

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Equality



Friday, 22 July 2022

COMMUNITY GROUPS MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE IN SMALL TOWNS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting community organisations in small towns to deliver projects with a positive social impact.

Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing today announced the 16 successful recipients of the *Small Towns Big Difference Fund*, backed with \$60,000 from the Labor Government's Mallee Regional Partnership.

Community groups across seven towns will deliver a diverse range of projects covering the arts, the environment, youth engagement and education.

Tyrrell College is among the recipients, and in partnership with local sporting clubs, will host The Resilience Project.

The project will support mental health initiatives in the Sea Lake community for people who are dealing with the impacts of the pandemic and from the sudden loss of key community members.

In Wycheproof, a local youth group will fit out the scout hall for young people and the broader community to have a space for regular catch-ups, while the Nandaly Progress Association will install raised garden beds at its community garden for better accessibility.

Funding will also boost visitor and community interaction in Birchip, with QR codes to be installed across historic sites and tourist attractions, to encourage a deeper appreciation of the town and its nearby attractions like Tchum Lake.

While the towns of the Buloke Shire may be small in population, with an average of 665 people, they're big on community, with high rates of volunteer organisations and activities.

The \$120,000 fund is a Government partnership with Buloke Shire Council, Bendigo Bank and Charlton and Donald Community Banks, and made possible through the Government's *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*.

The Government has made a record investment of almost \$36 billion in rural and regional Victoria since 2015. To find out more visit rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing

"These projects will contribute so much to communities in the Buloke Shire, while encouraging more people to enjoy and celebrate local history and culture."

Quote attributable to CEO Bendigo Bank's Community Enterprise Foundation David Impey

"These projects will help build the capacity of community organisations, grow community pride and increase resilience – helping to build more livable communities in Buloke Shire."

Quote attributable to Mayor of Buloke Shire Cr Daryl Warren

"Congratulations to all of the Small Towns Big Difference recipients who are creating meaningful change and social connections in our communities through these small but significant projects."

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