

Media Release

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



Friday, 9 October 2020

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH CORONAVIRUS

The Victorian Government is supporting Aboriginal organisations to lead local responses to the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams today announced more than \$500,000 in grants under the first round of the \$10 million *Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund*.

The Fund – announced in July – was set up to provide support for communities during the pandemic, including emergency relief, outreach and brokerage, social and wellbeing initiatives – as well as cultural strengthening and virtual celebration opportunities.

Four Aboriginal organisations were successful in the first round, including Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative in Geelong, which will receive \$250,000 to provide mental health support and telehealth sessions with Aboriginal children up to 15 years of age.

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited – based in North Melbourne – will receive more than \$185,000 to increase outreach support for those sleeping rough.

In Ballarat, there will be greater access to emergency relief, such as food, clothing and other essentials, for those who need it through the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Corporation.

Another \$44,000 will go to the Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association in Hastings to provide essential items and hampers, but also to hold a special online cultural event so that community members can feel connected to culture and each other.

Further funding will be announced this year as the Fund remains open for applications until the end of November. To be successful for funding, initiatives must respond to local issues and have the support of Aboriginal communities.

The fund is part of a broader \$23 million package announced in July to support Aboriginal Victorians through the pandemic, which included \$13 million over two years to meet an increase in Aboriginal Community Controlled sector demand.

Aboriginal Victorians and Aboriginal organisations are encouraged to apply for funding, with reviews occurring monthly. For more information or to apply, visit aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-community-response-and-recovery-fund.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

“Victoria’s Aboriginal community hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities – in these unprecedented times, that knowledge is crucial.”

“I encourage more Aboriginal Victorians and organisations to apply for funding so we can drive more culturally safe, locally based responses to the pandemic.”

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