

## Funding to protect mental health and AOD services welcomed

23 September 2020

Mental Health Victoria has welcomed the Victorian Government's announcement today of \$21 million in funding to ensure mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, have increased COVID safe protections in place.

Mental Health Victoria a/CEO Larissa Taylor said the government's investment would allow services to put measures in place to better protect workers so that they can safely provide vital supports for people during these difficult times.

"This investment is a result of feedback provided by community sector services – we commend the government for listening to and responding on such a critical need during the pandemic," she said.

The funding includes increased hourly rates and retainers so staff do not need to work across multiple sites, grants for minor infrastructure upgrades such as installing sensor taps or air conditioning, and support for increased cleaning and sanitation capacity.

Ms Taylor also welcomed a \$1 million allocation to extend operating hours to support access for clients after hours.

"Removing barriers to access services is vital given the many other issues that consumers and carers are currently struggling with and the surge in demand for services, including from many people who have never before accessed the mental health system" she said.

As well as welcoming this latest announcement, Mental Health Victoria acknowledges the nearly \$200 million already invested by the Victorian Government in mental health support through the pandemic, to respond to increased demand for mental health supports and to fast-track the recommendations to date from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

*For further information or to arrange an interview with Ms Taylor, please call Marie McInerney on 0418 273 698.*