

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Special Minister of State

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria



Thursday, 23 July 2026

STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP IN VICTORIA

The Labor Government is strengthening leadership across Victoria's mental health and wellbeing sector.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt announced the appointment of Jennifer Black as Victoria's next Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner, alongside Katie Larsen as Deputy Commissioner.

Ms Black is currently the NSW Mental Health Commissioner and brings extensive experience in mental health reform leadership, including as former CEO of the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health.

Katie Larsen is Executive Director Lived Experience at Mind Australia, with a strong track record in advancing lived experience practice and advancing peer-led approaches.

Ms Black and Katie Larsen will commence in their roles on 29 September 2026, until then, Maggie Toko AM will continue as Interim Commissioner.

The Labor Government has also appointed a new Board of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, with Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon appointed as Chair.

The Collaborative Centre Board will include returning members Gill Callister and Sheree Lowe, alongside new members Harsh Bansal, Heather Pickard OAM and Associate Professor Simon Stafrace.

The new Collaborative Centre Board will commence on 2 August 2026.

The Labor Government thanks Maggie Toko AM for her significant contribution in Victoria's mental health reforms.

Under Ms Toko's leadership, lived experience has been strengthened as a cornerstone of reform, ensuring the voices and expertise of people with lived experience are embedded in decision-making and system improvement.

The Labor Government also thanks the outgoing Collaborative Centre Board Chair Gerry Naughtin, Deputy Chair Amelia Walters, and members Professor Lisa Brophy, Dr David Fenn, Associate Professor Bridget Hamilton, Phong Nguyen, and Fionn Skiotis for their leadership and contribution to the Collaborative Centre.

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"These appointments will strengthen our mental health system by ensuring strong leadership, lived experience expertise and a continued focus on delivering better outcomes for Victorians."

Quote attributable to Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner Jennifer Black

"I am honoured to be appointed Commissioner of Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission and look forward to continuing the important work of reforming the mental health and wellbeing service system."

Quote attributable to Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing Chair Kate Fitz-Gibbon

"I'm proud to be appointed Chair of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing and look forward to working with my fellow Board members, lived experience leaders, researchers and practitioners."