

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

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MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES UNDER ONE ROOF IN GEELONG

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring people in Geelong have access to a range of comprehensive mental health services under one roof – officially opening the Central Geelong Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub.

The new Hub in the heart of Geelong's CBD will see Barwon Health deliver wraparound treatment, care and support for local consumers, carers and families – including mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services.

The Hub provides mental healthcare through specialist, integrated multidisciplinary teams, including both clinical and lived experience staff offering a range of services including assessment, treatments and therapies, care planning and coordination, education, peer support and self-help.

These supports are being provided in spaces that have been specifically designed to ensure people feel welcome and safe when they reach out for help and advice.

One of the services offered within the Hub is the Greater Geelong and Queenscliffe Mental Health and Wellbeing Local, which recently moved to the new site from its initial temporary location in North Geelong.

The Local is part of a network of 15 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals established following a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

The Locals provide care and treatment for adults experiencing mental illness or psychological distress in their community, including those with co-occurring substance use or addiction.

Acting as a 'front door' to the mental health and wellbeing system, the service offers a welcoming and inclusive space, staffed by qualified mental health professionals, including peer support workers to cater for the diverse needs of all communities.

The service is free and does not require a GP-referral or a Medicare card.

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.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"The Royal Commission told us Victorians find navigating the mental health system too hard – this mental health hub in the centre of Geelong means the community can easily access the type of care they need, when it is needed."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"It's exciting to see the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local for Greater Geelong and the Bellarine find its permanent home, providing our community in the Geelong region free, easy access to mental health care, closer to home."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara Ella George

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“The Geelong Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub will deliver more services under one roof for everyone in our community seeking mental health support.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant

“This Hub will mean people across the Bellarine can enter a safe space and receive the care they need, closer to their home and support networks.”