

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence



Saturday, 11 April 2026

BUILDING A STRONGER MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Allan Labor Government is building a stronger, larger mental health workforce – so every Victorian can get the care they need.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today launched a new program to grow the workforce, with new data revealing Labor’s targeted investments in training, education and development opportunities are working.

Between 2021 and 2025, Victoria’s public mental health workforce grew 33 per cent with significant increases in the psychology, social work, occupational therapy, nursing and the medical workforces.

Importantly, the lived and living experience workforce has grown by 125 per cent in that time, strengthening the central role that these workers play in the system.

The strong growth has been driven by a range of targeted investments and initiatives established by the Labor Government.

This has created a pipeline of mental health workers to provide care right across Victoria.

But we know we need to continue to grow this workforce.

That’s why Labor is launching the Pathways to Practice Incentive Grant Program.

This will provide critical cost-of-living support to students completing compulsory unpaid clinical placements in regional and rural Victoria.

The program will support students across social work, occupational therapy, psychology and nursing.

The program will deliver 520 grants of up to \$575 per week, helping students cover travel and relocation costs during regional placements.

Participating mental health services may also receive up to \$30,000 to boost student placement, including tailored onboarding, welcome activities and transport assistance for early and late shift work.

Applications for the Pathways to Practice program close 31 December 2026, unless fully allocated earlier.

Students who completed placements from 1 January 2026 may apply retrospectively.

For more information visit health.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

“The results speak for themselves – Labor’s investments in Victoria’s mental health workforce are working.”

“When students train in the regions – they are more likely to get a job there and provide care to regional Victorians.”

“By supporting students through unpaid placements, we’re removing financial barriers and strengthening mental health services where they’re needed most.”

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Quote attributable to Member for St. Albans Natalie Suleyman

“As Melbourne's west grows - we're growing the mental health workforce so locals can get the care they need, close to home.”