

Media Release

Mr Steve Dimopoulos MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier
Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health



Saturday, 21 August 2021

FUNDING BOOST FOR LGBTIQ+ MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE

LGBTIQ+ Victorians will have better access to free mental health support through a dedicated peer-led helpline service, thanks to a funding boost from the Victorian Government.

Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health Steve Dimopoulos today announced Switchboard Victoria will receive \$7 million to deliver tailored mental health information, support and advice through its Rainbow Door service.

Rainbow Door is a free, peer-led helpline for LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and families. The service provides information, support and referrals across a range of areas including mental health, family violence, alcohol and other drugs, housing, sexual assault, elder abuse as well as general health.

Trained staff provide support via phone, text and email, and the hotline is also connected to a free multi-language interpreter support service – including Auslan interpreters – ensuring it can be accessed by all Victorians.

Originally supported in response to the pressure the coronavirus pandemic placed on Victorians' mental health, continued funding for Rainbow Door was a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Royal Commission highlighted research results from La Trobe University which identified LGBTIQ+ survey respondents reported far higher levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation than the general population.

Many LGBTIQ+ Victorians also told the Royal Commission that they were reluctant to access mainstream mental health services and support due to poor past experiences.

Ensuring that the Victorian LGBTIQ+ community has equal access to the services they need to help them most is part of the Labor Government's ongoing work to achieve equality for LGBTIQ+ communities.

This funding is also part of the Government's largest ever investment in mental health, with \$3.8 billion in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to implement all of recommendations made from the Royal Commission.

More information about Rainbow Door can be found at rainbowdoor.org.au.

Quotes attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health Steve Dimopoulos

"The Rainbow Door service ensures that LGBTIQ+ Victorians can access safe and specialised support from their peers."

"Finding the right kind of support can be hard but speaking with someone who has been through the same thing can make it easier to take that first step."

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley

"Supporting Rainbow Door is just another step forward to helping LGBTIQ+ Victorians having the same opportunities to achieve good mental health as anyone."

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