

Media Release

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BUILDING OUR ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The Andrews Labor Government is building a mental health workforce that provides culturally safe and inclusive care by supporting traineeships and scholarships for Aboriginal people who want to work in the sector.

The Government has invested \$5.6 million over five years to support the *Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Scholarships Program* – providing training courses and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal people who wish to work in the mental health sector.

The program provided more than a dozen scholarships for students attending RMIT and Deakin Universities in semester one this year.

Providing the best quality education and training for Victoria’s mental health workforce ensures the best quality care for all Victorians with mental illness.

Building on the transition from study to work, the Government has also provided more than \$7 million since 2017 for the *Aboriginal Mental Health Traineeship Program* – a specialist course that provides workplace training, while trainees complete placements and mental health qualifications.

The program also allows our mental health services to learn from trainees about Aboriginal culture and gain knowledge and perspective, so they can develop more holistic and well-informed supports and care programs for all Victorians.

The first graduates are now working in an ongoing role with the health service where they undertook their traineeship or as an Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing worker in a local Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation.

Following recommendations made by the *Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System*, the Government has invested a record \$120 million in Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing, including co-design of suicide prevention initiatives, and establishing two Aboriginal Healing Centres.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health and Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

“A mental health and wellbeing system that provides culturally safe and inclusive care ensures the best possible support for every Victorian with mental illness.”

“Our dedicated mental health workers are the backbone of our reformed mental health system – supporting them through study and work is the best way to support every Victorian that needs help.”