

Joint Media Release



Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Australian Government
The Hon Emma McBride MP
Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health

Tuesday, 10 September 2024

EXTRA LAYER OF FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT ON THE WAY

The Albanese Labor Government and Allan Labor Government are working together to deliver a groundbreaking support program for Victorian adults experiencing psychological distress.

Victorian Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride today announced that Mind Australia and ermha365 have been appointed to deliver the Distress Brief Support Trial in Greater Shepparton and the City of Darebin.

A recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the trial supports people experiencing psychological distress to develop skills to manage their distress and connect them to local services for continued support in the community.

Mind Australia and ermha365 will work closely with key stakeholders, including people with lived and living experience of distress and people from diverse backgrounds, to design a program for adults who could benefit from non-clinical support as an alternative to presenting for emergency hospital-based care, to reduce demand on the health system.

The Victorian trial is a jointly funded initiative, with the Albanese Labor Government contributing \$2.4 million and the Allan Labor Government contributing \$2.6 million.

The Distress Brief Support program trial is anticipated to commence operation by mid-2025 and run until 2027.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"A clinical approach is not for everybody, that's why we want to offer different ways to assist people in need."

"I am proud to announce the new providers for the Distress Brief Support program trial, as it brings us closer to start this crucial service that will help people in manage their distress before they reach a crisis point."

Quotes attributable to Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride

"In finalising the design of the trial the Australian and Victorian Governments have worked closely with people with lived experience of psychological distress and who know the system well."

"Creating the option to support people across a period of 21 days gives us a better chance to make sure people are connected to longer term supports and avoid the need for more acute care."

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