

ABN 27 726 220 810

**24 January 2023**

## **MEDIA RELEASE: Family and Carer-led Centres providers announced**

The State Government has announced the providers to run new Family and Carer-led Centres, bringing a major piece of its support program for family, carers and supporters of people with mental health challenges one step closer.

Thanks to a government investment of \$54.5 million, eight Family and Carer-led Centres will open across Victoria during 2023, delivering on a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Centres will be led by staff who have lived experience supporting someone with mental health challenges. They will operate according to a service delivery model co-designed by Tandem in partnership with family members, carers and supporters across the state in 2022.

"Tandem worked with over 300 people across Melbourne and regional Victoria to design a service delivery model around the real needs of family, carers and supporters of people with mental health challenges," says Tandem CEO, Marie Piu.

"It's exciting to be so close to having a Family and Carer-led Centre open in every region of Victoria, with skilled, compassionate and knowledgeable lived and living experience and other workers available to work with family, carers and supporters to understand their needs and provide tailored help and information – things that Tandem has advocated for over many years," Marie said.

The successful providers for the new Family and Carer-led Centres will work in partnership with local agencies. The providers are:

- Gippsland: Wellways Australia (lead) with Satellite Foundation
- Hume: Gateway Health
- Loddon Mallee: Mind Australia (lead) with Mallee Family Care
- South Western: Wellways Australia (lead) with Satellite Foundation and Bethany Community Support
- South East (metro): Star Health (lead) with Connect Health and Community, and Central Bayside Community Health (partners)
- North East (metro): Access Health and Community (lead) with with Self Help Addiction Recovery Centre (SHARC), healthAbility, and Inspiro (partners)
- Western (metro): Jesuit Social Services

An announcement is yet to be made on a provider for the Grampians region Centre.

The Centres will provide a warm and welcoming space available to families, carers and supporters of all ages, with no need for a referral. They will provide information, support, resources and access to funding through Tandem's Carer Support Fund.

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The Centres will be co-designed and co-led by families, carers and supporters, in partnership with peak body Tandem.

Pakenham student, Denna Healy, has cared for family members with mental health challenges since she was 16. She became involved in co-designing the Centres with Tandem in early 2022. She is so passionate about the difference she thinks the Centres will make that she is now studying social work, with the goal of working in one of the Centres one day.

“This is something that I’d envisioned years ago. Hopefully these Centres will lead to more support and opportunities for carers and their families,” she said.

Bendigo mum, Kelly Pagram, has cared for family members with mental health challenges for much of her life. She too is excited about the Centres opening, especially for family, carers and supporters in regional Victoria.

“I am excited by the prospect of a designated ‘space’ where carers and significant support people can feel heard, safe and be supported by people with lived experience. It’s something that’s been needed for such a long time. I’m sure that regional Victorians especially will embrace the new Family and Carer led Centres,” she said

Tandem is proud to be the trusted voice of family, carers and supporters in mental health in Victoria. As the Victorian peak body with a sole focus on the needs and interests of mental health carers, Tandem’s role is to provide leadership, coordination and knowledge for the organisations and individuals who are working to improve outcomes for Victorian people living with mental health challenges.

Joining Tandem is free. Visit [tandemcarers.org.au](https://tandemcarers.org.au)

Call the Tandem Support and Referral Line for free from 9am to 5pm on **1800 314 325** for advice, advocacy, information or support accessing the NDIS or Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing System.

**Media enquires:** Melinda Lucas – 0409 339 275

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