

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
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WORK BEGINS TO AMEND COMPULSORY TREATMENT LAWS

An Independent Review Panel has started its vital work to review Victoria's mental health compulsory treatment criteria, to ensure that as the Andrews Labor Government rebuilds the state's mental health system, it supports the dignity and autonomy of people experiencing mental illness.

The Terms of Reference that will guide the Independent Review, were developed by community members including consumers, carers, family members, mental health workers and service providers with experience and connections to Aboriginal, LGBTQI+, disability and multicultural communities.

The Independent Review panel is chaired by former Federal Court Judge Shane Marshall AM and will explore how Victoria's *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act* can be aligned with other decision-making legislation.

Under the Terms of Reference, the Independent Review will look at how the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act* can better promote human rights and support a reduction in compulsory treatment.

Working with Justice Marshall on the Review are mental health advocate and lawyer Erandathie Jayakody, consultant and trainer Flick Grey – who has lived experience of involuntary treatment, family supporter and policy advocate Lisa Sweeney and psychiatrist Professor Richard Newton, a mental health sector leader and researcher.

The panel will begin discussions with a broad cross section of the Victorian community including consumers, carers, families, and supporters, the mental health and wellbeing workforce and peak bodies in early 2023.

The work of the Independent Review finishes late next year and will provide advice and recommendations to the Andrews Labor Government on how the compulsory treatment criteria and decision-making provisions in the Act should be amended to ensure better outcomes for Victorians in our mental health system.

The *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* set out a 10-year vision to reform Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system underpinned by a new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act* which passed the parliament in August.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* invested \$1.3 billion in mental health and wellbeing, building on last year's record investment of \$3.8 billion – the largest single investment in mental health in Victoria's history.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"The work of the Independent Review panel will ensure we have solid foundations for a world-class mental health system that protects the human rights and safety of any Victorian in crisis."

"The Panel's work builds on the progress we've made to provide more robust safeguards and oversights to protect the dignity and autonomy of people experiencing mental illness."