

SUMMARY

Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021–2024

A bold vision for reform

A modern mental health and wellbeing system relies on a workforce built and supported by contemporary thinking and inspired by a vision of reform.

Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021–2024 sets out a coordinated and strategic approach to deliver the diverse, skilled and multidisciplinary workforce required for Victoria's reformed mental health and wellbeing system.

The strategy identifies priorities for the future of the mental health and wellbeing workforce, builds on the system's highly capable workforce base to meet the most

urgent challenges, and lays the foundations for implementing recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System to deliver improved outcomes for Victorians.

The Royal Commission's vision for an integrated and responsive mental health system will be realised through the knowledge, skills and attributes of a workforce built and supported to work collaboratively with, and to meet the needs of, Victorians.

In new and existing services, settings and roles, the mental health and wellbeing workforce will shape reform through new ways of connecting, leading, teaching and learning.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting, nurturing, enabling and growing the workforce – this strategy is a major step towards building a sustainable workforce for the future system.

Key priorities

The strategy sets out four priorities for the future of the mental health and wellbeing workforce, along with actions to build the mental health and wellbeing workforce that Victoria needs.

Priority	Action areas	
Priority 1: Building workforce supply	1a: Attracting people to mental health careers 1b: Growing graduate, post-qualifying and transition training pathways 1c: Building emergent and new workforces 1d: Ensuring workforce meets regional needs	
Priority 2: Building workforce skills, knowledge and capabilities	2a: Ensuring education and training meets the needs of the community 2b: Embedding a system wide capability focus 2c: Improving capability through ongoing training opportunities 2d: Ensuring workforce reflects and responds to diverse communities	
Priority 3: Supporting the safety, wellbeing and retention of the mental health and wellbeing workforce	3a: Establishing workforce wellbeing monitoring and supports	
Priority 4: Building system enablers for excellence in workforce	4a: Improving system planning and sustainability 4b: Shaping the workforce for the future	

Principles for workforce reform

Five principles will guide the design and delivery of workforce reforms.



Culture of partnerships, collaboration and innovation

Collaborative partnerships across workforces, organisations, and services and sectors drive seamless transitional care for consumers, as well as career progression and lifelong learning opportunities for workers.



Treatment, care and support is provided by diverse, multidisciplinary teams

Multidisciplinary, consumer-centred care is the standard approach to care, treatment and support, providing opportunities for both specialist and generalist skillsets across disciplines.



Sustainable and responsive approaches to system growth

Changing needs and future growth are planned for by building rewarding and supportive career pathways – from training to retirement – across disciplines, settings and functions.



Reforms support workforce opportunities and satisfaction

System reform and program implementation across all priorities of the strategy encourage and support lifelong public mental health careers by focusing on the needs, challenges and aspirations of the workforce.



Working environments are supportive, safe and rewarding

Victoria's mental health workplaces are attractive, supportive, safe and rewarding, with positive cultures that respect and value workers and build passion for a lifelong career.

Investing in the future of the workforce

The workforce is critical to the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate care to consumers and their families, carers and supporters. The strategy outlines immediate and medium- to longer-term actions against each key priority to address workforce challenges and lay the foundations for change, with implementation of new funded actions to commence from January 2022 on critical stabilising initiatives.

The Victorian Government is committed to reforming the system and workforce and has committed **\$269 million to supporting workforce reform**.

This includes **\$41 million in new initiatives** for *Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce strategy 2021–2024* which will provide **358 full-time equivalent positions** across the mental health

system. These new initiatives build on the **\$228 million** previously invested through the 2020–21 and 2021–22 Victorian State Budgets, which provided approximately **580 new entry-to-mental health positions** for nurses, lived experience workers and allied health roles.

This **\$269 million** investment includes:



Graduate mental health nurses

\$70 million

to support up to **120 graduate mental health nurses** and supporting nurse educators each year



Lived experience workforces

\$40.7 million

to support and grow the consumer and carer **lived experience workforces**, including support for 30 peer cadets each year



Allied health graduates

\$39.4 million

in funding to support **60 allied health graduates** annually, with an additional **41 graduates** and eight educators funded to boost critical supply in 2022



Junior doctors

\$37.4 million

to continue training up to **575** of Victoria's junior doctors in **foundational mental health skills**



Mental health and AOD workforces

\$30 million

annually for workforce development for the mental health and AOD workforces



Allied health and nurse clinicians

\$12.2 million

for a training program for experienced allied health and nurse clinicians to transition into mental health with up to **50 nurses**, **30 allied health** training positions and supporting educator roles funded

Investing in the future of the workforce (cont.)



Rural and regional workforce

\$10.5 million

for the rural and regional workforce incentive program



Students

\$8 million

to provide students the opportunity to work and start building careers in mental health alongside their study



Enrolled nurses

\$4.6 million

for a new enrolled nurse pipeline, with **40 enrolled nurses** and eight educators trained in mental health in 2022



Capacity building programs

\$4.5 million

investment in capacity building programs for the psychiatry training pipeline, including **a new training group**, continued support of **mandatory training placements** and new **Directors of Training**, including for addiction psychiatry and rural and regional services in 2022



Mental health careers

\$3.7 million

to attract people to mental health careers



Postgraduate scholarships

\$1.3 million

for up to **70 postgraduate scholarships**, including 20 to AOD practitioners in 2022 to undertake postgraduate training such as a Graduate Certificate in Mental Health



Capability training program

\$0.6 million

capability training program to implement the Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework

This significant funding boost will support early reform in what will be a ten-year journey – one that is ambitious and builds momentum over time. The work must balance the scale and time required for lasting reform with the urgency required to deal with current system challenges.

This investment is an important step towards a sustainable workforce that is supported to thrive in rewarding and engaging environments, and towards delivering the mental health and wellbeing system that Victorians need and deserve.

Implementing the strategy

The strategy leverages the experience, responsiveness and expertise of the sector to build on proven initiatives, but also to create more opportunities for innovation that will require further collaboration, testing and evaluation – and input from both the mental health and wellbeing workforce and lived experience voices. The Victorian Government will refresh the strategy every two years so it can reflect the changing needs of the system, the community, and of the mental health and wellbeing workforce.

An approach based on learning, innovation and collaboration

Implementation of workforce reforms will be underpinned by collaborative design approaches with the diverse voices of the community, clinical, community, and lived and living experience workforces, and the voices of consumers, families, carers and supporters.

Measuring progress against outcomes

The Victorian Government will deliver outcomes-driven workforce reform. Work is underway to develop a Mental Health and Wellbeing Outcomes and Performance Framework as recommended by the Royal Commission in its final report. This work will allow progress against key outcomes to be tracked, and to measure the impact of initiatives to build workforce supply, capability and wellbeing and of system enablers.

Communicating progress

Regular updates will be provided as these vital workforce reforms are delivered, and regular and ongoing feedback will be sought from the sector. Significant milestones, announcements and opportunities will be shared through the [Department of Health's mental health reform website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-reform) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-reform>>, as well as through direct emails to key partners and stakeholders.

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 650 172, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email [Mental Health Workforce](mailto:MentalHealthWorkforce@health.vic.gov.au) <MentalHealthWorkforce@health.vic.gov.au>.

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