

# Media Release

**The Hon Harriet Shing MP**  
Minister for Housing  
Minister for Water  
Minister for Equality



Wednesday, 6 December 2023

## **BALLARAT QHUB WELCOMES LGBTIQA+ YOUTH**

The Allan Labor Government is funding a safe new space in Ballarat for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) Victorians and their families to get support and connection.

Minister for Equality Harriet Shing congratulated QHub Ballarat on officially opening its doors in Ballarat's health services precinct, with the service now able to take referrals for local LGBTIQA+ youth across the region.

Co-designed with communities, the hub will be a central, safe, affirming and inclusive space for LGBTIQA+ youth aged up to 25 from Western Victoria, providing access to crucial mental health support, social connection opportunities and wellbeing activities.

QHub is a Labor Government-funded LGBTIQA+ youth mental health and social connection program delivered in partnership with Drummond Street Services Queerspace, Wellways and Cafs Ballarat.

QHub Ballarat is the first of two physical QHubs to open as part of the initiative, which will also provide online support, boosting inclusion for LGBTIQA+ youth across regional Victoria, with the second in Geelong for the Surf Coast in the new year.

The Labor Government announced an investment of \$3.2 million to deliver the *LGBTIQA+ youth safe spaces for Western Victoria* grant program in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

Victoria's first LGBTIQA+ strategy, *Pride in our Future*, recognises that increasing mental health support and safe spaces for young LGBTIQA+ people is vital, with young rainbow people especially in regional communities at higher risk of suicide and negative mental health outcomes because of discrimination.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Harriet Shing**

*"Young members of our rainbow communities in regional areas deserve to have access to the best LGBTIQA+ supports and opportunities, and this new safe space in Ballarat is about creating just that."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle**

*"The delivery of safe spaces for LGBTIQA+ young people in Western Victoria will provide greater access to targeted mental health and wellbeing support closer to home, a key priority of Victoria's landmark Pride in our Future strategy."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison**

*"With the new QHub space in Ballarat, young LGBTIQA+ people from across Western Victoria will now have access to a dedicated safe space that will open up new doors of support for them and their families."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett**

*"We know that tragically LGBTIQA+ Victorians are far more likely to experience mental health issues due to social stigma and discrimination, which is why the services provided by QHub will be so important for our region."*

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