

Media Release

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



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MAKING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT EASIER TO ACCESS, CLOSER TO HOME

The Allan Labor Government is now one step closer to expanding access to free mental health and wellbeing support close to home without needing a GP referral or Medicare card.

Following the recent announcement of seven new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals across Victoria, Mental Health Minister Ingrid Stitt today announced the lead service providers that will deliver these services:

- **Cardinia** – Mind Australia in partnership with Monash Health
- **Darebin** – Neami National in partnership with Northern Health
- **Maribyrnong** – cohealth in partnership with Western Health
- **Maroondah** – Wellways Australia in partnership with Eastern Health
- **Mount Alexander** – Mind Australia in partnership with Bendigo Health
- **Port Phillip** – Wellways Australia in partnership with Alfred Health
- **Wyndham** – cohealth in partnership with Mercy Health.

These experienced organisations already lead a number of existing Locals, making them well placed to make sure Victorians receive quality care and feel welcome at the new Locals.

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

A flagship reform following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the new services will build on the 15 existing Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, operating across 17 locations, that have already supported more than 23,000 Victorians access free community-based mental health care and support.

To support the expansion of the Locals network and build a strong pipeline of new mental health workers, the Labor Government recently announced a second round of early career roles – helping early career mental health professionals to get hands-on experience and skill development over a 12 month program.

The seven new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are expected to open from late 2025, continuing the Labor Government's ongoing reform and expansion of community-based mental health services.

For more information on Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"Easy access to mental health care without needing a GP referral or Medicare card is another step closer – with these trusted providers set to deliver these important new services in communities across Victoria."

"More than 23,000 Victorians have already turned to Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals for support – and with more Locals on the way, even more Victorians will have access to this vital service close to home."

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