

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Friday, 8 March 2024

BOOSTING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Organisations supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of diverse communities across Victoria have been given a funding boost by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced the 20 recipients who will share in \$4.2 million in the second round of the *2023-25 Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program*, including organisations supporting multifaith, multicultural and LGBTIQ+ communities, and people living with disabilities.

Victorians from diverse communities are often at greater risk of mental health challenges and can experience difficulty navigating and accessing inclusive, responsive and culturally safe services – this program acknowledges the critical role these organisations play in supporting these groups.

Established in response to a key recommendation from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*, the grants are also ensuring diverse communities are a key part of Victoria's nation-leading mental health reforms.

One of these organisations is Afri-Aus Care, who will use its \$235,000 grant to run a specialist mental health program supporting African Australian communities in Melbourne's south east – including South Sudanese (Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk), Somali, Ethiopian, and Malawian communities.

The program will run for two years and is aimed at removing stigma and cultural taboos surrounding poor mental health. Its roll out will see culturally appropriate programs and educational material delivered to address disengagement from mainstream services to ensure better mental health outcomes.

Another recipient – Youth Programs Limited who supports LGBTIQ+ Victorians living with a disability – was awarded a \$240,000 grant for its Rainbow Holistic Outreach Program.

Specifically targeting young people aged 12-24 with autism, ADHD and other psychosocial barriers, the program will foster inclusion and provide essential support for re-engagement, including accessing employment and education.

The grants are part of the Labor Government's \$9.6 million investment over four years to establish a flexible funding pool for diverse community organisations and peak bodies.

This builds on the record investment of more than \$6 billion investment into Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system over the past three years, with work underway on more than 90 per cent of recommendations from the Royal Commission.

For a full list of grant recipients visit [mental-health-wellbeing-reform/diverse-communities-grants-program](https://www.vic.gov.au/mental-health-wellbeing-reform/diverse-communities-grants-program).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"Sadly, we know that for people from diverse communities the mental health system has historically been difficult to navigate – it's why this funding is crucial, helping these organisations support more Victorians."

"Culturally safe and appropriate mental health support can assist in engaging people who may not seek help otherwise – it is this inclusive and responsive approach that is driving our system-wide reform."

Media contact: Liam Mcallister 0488 771 334 | liam.mcallister@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Full list of second round recipients:

- Flat Out
- Youth Projects Limited
- Three for All Foundation
- Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
- Candella
- YACVIC (YDAS)
- Guide Dogs Victoria
- Autism Spectrum Aus
- Amaze
- Deaf Victoria
- Young People's Health Service (YPHS)
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Bachar Houli Foundation & Korin Gamadji Inst.
- Muslim Mental Health Professionals
- Pathways Melbourne
- Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council
- Shapes and Sounds
- Afri-Aus Care Inc.
- African Australian Welfare Bureau Inc.
- Victorian Refugee Health Network