

Media Release

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



Friday, 21 March 2025

STRENGTHENING VICTORIA'S MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE PIPELINE

The Allan Labor Government is expanding the mental health workforce with a new program to kickstart mental health and wellbeing careers so more Victorians can get the care they need, closer to home.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today launched the \$15.8 million Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals Graduate and Early Career Program to help build a strong pipeline of early career workers in Victoria.

The program will support early career mental health nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, allied health workers, lived and living experience workers and wellbeing support workers to support the Labor Government's commitment to double the mental health workforce by 2031.

People employed through the program will receive hands-on experience in Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals which act as a free and accessible 'front door' to services.

The program's first intake will fund roles at Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals in Greater Geelong and Queenscliff, Bendigo and Echuca, Whittlesea, Frankston and Latrobe with more services to join the program later this year.

In addition to the practical experience gained on the ground, participants will be supported by supervisors and educators to enhance their learning and skill development over the 12-month Graduate and Early Career Program.

These educator and supervisor roles funded through the program will also provide opportunities for more experienced mental health and wellbeing workers to enhance their skills and progress their own careers.

The program has been developed in response to recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, which placed the mental health and wellbeing workforce at the heart of system reform.

The Labor Government has invested \$6 billion in the mental health and wellbeing system since the Royal Commission report was handed down and increased the mental health workforce by 25 per cent between 2021 and 2024.

For more information on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals Graduate and Early Career Program, visit health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-locals-graduate-and-early-career-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system depends on the dedication of its workers – and we're ensuring more people can train, upskill and continue making a positive impact on people's lives."

"Through this program, we are not only strengthening the mental health workforce, but also creating pathways for the next generation of workers to thrive. This is about delivering the right care to the right people at the right time."