

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 12 February 2025

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR BALLARAT'S MENTAL HEALTH CAREGIVERS

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring Ballarat families and carers of people facing mental health challenges get the support they need, with a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centre now open.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today joined Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison, Member for Eureka Michaela Settle and Ripon Martha Haylett to officially open the Grampians Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre on Dawson Street North – joining the network of Connect centres across Victoria.

Delivering on a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the centres are the first of their kind in Australia, supporting the mental health and quality of life of caregivers who are supporting someone with mental health challenges, illness, psychological distress or addiction.

The Connect Centre is one of eight centres across Victoria supporting the caregivers with a range of free services including in-person peer support, community outreach, family counselling, support groups facilitated by peer workers and therapeutic groups facilitated by clinicians.

There are currently more than 60,000 Victorians providing mental health care to family and loved ones, often a long-term responsibility that is unpaid and without adequate support – making these centres more important than ever before.

Staff at the centre also have their own lived experience of supporting someone with mental health or substance use challenges and understand the needs and circumstances of people who come for support.

The Grampians Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre is operated by operated by Mind Australia, in collaboration with Grampians Community Health and Ballarat Community Health.

For information on Connect Centre locations, visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-connect.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"Our network of Connect Centres play an important role in not only promoting a better quality of life for caregivers, but also offering practical services, including advice, connection to support networks and access to hardship funds."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"We recognise that family and loved ones play such an important role in our mental health system, and this new centre right here in Ballarat will give caregivers the support they deserve close to home."

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

"We are making it easier for Ballarat families and carers of people experiencing mental health challenges to also take care of themselves, with this warm, welcoming and accessible space run by experts."

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

"We are so often focused on supporting those living with mental illness that we can forget to check on the people caring for them. Caregiving can be a challenging job, so it is vital we make sure carers are well supported too."

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