

Media Release



For immediate release

24 June 2022

Positive change for mental health in Victoria

We are excited to work with the communities in and surrounding Benalla, Frankston, and Geelong to deliver new and improved mental health services for everyone.

We will work together in partnership – local community, alcohol and drug and clinical service providers – to build the first Local Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, a place for people to get mental health and wellbeing support.

Wellways Chief Executive Laura Collister says a range of support and therapies will be available depending on what the local community wants.

“This is a new way of doing things – you’ll be able to access support in the way that you prefer, be it online, over the phone, or in person, and we will be there whenever you need,” she said.

“You’ll get support from people who have a personal experience of mental health issues and recovery too, which we know improves outcomes.

“The support on offer will be what people tell us they need; everyone will be welcome.”

The new Locals that we will build together with the community are:

- Benalla, Wangaratta and the Shire of Mansfield in partnership with Wellways, Albury Wodonga Hospital and the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO).
- Frankston in partnership with Wellways, Mentis Assist and Peninsula Health.
- Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliff in partnership with Barwon Health, Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative, Wellways, and ermha365.

This is a direct response to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System that told us mental health services must improve.

Quotes attributable to Laura Collister, Wellways CEO:

“We’re excited to be working together with clinical services and trusted community providers, to share our know-how and make sure that lived experience is at the heart of this reform. If we want to change the system, we have to work together.

“This is what Wellways was set up to do: develop and deliver lived-experience-led support so people can live life to their full potential in the community of their choice.

“We know that when people remain connected to their community, recovery happens.”



Media Release



Quotes attributable to Terry Palioportas, Mentis Assist CEO:

"The implementation of the recommendations by the Mental Health Royal Commission are well and truly underway. The voices of all those who have participated with the process are now being put to practice. Mentis Assist is extremely excited to be part of this partnership and these new times.



"Lived experience supports that lead to optimum personal recovery and wellbeing is the new Frankston Local."



Quotes attributable to Fiona Reed, Peninsula Health Executive Director Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health, & Mental Health:



"Peninsula Health is committed to providing exceptional mental health services to Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula community. Our new partnership with Wellways and Mentis Assist will ensure we are able to offer different pathways into mental health and AOD supports.



"This increased capacity and diversity of access will mean that people get the right service when they need it most. We are excited by this new partnership and are looking forward to working with Wellways and Mentis Assist for the benefit of our community into the future."

Quotes attributable to Lucie Shanahan, Executive Director Mental Health, AOD & Public Health, and Janet Chapman, Interim CEO, Albury Wodonga Health:

"Albury Wodonga Health are pleased to be part of the consortium delivering the Local Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in partnership with Wellways and the Australian Community Support Organisation"

"A range of support and therapies specific to community needs will be available through the new service. This local support will be available in conjunction with the supports usually offered through our regional mental health service.

"As the service is established, we will be working in partnership with local community, alcohol and other drug and clinical support providers to ensure support is accessible, welcoming and helpful. Our partnership ensures that a person, and their family can receive the supports they need.

"We know that when people with a lived experience – that is, people who have a personal experience of mental health issues and recovery or live and or care for someone living with mental health issues - develop and operate mental health services, the support is always better. This is why we are making sure this ethos is integral to and at the heart of, this new community support service.

"All stakeholders are in an incredible position to shape the future of mental health and wellbeing in Victoria so that everyone is supported and included moving forward.

Media Release



“This is a significant enhancement to local mental health and wellbeing service, stemming from the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System and a key part of the system reform that is underway across Victoria”.



Quotes attributable to Vaughan Winther, Australian Community Support Organisation CEO:



“ACSO is delighted to be a partner with Wellways and Albury Wodonga Health to deliver the Local Mental Health and Wellbeing service for Benalla, Wangaratta and Mansfield Shires.

“ACSO has a long history of successful partnerships providing treatment and support to individuals, in need, as well as their families and carers.



“We know that some people who are experiencing mental health issues will have other concerns such as substance use and that it often means that you have to go to different services to get support for this.



“ACSO’s experience in delivering alcohol and other drug treatment and support will ensure that people accessing the Local will also be able to talk with AOD clinicians and peer workers to get the support they need. We will also be able to provide family and carer support to those supporting others with substance issues.”

For comment contact:

Gerard Reed

Company Secretary and Director, Business Development

Phone: 0414 306 972