Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Wednesday, 18 March 2020

MORE HOMELESSNESS AND PUBLIC HOUSING SUPPORT IN COVID-19 FIGHT

Almost $6 million will be provided to Victorian homelessness organisations to help protect Victorians at risk of or experiencing homelessness because of the COVID-19 virus and manage any outbreaks.

Minister for Housing Richard Wynne said it was crucial to provide the most vulnerable people in our communities with the right advice and support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Andrews Labor Government is providing a $6 million funding boost to reduce the incidence of rough sleeping and homelessness and to make sure those with COVID-19, who are experiencing homelessness, have somewhere safe to get well and get back on their feet.

The funding will provide homelessness agencies with extra resources to find temporary housing for those who need it most in both metropolitan and regional areas.

Funding will also go towards private rental brokerage for those at risk of falling into homelessness, helping to keep them in safe and affordable accommodation, and reduce the community transmission of COVID-19.

In addition to this funding, alternative pop-up accommodation will be established for homeless people requiring quarantine or self-isolation in Melbourne, where the majority of cases are currently concentrated.

The Labor Government is making sure public housing communities have the latest information and advice about COVID-19 to help slow the spread of the virus amongst residents – including putting extra staff on the ground in the 13 estates which mainly house elderly tenants, who are particularly susceptible to the virus.

Security, essential maintenance and cleaning service providers are increasing preventative measures across all public housing estates – performing additional cleaning of communal areas, providing anti-bacterial sanitiser, and advising staff on how they can safely maintain service delivery.

These measures will protect our most vulnerable residents and help to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus across Victoria.

For more information visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus or call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 for advice if you are displaying symptoms.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing Richard Wynne

"The COVID-19 pandemic is going to have wide-ranging impacts across our community, but those experiencing homelessness who have nowhere else to go, will be hit particularly hard."

"This funding will help to get a roof over the head of more Victorians, helping to reduce transmission amongst the community and provide those who are unwell with a safe place to recover."

"We're also making sure our public housing tenants have the information, advice and support they need to look after themselves during this pandemic."