

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 2 July 2024

WRAPAROUND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE CBD

More Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness in the CBD will get the support they need thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Housing Harriet Shing today announced a new pilot site for Aboriginal people experiencing or at risk of homelessness will be established on Bourke Street in partnership with Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation and the City of Melbourne.

Ngwala will take over a City of Melbourne building on Bourke Street to deliver homelessness outreach services and they will also use the site to deliver a specialist Aboriginal homelessness entry point service. The site will operate from Tuesday to Saturday and will enable vulnerable communities to access essential housing and support services.

Underpinned by a self-determination model, Ngwala will offer a multidisciplinary response providing specialised support for Aboriginal people. This service addresses a significant gap in the delivery of support services.

Up to 15 per cent of people experiencing chronic homelessness identify as Aboriginal – despite only making up 0.5 per cent of the CBD's population.

Ngwala received more than \$4.5 million in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* to fund a range of Aboriginal-specific homelessness programs including their outreach van, operating around the CBD and St Kilda offering support to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and to continue the work of their Aboriginal entry point in St Kilda.

The Labor Government is investing nearly \$197 million through the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* into frontline homelessness services to help more people experiencing homelessness.

In addition to this the Labor Government recently delivered an extra \$8.2 million for frontline homelessness services across the state. This funding will be provided to a range of services to enable them to continue operating entry points, outreach services and offer wraparound supports to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Quote attributable to Minister for Housing Harriet Shing

"This partnership will provide safe wraparound support services right in the middle of Melbourne's CBD, enabling First Nations people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to access a wide range of allied services, and providing them with safe and supportive care when and where they need it."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty & First Peoples Natalie Hutchins

"Aboriginal Victorians are over-represented in the homeless population in Melbourne's CBD. Building systems of culturally safe and appropriate support is essential if we want to improve outcomes for vulnerable Victorians, including our Aboriginal communities."

Quotes attributable City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece

"The Ngwala 12-month pilot will operate from a Council-owned building in Bourke Street, establishing a presence and contact point for Aboriginal people, the first of its kind in the CBD."

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