

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Thursday, 18 January 2024

FLOOD VICTIMS ENCOURAGED TO SEEK FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The Allan Labor Government is encouraging regional Victorians to prioritise their mental health and seek the help they need following the second flooding event in just over a year.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today reminded people that they are not alone, with a range of free resources available to offer support to those who need it – as many Victorian farmers, business owners and community members grapple with the aftermath of the floods earlier this month.

For people of all ages living in or near Bendigo and the broader Campaspe region, including Rochester, the Bendigo Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub continues to provide support without the need for a referral from a GP or health professional.

The hubs were established to offer support to anyone feeling overwhelmed or having a difficult time and are presenting with a range of different issues, including distress, lowered mood, anxiety, substance use or addiction.

To access this free service, anyone across the Campaspe region can call 1300 375 330 or 0409 539 267 to have an initial discussion, or through visiting the Hub (39 Rowan Street, Bendigo VIC 3550).

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are also available to people in person or via telehealth, including:

- Bendigo and Echuca Mental Health and Wellbeing Local (servicing Greater Bendigo, Loddon and Campaspe) – services can be accessed via (03) 5497 5600 and Echuca on (03) 5412 6600
- Shepparton Mental Health and Wellbeing Local (servicing Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie and Moira) – services can be accessed via 1300 000 559
- Benalla, Wangaratta and Mansfield Mental Health and Wellbeing Local – services can be accessed by visiting the Benalla Local (Shop 5B, 66 Nunn Street, Benalla) or the Wangaratta Local (5 Victoria Parade, Wangaratta), or via 1800 000 842

Acting as a ‘front door’ to the mental health system, Locals provide a mix of supports and therapies for individuals needing mental health support. This service is available to anyone over 26 for free and without a GP referral.

Parents and carers can also seek free help for children up to 11 years old who may be distressed, with the Bendigo Children’s Health and Wellbeing Local providing free support. This service is available via 1800 433 977.

For youth, there is also headspace centres in Shepparton (03 5823 8800 - 129 High Street, Shepparton), Wangaratta (1300 332 022 - 44 Rowan Street, Wangaratta), Bendigo (03 5406 1400 - 78-80 Pall Mall, Bendigo), and Echuca (03 5485 5048 - 451 High Street, Echuca).

In addition to localised support, people can also access free statewide telehealth support options, including Rural Health Connect (via ruralhealthconnect.com.au) and Partners in Wellbeing for people over 16 (via 1300 375 330).

In an emergency where there is immediate risk of harm to a person, call Triple Zero (000) or for 24-hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

“There is a range of free services available to regional Victorians who may be struggling with their mental health as a result of the recent flood event – please know these services are here to help and that you are not alone.”

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