

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Foley MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services  
Minister for Equality



Thursday, 31 March 2022

## PEER SUPPORT CONNECTS TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE VICTORIANS

Trans and gender diverse Victorians will be empowered to connect with each other through a significant investment from the Andrews Labor Government for an Australian-first peer support program.

On Trans Day of Visibility, Minister for Equality Martin Foley announced the Labor Government will invest \$2 million towards the Trans and Gender Diverse Peer Support Program delivered by Transgender Victoria.

The Peer Support Program was co-designed by Transgender Victoria and trans and gender diverse communities, following a \$1 million investment in the Victorian Budget 2019-20 and has been operating for three years.

A new report shows that since its inception, more than 1,000 trans and gender diverse Victorians have benefitted from the world-leading program.

It has supported more than 75 grassroots peer support networks that have brought together trans and gender diverse people across Victoria, including groups focused on interests such as rock climbing, writing and yoga.

The program has also produced practical tools, such as a job application guide for trans, gender diverse and non-binary people, to help them find work and enable their meaningful contribution to the broader community.

Unfortunately, stigma and discrimination contribute to trans and gender diverse people experiencing poorer mental health and wellbeing than the broader population.

Peer support programs strengthen the wellbeing of trans and gender diverse Victorians by promoting community connection, championing the voices and experiences of these communities, and building a shared sense of identity and solidarity.

Programs such as this are an important element of Victoria's first 10-year plan for LGBTIQ+ equality, *Pride in our Future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-2032*, released in February. The funding for the Trans and Gender Diverse Peer Support Program is part of a \$6.5 million package to kickstart delivery of this important roadmap for equality.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley**

*"In Victoria, equality is not negotiable. We're proud to be paving the way and ensuring all people, regardless of sexuality, gender, or sex characteristics, have access to appropriate, community-led wellbeing programs."*

### **Quote attributable to Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Todd Fernando**

*"This program shows how our trans and gender diverse communities are leading the way in our diverse rainbow communities by meaningfully engaging to develop and deliver impactful, peer-led services."*

### **Quote attributable to Transgender Victoria CEO Mama Alto**

*"Transgender Victoria is proud to have collaboratively worked with our trans and gender diverse communities to deliver this ambitious and landmark project - and we are invigorated to continue this important work."*