

# Media Release

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



Thursday, 24 October 2024

## **SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF FAMILIES AND CARERS IN BENDIGO**

The Allan Labor Government is giving local families and carers of people experiencing mental health challenges the support they deserve – with a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre in Bendigo now officially open.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards visited the Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre – a warm and welcoming space that provides locals with the vital networks and support they need to continue caring for their loved one, while also looking after their own wellbeing.

Delivering on a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the network of eight centres are the first of their kind in Australia, supporting the mental health and quality of life of caregivers when supporting someone with mental health challenges, illness, psychological distress or addiction.

There are currently more than 60,000 Victorians providing mental health care to family and loved ones, often a long-term responsibility that is unpaid and without adequate support.

Recognising these challenges that caregivers often face, the centre offers a welcoming and accessible space, available for walk-ins and without need for a referral – giving those with care responsibilities access to a range of services, including information, networks, resources and hardship funds.

Staff at the Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect have their own lived experience of supporting someone with mental health or substance use challenges and understand the needs and circumstances of people who come for support.

The centre is operated by Mind Australia as the lead provider, in collaboration with Mallee Family Care as the secondary partner organisation.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centres are part a \$93 million investment to support families and carers, with Connect Centres located across regional Victoria and metro Melbourne, bringing the Labor Government's overall investment in the mental health and wellbeing system to more than \$6 billion since the Royal Commission report was handed down.

For information on Connect Centre locations, visit: [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-connect](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-connect)

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

*"We are so often focused on supporting those living with mental illness that we forget to check on the people caring for them – caregiving can be a challenging job, so it is vital we make sure carers too are well supported."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan**

*"Family and loved ones play such an important role in our health system, with this new centre helping more local caregivers get the support they deserve close to home."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards**

*"We are making it easier for families and carers of people experiencing mental health challenges to also take care of themselves, with this warm, welcoming and accessible space run by experts."*

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