

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Thursday, 18 May 2023

MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM EXTENDED

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting for some of our most vulnerable Victorians experiencing homelessness ensuring they have access to integrated supports and access to the mental health care they need.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today announced close to \$10 million to support four organisations over the next four years through the Labor Government's Social Inclusion Mental Health Support Services program.

The four organisations receiving the funding boost are St Mary's House of Welcome, Uniting Vic.Tas, Jesuit Social Services Connexions, cohealth in partnership with the Inner West Area Mental Health Service and Launch Housing.

The St Mary's House of Welcome Mental Health Support Services program provides practical assistance such as a meal, access to a shower, clean clothes as well as providing mental health, psychiatry, social supports and referrals to access specialist mental health and community health supports.

The program partners with Clarendon Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service at St Vincent's Health, and Mind Australia for mental health supports for people who are experiencing co-occurring substance use issues and mental illness. This program provides more than 100 referrals to health and other welfare services each month.

St Mary's House of Welcome will also receive an additional grant of \$120,000 to assist with capital building costs for the building – which opened nearly 63 years ago.

The *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* found that integrated and wrap-around care is critical for the wellbeing of our most vulnerable communities. Connecting people with mental health supports directly through established and trusted social services is providing the best possible care when and where it's needed.

Almost \$6 billion has been invested in mental health and wellbeing over the past three years – the largest investment in mental health in Victoria's history – with work underway on 90 per cent of Royal Commission recommendations.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

"We're helping St Mary's House of Welcome, Uniting Vic.Tas, Jesuit Social Services and cohealth continue vital work to support vulnerable Victorians and their mental health."

"People experiencing homelessness face some of the toughest mental health challenges, as well as the most difficult barriers to accessing care – this funding is making sure there are welcoming services providing this critical support."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Enver Erdogan

"St Mary's House of Welcome is such a critical and valued service for our community, and we're ensuring it can keep providing essential services for those who need it."