

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 20 September 2023

DELIVERING A DIVERSE AND ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

The Andrews Labor Government is building a mental health system that is accessible to every Victorian – introducing tailored support for people with disabilities, and multicultural, multifaith and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams today announced close to \$12 million to upskill Victoria’s mental health workforce and support community-led services – ensuring all Victorians receive appropriate mental health support, when they need it.

The *Mental Health Workforce Capability Projects for Diverse Communities* initiative will establish a two-year partnership with National Disability Services, cohealth, Rainbow Health Australia and other mental health and wellbeing providers to help the workforce deliver more welcoming and inclusive services.

Aiming to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of mental health practitioners, the partnership will see these organisations either co-design new education programs and resources or utilise existing programs to ensure the broader workforce is equipped to care for diverse communities.

Existing programs include Rainbow Health’s Rainbow Tick – a world-first framework helping health organisations support the LGBTIQ+ community, with a tick awarded to signal they are a safe, inclusive and affirming service.

Continued investment to upskill and broaden the abilities of the mental health workforce also continues with the next round of the Labor Government’s *Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants* now open.

Part of a total \$9.6 million investment over four years, the \$4.4 million in grants will provide funding for community-run organisations to develop and deliver new projects that will improve mental health outcomes for diverse groups.

To be successful, grant applicants will need to showcase that their idea engages with one of four areas:

- The mental health system and services – building their capability in servicing diverse communities
- Communities and people, especially hard to reach groups – increasing their access to support
- Government’s reforms and transformation of the system – strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion
- Non-health settings – benefiting diverse communities in those places e.g., workplaces, custodial settings

The Labor Government is continuing its reform of Victoria’s mental health system, investing more than \$6 billion since the *Royal Commission in Victoria’s Mental Health System* handed down its report – work is underway on 90 per cent of its recommendations.

Applications for the second round of the *Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants* close Wednesday, 1 November. To apply, please visit: health.vic.gov.au/diverse-communities-grants-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams

“We know that people from diverse communities are at greater risk of mental health challenges and may face barriers accessing the right support – that’s why we are building an inclusive, responsive and culturally safe system for all.”

“Our workforce initiative and grants program will ensure service providers and community-led organisations can deliver compassionate and appropriate mental health services and programs for everyone in the community.”

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