

## Bright Futures grants give young people the chance to shine

VicHealth is providing more than \$400,000 in grants to support the resilience, social connection and mental wellbeing of Victorian youth.

Twelve new projects connecting councils, community and young people will receive funding through VicHealth’s Bright Futures for Young Victorians Challenge.

Projects awarded funding include an initiative to create a youth space focusing on job opportunities, development of a community story telling pop-up booth and a new program aimed at young dads who are at risk of losing connection with their children due to disadvantage.

The Bright Futures Challenge aims to build resilience in young people and grow social connection within their communities. The projects supported through the Challenge will trial preventative strategies to equip young people to better cope with challenges they may face.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter announced the grant recipients today (10 October) on World Mental Health Day.

“World Mental Health Day importantly encourages people to seek help and like our Bright Futures Challenge, aims to foster social connection through communities,” Ms Rechter said.

“Almost 75 per cent of mental illnesses commence before 25 years of age so it’s crucial we take a preventative focus and proactively work to build resilience.

“Research shows young Victorians with strong social and support networks are less vulnerable to depression and better able to cope with the ups and downs of life.

“VicHealth wants to get 200,000 more Victorians to have a greater level of resilience and connectedness by 2023 and the Bright Futures Challenge is an important part of this.”

VicHealth’s 2016 Community Attitudes Survey of more than 3000 Australians demonstrated the importance of social connection with a majority of respondents listing positive relationships with family and friends (58% and 57% respectively) in the top three issues impacting people aged 12-17 years.

The recent VicHealth-commissioned CSIRO [Bright Futures report](#), released last year, identified [five key megatrends](#) that would impact the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the next 20 years. These include an increasingly competitive job market, the continued rise of digital technology, diversification of the population and workforce, and over –exposure to online content.

The research provided an important opportunity to get on the front foot on a range of issues impacting young people into the future and formed part of VicHealth’s Mental Wellbeing Strategy.

Funding for the Bright Futures Challenge is for a one-year period. Projects that demonstrate the greatest potential during the pilot phase may be offered further funding.

Successful recipients of the VicHealth Bright Futures grants are listed below. More information can be found at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/brightfutures](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/brightfutures)

PROJECT	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
<b>My Journey</b> – online youth jury	City of Melbourne
<b>We know your name, but not your story</b> – collecting and telling stories	Corangamite Shire Council
<b>Wired into the Warra</b> – a virtual youth space, including job opportunities and homework support	Gannawarra Shire Council
<b>Band Mates</b> – connects people and volunteers to attend music gigs together	Maribyrnong City Council
<b>Safe and Supported in Cardinia</b> – support for same sex attracted, sex and gender diverse	Cardinia Shire Council
<b>Dad Space</b> – helping young dads retain a connection with their children	Wyndham City Council Youth
<b>The art of belonging</b> – providing a connection to a local place, including art workshops	Yarra City Council
<b>Green Valley Garden</b> – keeping disadvantaged secondary students in school	Latrobe City Council
<b>Upstart and Uplift</b> – social enterprise to enhance young peoples’ skills and confidence	Brimbank City Council
<b>The Moreland Youth Movement</b> – empowering young people to have a voice in their community	Moreland City Council
<b>Understanding Reality</b> – sharing information on current issues, and de-stigmatising mental health conditions	Hindmarsh Shire Council
<b>Youth-Friendly Employer</b> – support network for job-seekers	Moonee Valley City Council

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