are already working in the sector, to further develop their leadership and management skills.

Establishing a strong workforce in regional and rural Victoria is also a major focus, with grants of up to \$20,000 now available for support workers and their families – incentivising people to relocate, settle and remain in these areas by helping with costs such as accommodation, relocation and school fees.

The Labor Government is also backing jobs in the AOD sector with funding for 84 new trainee positions over the next two years to provide on-the-job learning opportunities and develop a new pipeline of workers.

To help realise the vision for a skilled, supported and thriving workforce outlined in the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024*, a record \$600 million has been invested since the Royal Commission.

Overall, more than \$6 billion has been invested in mental health and wellbeing over the past three years – the largest investment in mental health in Victoria's history.

To learn more about *Jobs that Matter* mental health initiative, please visit [vic.gov.au/mental-health-jobs](https://vic.gov.au/mental-health-jobs).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

*"We know how important it is to deliver a stronger, better supported mental health workforce – that's why we're working hard to double the number of jobs so we can have a responsive, safer and more integrated mental health system."*

*"Building the system from the ground up is a once-in-a-generation reform that will change and save lives – and our workforce is the backbone of this system."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

*"The mental health workforce at Bendigo Health does an amazing job supporting some of our community's most vulnerable – it is fantastic we can help them continue to employ the staff they need to deliver the best care."*

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