

Media Release

Mr Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Child Protection and Family Services
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
Acting Minister for Mental Health
Acting Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Monday, 10 October 2022

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR BUSHFIRE COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting bushfire affected communities across Victoria with more than a million dollars in grants to boost community-based mental health and wellbeing programs.

Acting Minister for Mental Health Colin Brooks today announced \$1.5 million in funding to support community-based programs that provide counselling and social support – helping rural and regional Victorians impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires.

The funding will help services including Mallacoota Medical Centre, Reclink Australia and Alpine Health (in partnership with NESAY Youth Services) continue supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people, adults and families.

Beyond Blue will also receive a funding boost to help train its mental health workforce in border communities. People with lived and living experience will be trained as NewAccess Low Intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Coaches – providing telehealth and in-person support.

Funding for the Upper Murray Regional Neighbourhood House Network and Corryong Health will continue localised care, keeping mental health and wellbeing support accessible and close to home – a key recommendation of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*.

The Mansfield Restart program will also continue treatment for those experiencing co-occurring mental health and drug issues, including partnerships with GPs and local governments for complete, wraparound care for the most vulnerable.

The Labor Government has now delivered more than \$24 million since 2020, as part of the bushfire mental health response and recovery. The bushfire mental health funding continues to provide mental health support and services in impacted communities while the Royal Commission's recommendations are fully implemented.

Work is underway on more than 90 per cent of the Royal Commission recommendations, with \$1.3 billion in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* building on last year's record \$3.8 billion investment – the single largest investment in mental health in Australia's history.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Colin Brooks

"We haven't forgotten how tough it's been for Victorians in bushfire affected communities and mental health support for people living in those areas will always be a top priority."

"While work is underway to meet the Royal Commission's recommendations, we're supporting the training of new mental health coaches in regional communities to ensure Victorians are supported in every way possible."