

Media Release

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



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MAJOR BOOST TO VICTORIA'S MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Labor Government is continuing to expand Victoria's mental health workforce to meet growing demand and deliver on the Royal Commission's vision of a system where every Victorian has access to the care they need.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today visited the Whittlesea Mental Health and Wellbeing Local to announce the second round of roles through the Graduate and Early Career Program – supporting a strong pipeline of new workers to deliver the care Victorians need, close to home.

These workers will be placed in Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals across Victoria – helping more Victorians get free mental health support close to home without needing a GP referral or Medicare card.

Established by the Labor Government and acting as a 'front door' to the mental health system, the Locals offer free support and treatment for Victorians experiencing mental illness or psychological distress, including co-occurring substance use or addiction.

Support is delivered in-person, via telehealth and via outreach services with a care plan designed to reflect a person's goals and preferences – family, carers and supporters can also be involved.

This new intake will establish 66 mental health roles across the community for graduates including:

- positions in allied health, psychology, and postgraduate nursing
- lived and living experience positions
- wellbeing support roles
- as well as clinical educators and supervisors to support and guide graduates.

It follows the first intake which commenced in February and saw 27 roles established at Locals in Greater Geelong and Queenscliff, Bendigo and Echuca, Whittlesea, Frankston and Latrobe.

Together, the first two intakes of the program mark a major milestone – with every Mental Health and Wellbeing Local across Victoria now allocated early career roles, supported by dedicated supervisors and educators to strengthen care and support across the state.

The program is a key part of the Labor Government's work to implement the recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, which placed the workforce at the centre of system reform.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$6 billion in the mental health system since the Royal Commission report was handed down and increased the mental health workforce by 25 per cent between 2021 and 2024.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"This program is backing the future of Victoria's mental health system – giving passionate early career workers the hands-on experience, support and training they need to build long, rewarding careers supporting others."

"Every Local across Victoria will have early career mental health workers on the ground – supported by experienced educators and supervisors – helping more Victorians get the care they need, closer to home."

Quote attributable to Member for Mill Park Lily D'Ambrosio

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“This is a vital service for the community delivered by skilled and compassionate mental health professionals – and it’s fantastic that even more Victorians will soon be able to access the care they need, closer to home.”

Quote attributable to Member for Yan Yean Lauren Kathage

“This investment is not just creating jobs – it’s building a stronger, more accessible mental health system that meets people where they are right in their own community.”

Quote attributable to Member for Thomastown Bronwyn Halfpenny

“By supporting early career workers right here in the City of Whittlesea, we’re ensuring our community has the mental health care it needs now and into the future.”