



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Fast tracked mental health support will save lives**

Mental Health Victoria today welcomed the additional \$60 million in funding announced by the Victorian Government to expand community and clinical mental health services across the state.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland said that COVID-19 was having a profound impact on the mental wellbeing of Victorians, both from the trauma associated with the pandemic and the economic repercussions now unfolding.

“Pressure is building in a mental health system that was already in crisis before COVID-19 hit. The effects of the pandemic will be felt for years, that is why the initiatives announced today are so critical,” he said.

In addition to fast tracking more acute hospital beds, the latest package of funding will help boost community mental health service delivery, including through the 15 Melbourne-based headspace centres, with the aim of providing proactive support to known clients.

The package also includes accelerating the statewide rollout of the Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal after Engagement (HOPE) program, as well as providing additional mental health support for nurses, midwives, police and personal care workers.

“The stakes are very high right now, so we welcome the State Government’s continued focus on the mental health of Victorians and the mental health system,” Mr Clelland said.

“Today’s announcement follows the additional support recently announced by the Federal Government that will see funding for helplines and headspace to respond to growing demand from Victorians, as well as additional Medicare subsidised psychological therapy sessions for people subjected to further restrictions in areas impacted by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“We welcome having the Victorian and Federal governments working side by side to support Victorians in desperate need for mental health support. Lives will be saved.”

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