



The Hon Ros Spence MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Minister for Youth

Thursday, 20 May 2021

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping culturally diverse communities and young Victorians come together and connect, with new funding to further strengthen our state.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* delivers \$23.7 million for multicultural communities, including support for seniors, refugees and community events. An \$8 million investment will support more than 900 groups across the state through the Multicultural Seniors Support grants program.

This program supports local organisations to hold activities for their members, including excursions, cultural activities, and religious feast day celebrations, and recognises the vast contributions made by our older Victorians.

We believe every Victorian should be able to celebrate and share their culture. It's why this Budget delivers \$4.3 million for upgrades to multicultural community facilities under the popular Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund.

To support critical services for some of Victoria's most vulnerable multicultural communities, \$8.8 million will go towards essential programs that streamline settlement for humanitarian arrivals and support migrant communities.

Importantly, these services bridge gaps left by the Commonwealth – including support for community hubs, legal services and playgroups.

The Labor Government is backing stronger communities through the Multicultural Festivals and Events program, which has seen demand grow by 350 per cent in the past five years. A further investment of \$1.1 million will continue to support communities to celebrate events of cultural and religious significance.

Community organisations and peak bodies will receive \$9.6 million to help diverse communities navigate the mental health system. An investment of \$4.5 million will deliver a mental health and wellbeing framework and a blueprint for action, while \$3.2 million will deliver tailored support for migrant and refugee women.

Building on successful programs to engage young people, the Budget delivers \$14.3 million to continue the vital work of six community support groups that empower young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Le Mana Pasifika Project will receive \$1.7 million to continue its support for Pasifika young people in Melbourne's south-east and west, and a further \$2.4 million will help provide a range of wraparound services, including sport and activities for African young people, trauma counselling and alcohol and other drug support.

The Marram Nganyin Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program will receive \$1.4 million to continue delivering community-led mentoring programs that empower young Aboriginal people across Victoria. Rural and regional services for young Victorians have also been backed with \$5 million, ensuring support is available across our state.

The Labor Government is also supporting disadvantaged and at-risk young people to participate in Scouts and Girl Guides thanks to a \$500,000 boost to expand access.

These initiatives complement longstanding youth programs totaling \$11 million each year, including the FReeZA, Engage! and Advance programs that support young Victorians to build skills and participate in the life of their local communities.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Youth Ros Spence

“These challenging times have shown just how vital our connections to one another are. It’s why we’re investing in the organisations and events that keep us connected.”

“We are proud of our diversity, and we want to make sure that every Victorian is supported as we continue on the road to recovery.”

“Young Victorians have been among the hardest hit by the pandemic. These investments will give them every reason to be optimistic about their future, focusing on skill-building and staying connected to their communities.”