

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Thursday, 26 October 2023

COLLABORATIVE CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH LEADERS ANNOUNCED

The Allan Labor Government has announced the appointment of two leading experts to head the new Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, driving the critical work to improve Victoria's mental health system.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt has named Carolyn Gillespie and Professor Sarah Wilson as co-CEOs, with each taking up a lead portfolio in lived experience and research respectively.

Established following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the centre is an Australian-first and brings together researchers, health professionals and people with lived experience to lead the reform.

The centre will provide mental health and wellbeing treatment, care and support to adults, lead cutting-edge research and serve as the 'engine room' for reform across the mental health sector and its workforce.

Bringing with her a wealth of lived experience and clinical expertise, Carolyn Gillespie is highly respected across the health care, justice and the community sectors.

Her work in both Australia and globally, has seen her establish and lead large organisational and systemic cultural change and deliver excellence in client-led healthcare programs.

Boasting more than 30 years of experience, co-CEO Professor Sarah Wilson is an expert in Clinical Neuropsychology and a leading international researcher in mental health.

She has more than 15 years of executive and senior leadership experience and a sustained track record in research translation embedded in co-design with people who have lived experience – a critical skill in this role.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital and the University of Melbourne were appointed in August as the lead partners for the centre and will be supported by 18 other mental health and research collaborators, including community services with a focus on Aboriginal health and wellbeing.

The Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing is just one reform being implemented following the Royal Commission, with the Labor Government to complete all 74 recommendations.

Work is already underway on 90 per cent of the recommendations and more than \$6 billion in funding delivered since the report was handed down – the mental health largest investment in Australia's history.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* delivered \$776 million to support mental health and alcohol and other drugs initiatives, continuing the vital work to build a responsive and compassionate system.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"With such experienced leadership and understanding of lived experience steering the work of the Collaborative Centre, its work is set to help shape how we deliver mental health and wellbeing care and support across Victoria."

"Every Victorian deserves responsive and compassionate mental health support no matter where they live – the work of the partners will undoubtedly change and save lives."

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Quotes attributable to Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing CEO Carolyn Gillespie

“I know from my own lived experiences that tailored mental health solutions are more effective and longer lasting, so we’re going to ensure we have a human-centred and trauma-informed way of doing things.”

“There is definitely a mood for change – people want to see mental health done differently in Victoria and Sarah and I have a fantastic opportunity to lead that work together.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing CEO Sarah Wilson

“There is so much great work happening out there, but it needs to be done more collaboratively to bring it into the light – which is what Carolyn and I will help facilitate.”

“We’re looking at the system through a fresh lens. We want reform that leads to better care and collaboration, so there’s no more patchwork service delivery or cracks in the system.”