

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



Saturday, 21 January 2023

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN FLOOD-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting more women affected by the devastating flooding across Victoria last year.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today announced \$1.2 million will be invested into four key women's health services to help women recover from the flood events.

The funding will be split evenly across the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, GenWest, Women's Health Loddon Mallee and Women's Health Goulburn North East – which have all played a critical role in supporting women through disasters.

Evidence shows women take on more of the emotional and psychological burden during and after disaster and are more likely to prioritise the care of others at the expense of their own physical health, social and mental wellbeing.

Women also recover at a slower rate than men from major economic losses during disasters – with women more likely to be expected to sacrifice their paid work to take on increased unpaid caregiving for vulnerable family members and children.

The funding will allow the women's health services to provide tailored and targeted support programs to help women most at risk from the floods. Research will also be conducted on the needs of migrant and refugee women affected by disasters and translated into a best practice guide for service providers.

Evidence-based resources to support disaster response and recovery in areas with migrant and refugee communities will also be developed, along with training workshops to bilingual health educators and health promotion workers on providing mental health support after a disaster.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"We know women take on more of the emotional and psychological burden during and after disasters – putting them most at risk of mental distress and social isolation."

"Recovery takes time – which is why we're continuing to support women that have been affected by the widespread flooding across Victoria through this funding boost."

"The tailored mental health and social support programs will be crucial to ensure women get the help they need to recover."

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Lizzie Blandthorn

"This funding will ensure more women affected by the devastating flooding across Victoria last year get the vital mental health and social support they need."