

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Victoria



In the next phase of the mental health and wellbeing reform, we will have a greater focus on prevention, promotion and early intervention, so Victorians can access care in the community, closer to home.

Developed in close collaboration with sector partners, The Next Phase of Reform builds on our successes to deliver person-centered care. It focuses on improving service delivery, strengthening our workforce, and promoting mental health and wellbeing.

Visit www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-wellbeing-reform for more details.





Focusing on prevention and promotion

Promotion and prevention are key to achieving our vision for the future mental health and wellbeing system. This priority is about early intervention and programs that improve wellbeing with more supports in the community, so we can shift away from crisis and acute services.

Focus:

Preventing suicide and the onset of suicidal distress

With an aim to reduce the incidence and impact of suicide in Victoria, these initiatives will be delivered in partnership with people with lived and living experience of suicide, communities and other parts of governments.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Launch Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy

2024-2027

Mental Health Improvement Program and adopting the Zero Suicide Framework to improve safety for all

2024-2025

LGBTIQA+ Aftercare service: Co-design model of care; support delivery of interim service

Statewide peer call-back service: Co-design model of care; support delivery of interim service

Distress Brief Support: Commission providers and establish program

2025-2027

Implement Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy

2025-2027

Continued implementation of Distress Brief Support trial

2024-2027

Further programs facilitating suicide prevention and response, including postvention bereavement, Standby Support After Suicide, and gatekeeper and workforce training programs

Focus:

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

The wellbeing program of work aims to strengthen communities and systems that support people to stay well in their communities. It works to remove structural barriers to wellbeing and towards health equity, promoting inclusion and reducing discrimination.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Launch Statewide Wellbeing Strategy

2024-2025

Continue existing social prescribing trials with the first six Local Services and undertake an evaluation

2024-2025

Supporting mental health and wellbeing in Victorian Schools by providing all government schools with the Schools Mental Health Fund to select programs from an evidence-based menu of mental health and wellbeing supports

2024-2025

Delivery of the first 10 Social Inclusion Action Groups

2024-2026

Implement the Victorian Eating Disorders Strategy (first implementation plan)

2025-2026

The Mental Health in Primary Schools program (MHIPS) is expanding across Victoria from 2023 to every government and low-fee non-government primary school by 2026

2025-2027

Implement Statewide Wellbeing Strategy



Focus:

Promoting First Peoples Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Prioritise self-determination and cultural safety, while providing tailored services and care models to meet their unique needs.

Key initiatives:

2024-2027

Growing the Aboriginal workforce

2024-2027

Partnering with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) on social and emotional wellbeing expansion

Focus:

Diversity and inclusion

The diversity and inclusion work, underpinned by a framework and blueprint, has been designed to reform our mental health and wellbeing system so it caters for everyone and has equity embedded within it.

Key initiatives:



2024-2025

Launch Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Blueprint



2024-2025

Continue to deliver Switchboard Victoria's specialised LGBTIQ+ helpline, Rainbow Door

2024-2025

Continued delivery of two-year Diverse Communities grants program with community-led organisations

2025-2026

Implement the Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Blueprint



Growing strong, safe and supported workforces

The workforce is the backbone of our system. This priority is about growing and supporting the diverse, multidisciplinary workforce Victoria needs in the reformed mental health and wellbeing system.

Focus:

Growing the workforce

A focus on growing the workforce so that Victoria's expanded mental health and wellbeing services are delivered through a diverse, multidisciplinary workforce of the right size and composition.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Continued implementation of funded lived and living experience workforce programs

2024-2025

Deliver the Aboriginal Mental Health Traineeship Program

2024-2025

Continue to grow the workforce in rural and regional areas through the Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentive Program

2024-2027

Early Career program helping to establish a pipeline of future skilled workers for Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals

2025-2026

Programs and priorities to grow the mental health and wellbeing workforce, aligned to *Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021-2024* and the *Lived and living experience leadership strategy*

2025-2026

Establish a refreshed 12-month Strategic Action Plan for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy

2025-2027

Continue to deliver the Aboriginal Mental Health Traineeship Program, under the Balit Murrup Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework

Focus:

Safety and wellbeing

A focus on better data collection, improved governance and accountability for workforce wellbeing and expanded wellbeing supports.

Key initiatives:

2024-2027

Continue ongoing monitoring of workforce safety and wellbeing

2025-2027

Implementation of industry trials by WorkSafe to create more mentally healthy workplaces, for completion in 2028

2024-2027

Continue to provide improved supports to build worker safety and wellbeing



Focus:

Workforce capability

A focus on growing the workforce capability for the current and future system.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Sector engagement activities to establish local implementation teams across Victoria under the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework

2025-2027

Continued implementation of programs under the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework, *Our workforce, Our future*, in partnership with the sector

2024-2025

Design workforce capability function of the Victorian Collaborative Centre

2025-2027

Implement the workforce capability function of the Victorian Collaborative Centre

2024-2025

Invest \$15.8 million to expand the workforce with a graduate program to establish a pipeline of future skilled workers for our Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals



Supporting a system that embeds lived experience at every level

Lived and living experience perspectives are critical to ensuring our programs and services meet the diverse needs of those seeking support.

Focus:

Lived experience leadership, workforce & services

The focus will be on the development and provision of specific services, initiatives and entities led by and for people with lived experience.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Deliver a *Lived and Living experience leadership strategy*

2025-2027

Develop and implement delivery model for lived experience residential service (The Healing Place)

2024-2025

Continue working with lived experience partners to prepare for establishment of the lived experience residential service (The Healing Place).

2025-2027

Strengthen capacity and capability of lived experience leadership and workforce

2025-2026

Continue work to establish the Lived Experience Agency with partners



Focus:

Lived and living experience supports

The focus will be on the provision of specific supports for people with lived experience.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Continue to refine and support extension of legal advocacy and new opt-out non-legal advocacy to support consumer rights

2024-2027

Continued service content updates on existing online platform to support lived experience navigation of the system, ahead of website development

2025-2027

Continue work on developing and embedding referral pathways for young carers in mental health and wellbeing services





Delivering new and better services

We are moving the system towards community-based service models, improving options for Victorians and delivering mental health and wellbeing care closer to home. A key focus is to support young people’s mental health and wellbeing across community, hospital and residential settings. These include:

Focus:

Service rollout

Work to deliver and evaluate Local Services will be prioritised. This work is connected to core system re-design and requires strategic support for market creation and infrastructure planning to help the commissioning of service partners.



Key initiatives:

2024-2025

15 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals Services operational and accepting walk-ins

2024-2025

Children’s Health and Wellbeing Locals Services continuing to increase service capacity

2024-2025

Design of Transforming Trauma Victoria, a new statewide trauma service

2024-2025

Led by VACCHO, co-design the establishment of two healing centres and a family-oriented service for infants and children

2024-2025

Continue delivery of Mental Health Hospital in the Home programs, as part of adult and youth bed-based reform



2024-2026

Building an Alcohol and Other Drug residential rehabilitation centre in Mildura

2024-2027

Allocate funding and deliver projects through the Mental Health Capital Renewal Fund 2024-2025 and continue delivery of projects funded through previous rounds

2024-2027

Work with Forensicare to continue expansion of forensic care community model and establishment of new regional forensic mental health teams

2024-ongoing

Delivering more mental health acute beds in Shepparton and undertaking planning for further regional beds

2024-ongoing

Building Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Emergency Department Hubs as part of the Ballarat Base, Frankston and Footscray Hospital projects

2025-2027

Support the Local Services model to mature, progress system-wide reforms and plan for future locations, delivering mental health and wellbeing care closer to home

2025-2027

Continued design and planning for the new Victorian statewide trauma service, to provide specialist trauma informed services and bolster trauma-informed practice across the mental health and wellbeing system

2025-2027

Design and planning for bed-based reforms in Area Services

2025-2027

Evaluation of the service model, system integration and benefits for families, carers, supporters and consumers, for Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centres

2025-2027

Expand social and emotional wellbeing teams through Victoria supported by the Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre of Excellence, the Balit Durn Durn Centre

2026-2027

Commence design and implementation of a service capability framework

Focus:

Supporting mental health and wellbeing of young people

A primary focus is to support young people’s mental health and wellbeing across community, hospital and residential settings. This includes infants and children aged 0-11, their families, and young people aged 12-25.



Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Identify integration and referral pathways between Infant Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services and headspace services

2024-2026

Deliver new YPARC centres in Shepparton, Ballarat, Geelong, Heidelberg and Traralgon and we are upgrading existing YPARC centres in Bendigo, Dandenong and Frankston

2024-2025

Mapping of existing arrangements between Area Services and headspace services for integration

2024-2026

Strengthen the role that headspace centres play as Youth Local Mental Health and Wellbeing Services in the reformed youth mental health system

2024-2025

Completion of the disaggregation of the North-West cluster, including establishing the Parkville Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

2024-2027

Continued implementation and support for three Children’s Health and Wellbeing Locals

2024-2027

Phased implementation of infant, child and youth age streaming with Area Mental Health and Wellbeing service providers



Focus:

Mental health crisis response reforms

Critical work to improve services for people experiencing a mental health crisis, including crisis supports, telephone-based crisis response and community outreach, establishment of new drop-in centres (safe spaces), and a shift towards a health-led crisis response model.

Key initiatives:

2025-2027

Continued design and phased implementation of enhanced mental health crisis responses

2025-2027

Design of youth and adult safe spaces for people experiencing mental health crisis

Focus:

System redesign

The system redesign will focus on working in partnership with service providers and people with lived and living experience to develop and implement consistent, holistic and multi-disciplinary services and clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors across the system.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Continued collaboration with the Hamilton Centre on integrated mental health and alcohol and other drug care

2024-2026

Redesign community mental health and wellbeing services to make them more holistic and to improve consistency across the state

2024-2026

Design a collaborative partnership model between Area Services and NGO providers of wellbeing supports to enable integrated delivery of community-based mental health and wellbeing services



2024-2025

Continue to deliver existing statewide services

2025-2027

Phased implementation of the new access policy with Area and Local Mental Health and Wellbeing providers

2025-2026

Phased implementation of enhanced suite of service expectations for community mental health and wellbeing services to be delivered through the NGO partnership model

2025-2027

Embed diversity and inclusion program in Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and Area Services

2025-2027

Continued design and phased implementation of the NGO partnership model

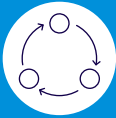
2025-2027

Develop and finalise a capability framework that articulates the minimum requirements for consumers presenting to emergency departments or urgent care centres, including consumers experiencing a mental health crisis

2025-2027

Work with mental health and wellbeing services and alcohol and other drug services to deliver integrated care and support





Providing more support to the system

This priority seeks to support services to learn and improve so all Victorians can access high quality care. With improved performance management and system stewardship we will have the legal foundations and funding reforms in place to support services.

Focus:

Funding and performance management system

Working together with the sector to identify the implications and transition needs for future funding arrangements.



Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Implement activity-based funding models for admitted services

2025-2026

Continue refining policies, standards and protocols for collecting and sharing mental health information

2024-2025

Progress implementation of a Mental Health Information Sharing Framework

2025-2027

Continue transition to activity-based funding and explore further funding reforms

2024-2025

Implement the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Outcomes and Performance Framework* and deliver baseline report

2025-2027

Implementation of the new *Outcomes and Performance Framework*, including further development of measurement and reporting products

2024-2027

Continue developing and implementing key deliverables for the new information communication technology architecture for the mental health and wellbeing system, ensuring information can be shared between service providers

Focus:

Regional governance and supporting complex care

Improving collaboration and accountability through improved regional governance and the establishment of multiagency panels to support complex care.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Finalise work programs of the Interim Regional Bodies

2024-2027

Planning for future regional governance arrangements

2024-2025

Design and planning for mental health multiagency panels

2025-2027

Establishment of multiagency panels

Focus:

System planning

Ensuring statewide system planning and regional service planning is informed by what people need, building on the strengths of our communities.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Implementation of the statewide service and capital plan

2024-2026

Removal of rigid service catchments

2025-2027

Development of regional service and capital plans





Driving cultural change

New system leadership, accountability and a rights-based approach will guide service providers and decision-makers to deliver better and more consumer-focused mental health and wellbeing treatment, care and support.

Focus:

Quality and safety

The Act includes a range of new expectations, requirements and functions ranging from standing up a new oversight body (Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission), to an independent review of compulsory treatment and work to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence in bed-based service settings.



Key initiatives:

2024-2025

The Mental Health Improvement Program, Improving Sexual Safety Initiative, led by Safer Care Victoria, will work with mental health inpatient units to build evidence to improve sexual safety within inpatient units

2024-2025

Provide support for the operations of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, including its focus on holding the government to account for the performance, quality and safety of Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system

2024-2025

Co-design of Aboriginal-led approach to suicide prevention and response, led by the Balit Durn-Durn Centre

2024-2026

Transform mental health infrastructure to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence in mental health settings through gender-based separation in intensive care areas

2024-2027

Support mental health workforce safety reform to identify and address physical safety and wellbeing issues and risks in the mental health and wellbeing system

2024-2027

Through education and training, raise awareness of the new objectives and principles of the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* to help people feel safer in the mental health and wellbeing system, including cultural safety and safety for people from diverse backgrounds

2024-2027

Seclusion and restraint strategy finalised for implementation and targets set for the reduction and elimination of restrictive interventions by the Chief Officer for Mental Health and Wellbeing

2024-2027

The Mental Health Improvement Program will reduce the use and duration of compulsory treatment by collaborating with clinical and non-clinical community teams, incorporating consumer voices, and enhancing the application of safeguards in the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022*



2024-2027

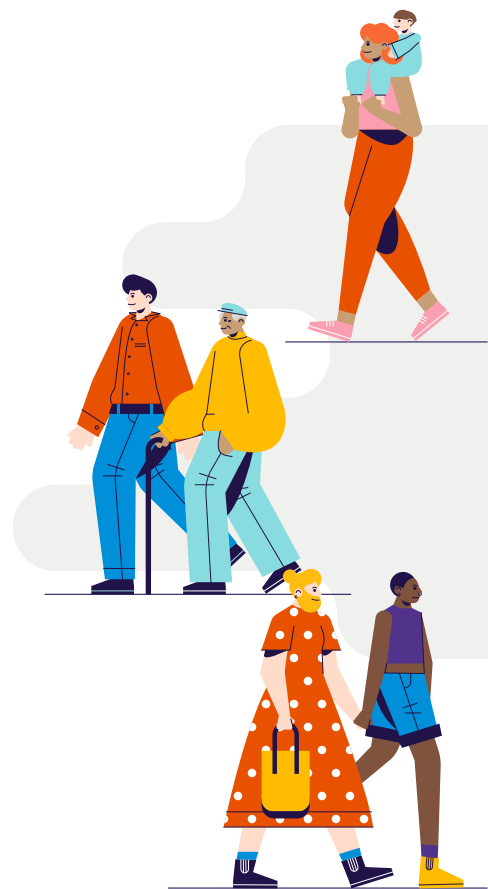
Establish and maintain new system quality and safety architecture across the Chief Mental Health Nurse, Chief Psychiatrist, the Department of Health and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, and mental health and wellbeing service providers

2025-2027

Implementation of reforms to reduce compulsory treatment through guidance, guidelines, training and driving culture change

2025-2027

Continued Aboriginal leadership, empowerment and collaboration to help strengthen mental health and AOD service systems



Focus:

Implementing the Act

The program will focus on supporting the mental health and wellbeing sector and key workforces to understand their obligations and responsibilities under the Act to help deliver services consistent with its objectives and principles.

Key initiatives:

2024-2025

Compulsory treatment criteria and alignment of decision-making laws: provide response to Engage Victoria consultation and final report based on work of independent review panel

2024-2027

Ongoing implementation of the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022*, including engagement with the mental health and wellbeing sector, peak bodies and other partners

2024-2027

Support consumer rights and advocacy by embedding and raising awareness of strengthened rights-based principles and complaint processes across the new system and mechanisms for supported decision-making for people receiving compulsory treatment

2024-2027

Support the Victorian Collaborative Centre to operate and evolve

2024-2027

The Victorian Collaborative Centre will work to promote and improve evaluation practices throughout the mental health and wellbeing system by issuing guidance and facilitating access to evaluation expertise

