

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

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Minister for Trade



Monday, 4 July 2022

HELPING TO FIND A HOME GIVES PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON A FAIR GO

People leaving prison will be helped to avoid a crisis accommodation and homelessness loop that can lead to reoffending through a ground-breaking program backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

The \$33 million Arc project – named to signify change and new beginnings – will help hundreds of men and women navigate a smoother transition back into society, with experts working with individuals to secure stable housing months before a person’s release.

Arc will help participants maintain accommodation for up to two years while simultaneously supporting them with finding long-term housing. The program’s impact will be measured in recidivism levels, sustained housing success and reduced call on acute services related to anti-social behaviour and offending.

The Labor Government has joined with the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) and Social Ventures Australia to develop the project to give adults exiting the justice system a fairer go.

Arc will boost the capacity of VACRO – Victoria’s oldest and only specialised justice integration service – to provide practical and emotional support to ease the transition of men and women re-entering the community.

VACRO case workers will engage with prison and community corrections staff and clients to develop a viable exit strategy – including safe and suitable housing options – up to three months ahead of a release date.

Portland man Keith was released from prison two years ago after working with VACRO to secure a unit, and credits stable accommodation for his successful reintroduction into his community and completion of his parole.

“Fuzzy” knows the realities of being released from prison into homelessness – but is now living at Correction Victoria’s Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility, has a job and is working towards securing a long-term home.

Arc is the Labor Government’s fifth and largest Partnership Addressing Disadvantage, which enable public, private and not-for-profit sectors to develop new ways of resolving challenging social problems for vulnerable people.

Social Ventures Australia, a not-for-profit working to alleviate disadvantage, will raise investor capital to establish a social impact bond to part-fund the Arc program, in addition to providing development advice and support.

Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

“Rebuilding a life after being in prison is tough, and having stable housing is so important. We need to embrace doing things differently so we get different results – for individuals and the community.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Corrections Natalie Hutchins

“We know the significance of housing in people being able to turn their lives around and reducing offending, and that’s why we’re backing this program.”

Quotes attributable to VACRO client “Fuzzy”

“When I was about to be released from prison, my greatest stress and fear was not having a roof over my head. You can’t get work if you don’t have a place to lay your head down.”

“Now I am in a safe and stable home, the stresses of not being fed or warm, especially in winter, are gone, so I can now focus on other things, like reconnecting with my family, my rehabilitation, and going to work.”

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