

Strategy highlights

- **Supporting participation in the community** through new care coordination arrangements and flexible support packages for people with severe, enduring conditions including innovative supportive housing and employment participation programs.
- **Reducing inequalities** through service redesign and partnerships to provide culturally responsive mental health care for Aboriginal people, migrant and refugee communities, and a more integrated response to people with mental illness and co-existing disabilities.
- **Building a sustainable, innovative workforce** through targeted retention and retention activities, working with the Commonwealth on supply issues and consolidated training opportunities (for specialist mental health and other sectors).
- **Fostering partnerships and accountability** through local planning and service coordination, streamlining components of the mental health service system under common catchments, more transparent and collaborative service governance, and a shared set of priority outcomes.



Implementation

Reform will be implemented through policy and practice change, service development and redesign, and new partnerships. Action to strengthen the workforce and governance is also critical.

The government will appoint a Victorian Mental Health Reform Council to oversee the reform effort. This group of highly experienced individuals will provide critical guidance and progress reports to the Minister for Mental Health.

Accountability will be based on an agreed outcomes framework, outlined in *Because mental health matters* and in a series of action plans developed progressively from the first half of 2009.

Further information on *Because mental health matters* and mental health services in Victoria is available at www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/reformstrategy

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Because mental health matters



Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009–2019 in brief

Mental health problems affect us all – as one in five Victorians who experience a mental illness each year, or as a family member, carer, friend or workmate.

Because mental health matters is the Victorian Government's forward-looking agenda for change and improvement in the way we address mental health in this state.

The strategy builds on the leadership and innovation previously demonstrated by Victoria in mental health service delivery to take us into the next decade.

Developed through wide consultation with service providers, consumers and carers, the strategy will shape policies and services affecting the mental health and wellbeing of the population.

Through action across a range of sectors, we aim to achieve better long-term outcomes for all those affected by mental illness and wider benefits for the whole community.



The strategy vision

Our vision is for all Victorians to have the opportunities they need to maintain good mental health and wellbeing, while those experiencing mental health problems can access timely, high quality care and support to live successfully in the community.

Action to achieve this vision will be underpinned by an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, recovery and social inclusion.

The strategy will foster:

- a more positive, inclusive experience for all consumers of mental health care, together with their families and carers
- greater opportunities to assist children and young people, intervening before problems cause major harm
- streamlined access to specialist care and smooth transitions across a broad range of treatment and support services
- a focus on avoiding crisis and people needing to be acutely unwell before they get help
- sound prevention and mental health promotion efforts in schools, workplaces and other community settings
- vital support to reduce homelessness, family breakdown, offending behaviour, educational disengagement and workforce non-participation.

As a result, mental health will be a more integral part of our overall health and community services system, providing holistic care, without barriers, to many of Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.

Strategy highlights

- **Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing** through health promotion activities in schools, workplaces and other community settings, addressing mental health in government social inclusion programs and reducing risk factors related to alcohol and drug use and suicide.
- **Supporting people earlier in life** through the redevelopment of child and youth mental health services, with a distinct early intervention capacity, and delivery partnerships with schools, early childhood, primary health, and child and family services.
- **Streamlining pathways to care** through new phone advice and referral services, centralised psychiatric triage systems and a more integrated community crisis response involving police, ambulance, mental health teams and hospital emergency departments.
- **Giving greater focus to earlier intervention and relapse prevention**, public/private service partnerships to support a broader range of people, more alternatives to acute inpatient care, particularly for older people, and active promotion of consumer-centred and carer-inclusive practice.
- **Embracing new approaches** to supporting people with mental health problems in the justice system, including court support and diversion programs, and redeveloped prison health services.