

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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***New partnerships put young people at the centre of health solutions***

Health promotion foundation VicHealth has announced a new partnership with 7 youth organisations, focused on building back a better, healthier and fairer Victoria for children and young people.

The 7 organisations will work alongside VicHealth to put young people at the centre of health solutions during and beyond the coronavirus pandemic – particularly in supporting young people to access healthy food, stay active and feel connected to others in their community.

The partnerships with [Berry Street](#), [Centre for Multicultural Youth \(CMY\)](#), [Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria \(ECCV\)](#), [Koori Youth Council](#), [Minus 18](#), [Youth Affairs Council Victoria \(YACVic\)](#) and [Youth Disability Advocacy Service \(YDAS\)](#) will be critical in shaping health initiatives that deliver for young Victorians.

Since the pandemic began, many young people found themselves feeling disconnected from their communities and struggled with the indirect health impacts of the pandemic.

VicHealth CEO Dr Sandro Demaio said working with youth organisations is crucial to better understanding young people's needs and ensuring their voices are heard in developing solutions.

"We know that young people have been significantly impacted during the pandemic and have great ideas for the solutions needed to improve their health and wellbeing," Dr Demaio said.

"These new partnerships will put young voices front and centre. We don't want to tell young people what we think they need; we want to hear their thoughts and ideas and work collaboratively to identify solutions".

"Through the partnerships with these 7 youth organisations, we will create safe and inclusive spaces for constructive and candid conversations."

Martin Isidro, a member of the Intercultural Young Advocacy Leadership Group at Ethnic Communities Council Victoria (ECCV), is passionate about ensuring young people's voices are being heard.

"I think young people really want to be in the room when decisions are being made about our own health and wellbeing, whether that's contributing or just listening and knowing what information is going into those decisions," Isidro said.

"I think we also want to be valued and acknowledged for the contributions we make to our communities. I think we're a compassionate generation and want to contribute to our own health and that of our community.

"I think we know what we want. We want to be reassured that things will be ok. We're innovative and we're willing to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve better health, or better outcomes, for everyone," he said.

By working with a range of youth partners, VicHealth will listen and work with young people with diverse lived experience, including young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ young people, young people living with disabilities and those from regional areas.

Take a look at the importance of this partnership – [click here](#).

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