

Community Connectors Program



The Victorian Government is establishing a Community Connectors program to employ teams of local residents that will act as a 'connector' to link people at their doorstep to preventative and early intervention health and social services.

The program is an \$8.5 million additional investment from the Victorian Government. Community health providers will be funded to deliver initiatives that respond to the needs and issues most relevant to local communities.

Local residents will be employed from the communities which it seeks to serve, in many cases continuing employment that has been supported during the COVID-19 emergency.

The program will build on the lessons learnt and successes of the High Risk Accommodation Responses (HRAR) program funded by the Victorian Government to assist residents to access vaccinations, testing and actively linking people to health and social supports via community health services. The HRAR program demonstrated the critical role that residents and local communities play in health prevention outcomes, and the employment pathways that form part of these partnerships.

The Community Connectors initiative will continue these aspects and bring a stronger focus on health promotion and access to health services and broader social care services.

Key program features

The Community Connectors program will be delivered by community health providers across both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

The program will specifically work in high-rise public housing communities across metropolitan Melbourne. In outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, the program will focus on areas with large proportions of public housing communities and other sensitive settings such as rooming houses and caravan parks.

Employing local residents such as public housing tenants is a critical feature of the program to build trust and capacity in local communities. This program includes training for Resident Workers to develop transferable skills and support future employment pathways into community health or social support/care roles or other sectors.

By leveraging existing community connections and embedding resident voice into the community health partnerships, the program will increase access to health services and improve specific health and well-being outcomes amongst communities.

The program will also connect residents to social care services where relevant, such as family violence, child and family services, financial aid and food relief. This will ensure that people's needs are identified and responded to early, avoiding people ending up in crisis and requiring more costly responses.

Locations and focus areas

Areas with high concentrations of public housing and other at-risk accommodation settings will be the focus for the program to improve connections with community health and social care services.

The program will support public housing high-rise communities in South Melbourne, Flemington, North Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood, North Richmond and South Yarra.

The program will also include a mobile service to areas in need including public housing and other at-risk settings such as rooming houses and Supported Residential Services in outer metropolitan locations and in regional areas such as Shepparton, Latrobe Valley, Ballarat, Geelong and Mildura.

What's next?

The priority health and wellbeing outcomes for the Community Connectors program will be designed in consultation with community health services, peak bodies and local resident groups.

Homes Victoria will be working directly with community health services already in place in high-risk public housing settings to enable continuity in current employment of public housing residents.

The community health providers for the mobile connector teams will be determined in the coming weeks through an expression of interest process.

The Community Connectors program will be rigorously evaluated throughout the 12 months of the program to assess the impact the program is having on health and wellbeing outcomes.

Contact Homes Victoria

For general enquiries you can send an email to enquiries@homes.vic.gov.au or call us on 1300 650 172 (local call in Victoria). If you are interstate, overseas or on a mobile, please call (61 3) 9096 0000.

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