

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



Tuesday, 16 June 2020

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS THROUGH CORONAVIRUS

The Victorian Government is giving Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Traditional Owner group networks the resources they need to develop Aboriginal-led, culturally safe responses to coronavirus.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams today announced an extra \$23 million to support Aboriginal Victorians through the pandemic.

The package includes \$10 million to establish the *Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Fund*, to give local organisations the funding they need to develop responses at a local level over the coming year.

The fund provides immediate support – including emergency relief, outreach and brokerage, social and emotional wellbeing initiatives – as well as cultural strengthening and celebration opportunities.

The package also includes \$13 million over two years to meet an increase in ACCO service demand. This will provide support for Elders, homelessness services and stable housing, education support and resourcing for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to provide specialist health supports.

The funding supports self-determination by putting decision-making power back in the hands of Aboriginal communities.

Dedicated funding is also included for Registered Aboriginal Parties to ensure they have the technology and skills needed to continue working remotely and care for Country during the pandemic.

A COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce was set up in April to inform the Government's coordination of services to Aboriginal Victorians, which includes ACCO and departmental representatives.

To support the community, the Government is providing \$35 million for Aboriginal organisations to build, upgrade and maintain social and transitional housing, \$2 million to ACCHOs in wellbeing and social supports, \$287,400 in targeted business support and a further \$100,000 to improve and create targeted health messaging.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to be impacted by coronavirus – whether that's the health impact or its social, economic or cultural implications."

"Aboriginal Victorians know what's best for their families and their communities – that's why we're not only delivering more support but importantly, ensuring they make the call on where and how that support is delivered."