

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 13 February 2022

BACKING YOUNG LGBTIQ+ VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is standing with young queer, transgender and gender diverse Victorians and their families, with a fast-tracked funding boost to give them better access to vital health and support services.

The recent unnecessary, hurtful public debate around legal protections for young LGBTIQ+ Australians has had a significant impact on their wellbeing and that of their families and loved ones.

Young same-sex attracted people are already five times more likely to attempt suicide – and young transgender Australians are 15 times more likely. That's why the Labor Government is stepping in to provide support where the Commonwealth has failed and subjected these communities to weeks of harmful and divisive rhetoric.

Responding to any additional demand and making sure young LGBTIQ+ people know that in Victoria equality is not negotiable, the Government will deliver a \$200,000 package for local organisations that provide crucial support to the LGBTIQ+ community.

The investment will consist of \$150,000 for the broader LGBTIQ+ community – with \$50,000 each to Switchboard Victoria, Thorne Harbour Health and Drummond Street, and a further \$50,000 dedicated to boosting support for trans and gender diverse Victorians, split between Transcend and Parents of Gender Diverse Children.

This extra support will make sure these organisations can manage any increased demand for their services including counselling and family therapy, referrals and peer supports to ensure LGBTIQ+ young people, their families and carers get the support and guidance they need, as soon as they need it.

In addition to this package, an extra \$15,000 will support Transcend to deliver a social media campaign providing positive messages to trans and gender diverse young people, their families, allies and wider community.

The funding announcement coincides with today's inaugural Melbourne Pride Street party – celebrating Victoria's vibrant, diverse queer community, and follows the Labor Government's release of the first whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ Strategy, which sets out a 10-year plan to improve outcomes for the community across the state.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* has invested \$26.2 million to make mental health and wellbeing services more accessible to diverse communities – including \$7 million to expand Rainbow Door.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"It's pretty simple. All people, whether gay or straight or transgender, deserve support and protection. That is our record - and the Commonwealth government ought to be ashamed."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"The debate this week in Canberra has put our young LGBTIQ+ communities at risk. We're sending queer and gender diverse Victorians a message that in this state, you are loved, supported and welcome to be exactly who you are."

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley

"In Victoria, equality is not negotiable – and we are proud to be supporting a campaign to make sure that if any member of our LGBTIQ+ community needs support, we have their back."

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