

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**GAME CHANGING DAY HERALDS NEW FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING, AND GREATER EMPHASIS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION**

***Smiling Mind CEO and clinical psychologist, Dr Addie Wootten, weighs in on the state of the Victorian mental health system***

Smiling Mind has supported findings released today from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, specifically those calling for investment in mental health promotion and prevention strategies, and recognising the crucial role technology and innovation can play in fostering good mental health.

The leading mental health not-for-profit welcomed many of the advancements announced today, including prioritisation of social and emotional wellbeing in schools and driving innovation in the mental health system. CEO Dr Addie Wootten, who was interviewed as part of the commission, was particularly pleased to see the findings call for greater utilisation of technology — a tool she has long argued is hugely underutilised in improving Victorians' mental health.

“Overall, today's announcement represents a strong step in the right direction. Smiling Mind has seen first-hand the overwhelmingly positive impact of digitally-led mental health support in schools, homes and workplaces, so to see the Commission recognise the potential of innovation and technology in this space is incredibly promising.”

“There are more phones in Australia than there are Australians. This almost universal access means smartphones are the perfect vehicle to reach more Victorians than ever before and arm them with the knowledge and skills they need to build mental wellbeing and resilience.”

“Smiling Mind has seen record levels of demand for our digital services since the pandemic began, with 1.25 million new downloads of our free app, 1 million wellbeing check-ins and 8.5 million meditations completed in 2020. Our tailored tools for schools, families and workplaces are already used by hundreds of thousands of Australians and provide the Victorian Government with proven, real world examples of how we can immediately deliver on the recommendations in today's final report from the Royal Commission,” Dr Wootten said.

Handing down the Commission's final report, Chair Penny Armytage acknowledged the current system isn't fit for purpose because it has failed to properly invest in preventative mental health and wellbeing.

“The Commission's recognition of the vital importance of mental health promotion and prevention based strategies is a breath of fresh air for our mental health system. With proper government investment in accessible, self-directed tools, we can better integrate Victoria's fragmented mental health system and take the pressure off services that aren't coping by encouraging all Victorians to proactively support their mental health at their own pace, and in their own time.

“Now is the time to not only invest more in preventative mental health approaches, but to get smarter about how we integrate it into people's lives. If the past twelve months have taught



Victorians anything, it's that we can solve any challenge if we listen to the science and innovate when the evidence tells us we must," Dr Wootten said.

- ENDS -

### **About Smiling Mind**

Smiling Mind is a whole lot more than Australia's #1 mindfulness app.

It's a not-for-profit that is helping make future generations happier and healthier through the practice of mindfulness meditation – a proactive approach to maintaining positive mental health.

Since launching in 2012, Smiling Mind has helped 5.9 million people's minds thrive with hundreds of free meditations, activities, tools and resources.

### **Note to editors**

Interviews with Dr Addie Wootten are available on request. For more information, imagery or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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