

## Media release - Mind Australia

22 October 2024

### Family and carer-led support service officially opens in Bendigo

Mind Australia and Mallee Family Care are proud to announce the official opening of Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect – a centre providing support for family members, carers, kin and supporters of people with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

Funded by the Victorian Government, the centre provides individual and group based support, tailored information, advocacy, counselling, and access to brokerage funds through Tandem’s Carer Support Fund.

[Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect](#) is a warm and welcoming space that provides people with the vital networks and support they need to keep caring for their loved one while still looking after their own wellbeing.

Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect, which has been operational since May 2023, was officially opened by Victoria’s Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt MP on Tuesday 22 October.

“These centres play an important role in not only promoting a better quality of life for carers, but also offering practical services, including advice and connection to support networks,” Minister Stitt said.

Staff at Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect have their own lived experience of supporting someone with mental health and/or substance use challenges, so they have great understanding of the needs and circumstances of people who come for support.

Mind Australia CEO Gill Callister (she/her) said putting lived experience at the heart of service design and delivery was one of the key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.

“The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System recognises the valuable skills, strengths, and expertise that families and carers develop through their lived experiences of providing support, and Mind commends the Victorian government on following through on this vital recommendation,” Ms Callister said.

“The Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre is providing a much-needed opportunity to utilise and harness family and carer lived experience to support and improve outcomes for other primary carers in the region.

“By listening to carers within the community and identifying the issues that matter, we can create tailored support options so that carers and family members can live their own lives, while continuing to care for their loved ones.”

Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect is for people of all ages and backgrounds who are living in the Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Mount Alexander and Swan Hill local government areas. Support is free and no referral is needed.

Mallee Family Care CEO Teresa Jayet said the agency was proud to partner with Mind to offer a centre for carers in the Mallee region.

“Many carers face emotional, financial, and social challenges. It can also restrict the hours a person is available to work or to enjoy leisure activities,” Ms Jayet said.

“That is why it is crucial that people recognise their caring role and know where to go to access help and advice should they need it.”

Support services are available through walk-in, phone, online and outreach services. Walk-in services are available at 103 Wills Street, Bendigo (Victoria) and 122 Ninth Street, Mildura (Victoria).

The Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect is one of eight new Connect Centres established by the Victorian Government in response to Recommendation 31 of the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.

To find out more about Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect call 1800 979 730 or email [loddonmalleeMHWConnect@mindaustralia.org.au](mailto:loddonmalleeMHWConnect@mindaustralia.org.au)

### **About Mind Australia**

Mind Australia is one of the largest providers of community-managed psychosocial services in Australia with a range of residential, mobile outreach, centre-based and online services.

We provide individualised, evidence-based and recovery focussed support to more than 11,000 people experiencing mental health challenges in Australia every year.

For more information visit [www.mindaustralia.org.au](http://www.mindaustralia.org.au)

### **About Mallee Family Care**

Mallee Family Care is a leading human service provider, supporting the communities of north-west Victoria and far-west New South Wales. The organisation aims to achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, adults and families facing various forms of disadvantage.

For more information visit [www.malleefamilycare.org.au](http://www.malleefamilycare.org.au)

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