

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence



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MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MELBOURNE'S INNER NORTH

The Allan Labor Government is making it easier for Victorians in Melbourne's inner north to get free, community-based mental health care with a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Local now supporting the community.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt announced the Darebin Mental Health and Wellbeing Local is now operating from two sites in Northcote – 413 High Street and Your Community Health at 42 Separation Street.

Delivered by Neami National, in partnership with Northern Health, the Local commenced delivering mental health and wellbeing supports via phone or telehealth in November and is scaling up to offering in person support over the coming months.

Once scaled up, the Darebin Local will provide a range of clinical and wellbeing mental health supports via in-person appointments, telehealth and outreach services – all free of charge with no Medicare card or GP referral required.

Acting as a 'front door' to the mental health system, the network of Locals offers 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 services have already supported over 30,000 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.

Further Locals in local government areas across Cardinia, Maribyrnong, Port Phillip, Wyndham, Maroondah and Mount Alexander have also recently started offering mental health and wellbeing supports via phone or telehealth, with the services scaling up to offer in-person support over the coming months.

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

"The new Darebin Mental Health and Wellbeing Local will give more people in Melbourne's inner north that crucial front door access to the mental health system, closer to home."

"Our network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are making it simpler for Victorians to access free support whenever they need it – with no referrals or Medicare card required."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

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“The new Darebin Mental Health and Wellbeing Local is an incredibly exciting step towards getting more people in the community the help they need locally, for free and without having to travel far from home.”