

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans



Monday, 16 November 2020

STAYING CONNECTED AND SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting community-based organisations to help build and strengthen connectivity as the state takes the next important steps to move through to the other side of the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Suburban Development Shaun Leane today announced recipients of the \$1.3 million *Let's Stay Connected Fund*, with 39 organisations receiving grants to support and promote connectivity and inclusion in local communities across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Grants of between \$5,000 and \$200,000 will enable community organisations to launch or expand community focused projects that reduce isolation and build community resilience.

The *Let's Stay Connected Fund* has provided more than \$702,000 for projects in metropolitan Melbourne through the Office of Suburban Development and almost \$520,000 has been provided for regional projects through Regional Development Victoria.

Successful projects in Melbourne include the Connecting Junior Gardeners program through Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria. This project will use videos, digital fact sheets and activities to encourage young people to engage in gardening at home and inspire children to discover the health and wellbeing benefits of gardening.

Maribyrnong City Council will create MasterChef Maribyrnong, a livestream cooking demonstration on Saturday nights hosted by seven diverse restaurants in the western suburbs which will share recipes and their stories.

The *Let's Stay Connected Fund* is also funding not-for-profit organisation Weenthunga Health Network to support First Nations women in school, university and work on the path towards health careers. An online platform will help build networks and provide a range of resources to support participants and families.

In regional Victoria, the fund is supporting Mildura's Sunraysia Community Health Services with a Generations Music Together Online program that pairs families with an aged care resident for weekly music making sessions.

For more information about *Let's Stay Connected* go to
<https://www.suburbandevlopment.vic.gov.au/grants/lets-stay-connected>

Quote attributable to Minister for Suburban Development Shaun Leane

"This has been a year like no other and I'm proud that we're supporting our communities through the Let's Stay Connected Fund, and to see how Victorians have come together in so many different ways."

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

"These projects will tackle social isolation and loneliness and strengthen regional areas through digital initiatives to continue and grow community engagement."