

Media Release

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



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SEVEN NEW MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING LOCALS NOW OPEN

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier for Victorians to get free, community-based mental health care with the opening of seven new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals to support their communities.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced services have now commenced at the Cardinia, Darebin, Maribyrnong, Port Phillip, Wyndham, Maroondah and Mount Alexander Locals. Mental Health and wellbeing supports are now available via phone or telehealth, with the services scaling up to offering in person support over the coming months.

Acting as a 'front door' to the mental health system, the 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 Local services have already supported over 29,000 Victorians to access free, community-based care.

The total number of Locals has now grown to 22 across 24 locations – making it easier for more Victorians to access mental health and wellbeing support free of charge with no Medicare card or GP referral required.

The growing uptake of these services reflects the Government's progress in delivering a mental health system that is more accessible for Victorians.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* invested \$34.4 million to support the Local's existing locations, establish the seven new locations and continue essential community-based mental health services across Victoria.

The Labor Government has invested \$6 billion in the mental health system since 2021 and grown the mental health workforce by 25 per cent.

More information and phone numbers are available at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-locals.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"We're making sure that more Victorians can access free and compassionate mental health support whenever they need it, and these seven new locals will make it even easier."

"More than 29,000 Victorians have already turned to Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals for support – and with seven more now open, even more Victorians will have access to this vital service, closer to home."