



MEDIA RELEASE

Further State–Commonwealth collaboration on mental health to be applauded

Monday 17 August 2020

Mental Health Victoria today welcomed the additional \$31.9 million in funding announced by the Federal Government to create 15 mental health clinics across Victoria, and further expand on available mental health supports during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland said that COVID-19 was having a profound impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians.

“The pandemic is placing further pressure on an already-strained mental health system which makes such initiatives so important at this time,” Mr Clelland said.

The funding will establish 15 dedicated mental health clinics at existing health centres in the community, providing access to on-site support and referrals through a team of multidisciplinary mental health workers including psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers, and alcohol and drug workers. Six of these clinics will be located in regional areas.

Mr Clelland also welcomed the announcement that Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews had agreed to jointly establish a new Victorian Mental Health Taskforce to assist with on-the-ground coordination.

“The establishment of the taskforce will be critical, given that mental health is a dual Commonwealth-State responsibility and it is often difficult for those seeking help to navigate the complexities of the service system,” Mr Clelland said.

“Today’s announcement is another welcome example of federal and state collaboration to focus on the mental health of Victorians at this critical time,” he said.

Mr Clelland said it was important to recognise that, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, both governments had committed to a major reform agendas for mental health as evidenced by the Victorian Royal Commission, Productivity Commission Inquiry, and the Commonwealth Adult Mental Health Centre initiative that will see Victoria’s first centre established in regional Corio in 2021–22.

“We hope that today’s commitment will form the foundation of ongoing funding to support the continued operation of these clinics beyond 12 months and see them become fully fledged mental health centres like the one to be established in Corio,” Mr Clelland said.



“We know that the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians will last for many years and create even more demand for services within the community that can help keep people safe and reduce the need for hospital emergency department presentations.”

In addition, the latest package of funding includes \$5 million to expand digital and phone services for at-risk groups, including people with eating disorders. A further \$2 million will go towards evaluation and further identification of needs.

For further information or to arrange an interview with Angus Clelland, please call Marie McInerney on 0418 273 698.