

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Ageing  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence



Tuesday, 10 February 2026

## FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT NOW OPEN IN NORTHCOTE

The Allan Labor Government is delivering free, community-based mental health support to Melbourne's inner north, making it easier for locals to get the help they need close to home.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt has officially opened the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Darebin, now operating from two Northcote sites at 413 High Street and Your Community Health at 42 Separation Street.

Delivered by Neami National, in partnership with Northern Health, the service has been supporting locals via phone and telehealth since November last year and now provides in-person care – all free of charge with no Medicare card or GP referral required.

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

A flagship reform following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* in 2021, more than 33,000 Victorians have already accessed free mental health care through these vital local services across the state.

There are now 22 Locals operating across 24 locations statewide, with services recently launching in Cardinia, Maribyrnong, Port Phillip, Wyndham, Maroondah and Mount Alexander.

The strong uptake of these services shows the Government's reforms are making mental health care more accessible for Victorians when and where they need it.

The Victorian Budget 2025/26 invested \$34.4 million to strengthen the Local network and establish seven new locations, ensuring essential mental health services continue to expand across the state.

Only Labor invests in healthcare – delivering and backing support services for Victorians when they need it most.

For more information on Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-locals](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-locals).

### Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

*"Our network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals is transforming access to care, with more than 33,000 Victorians already getting free support in their community without the need for a referral or Medicare card."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

*"The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Northcote means our inner north community can access the mental health care we need close to home in a safe, supportive and welcoming environment."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Preston Nathan Lambert

*"Mental Health Locals were a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, and with Neami and Your Community Health involved, Darebin residents will get the community-based support they need."*

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