

Media Release

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



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WALK-IN MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT NOW AVAILABLE IN MORWELL

The Allan Labor Government is getting on with the job of building a modern and accessible mental health system for every Victorian – with the start of walk-ins at the Latrobe Mental Health and Wellbeing Local.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing today visited the service in Morwell to announce that locals aged 26 years and older can now walk in and get the help they need – no GP referral or appointment is required, and the service is free of charge.

Offering telehealth since late 2022, the service expanded throughout 2023, with service provider Neami – alongside partners Drummond Street Services and Uniting Vic.Tas – now delivering the full service at its permanent location.

The Latrobe service is one of 15 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals now operating across the state, supporting people experiencing mental illness or psychological distress, including those with co-occurring substance use or addiction, providing treatment and care in their community and closer to their support networks.

A flagship reform following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the Local Services act as a 'front door' to the mental health and wellbeing system, offering a welcoming and inclusive space to access support from qualified mental health professionals, including peer support workers to cater for the diverse needs of all communities.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* delivered more than \$263 million to establish the first 27 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, with the latest budget funding \$67 million to establish additional services and \$10 million towards planning for another 20 locations.

Since the Royal Commission handed down its final report, significant progress has been made with work underway to implement more than 90 per cent of recommendations and more than \$6 billion invested in the system over the past three years – the largest investment in mental health in Victoria's history.

People across the Gippsland region can now access the Latrobe Mental Health and Wellbeing Local at 3 Hazelwood Road, Morwell seven days a week, or can call to arrange a face-to-face or telehealth appointment.

For more information or to locate a Mental Health and Wellbeing Local, visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"We are transforming our mental health system, making it easier for more people to seek out responsive and compassionate support – because that is what every Victorian deserves."

"Services like the Latrobe Local provide a welcoming and accessible environment for people needing mental health support, and with no GP referral or fees it means anyone can walk in and ask for help."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"This new Local is helping to address increasing demand for mental health support across the Latrobe Valley – with walk ins now open at the permanent address, it is acting as a critically important 'front door' to the system."

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