

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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## 10,000 VICTORIANS SUPPORTED BY MENTAL HEALTH LOCALS

Victoria's network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are delivering much-needed support to communities across the state, with more than 10,000 people receiving care over the past two years.

A flagship reform following the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, there are currently 15 Locals that have opened progressively across Victoria since 2022.

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

Importantly, they make care more accessible, with the services available to adults with no need for a Medicare card, GP referral or an appointment.

Care is provided in the most suitable way for consumers with most locations offering face-to-face options via walk in or appointment, phone calls, telehealth appointments, community engagement activities and outreach.

Each location ensures a welcoming and inclusive space and is staffed by qualified mental health professionals including peer support workers to cater for the diverse needs of all communities.

In Frankston, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local is delivered by Wellways Australia in partnership with Mentis Assist and Peninsula Health and has supported more than 1,500 people since it opened in October 2022.

The uptake of the services across Victoria sees more people getting the help they need, thanks to the integrated treatment, care and support they provide closer to home.

Since the Royal Commission handed down its final report, significant progress has been made, with work underway to implement more than 90 per cent of recommendations.

Victoria continues to lead the way for mental health reform nationally, with more than \$6 billion invested in the system over the past three years – the largest investment in mental health of any state in Australia.

For more information on Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal).

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

*"The Royal Commission made it clear that we need to make the mental health system more accessible and that's exactly our Locals provide – free care without the need for a GP referral or a Medicare card."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Carrum Sonya Kilkenny

*"This is an incredible service, staffed by teams of highly qualified mental health professionals who understand the importance of this initial support in reducing the need for more acute care in the future."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke

*"The Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Frankston means people in our community don't need to travel far to get the help they need close to their support networks."*

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**Quote attributable to Member for Hastings Paul Mercurio**

*“We are making it much easier for Victorians to seek out mental health support and these local services provide a welcoming and accessible environment in the community.”*

**Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Tim Richardson**

*“We remain focused on implementing every one of the recommendations of Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System including Locals so Victorians can get the mental health support they need.”*