

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$3.9m to support healthy Vic communities in COVID-19 recovery

460 local organisations across Victoria will share in more than \$3.9million in VicHealth grants to support their communities to connect socially, get active and access healthy, affordable food in the new COVID-normal.

The Reimagining Health grants come as new data reveals how the second coronavirus wave has indirectly affected the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

A survey of 2,000 Victorians shows many struggled to connect socially and to be physically active, but on a positive note, many wanted to be more involved with their community once the pandemic eased. The data shows that during the second wave:

- 1 in 3 Victorians were worried about their loss of social connection, with 2 in 5 finding it hard or very hard to stay connected to friends and family
- 3 in 4 who attended fitness classes stopped attending, while 3 in 5 who attended arts groups also stopped going along
- 1 in 2 school-aged kids were less active
- However, more than 1 in 2 wanted to get involved in a community group or club once restrictions eased, and;
- 1 in 5 ate more veggies, for most it was because they were cooking more.

VicHealth CEO Dr Sandro Demaio said the newly funded projects would empower communities to build back better.

“As we approach 2021, local organisations will be key to ensuring Victorians of all ages and backgrounds can reconnect with others, get active and access affordable, healthy food,” Dr Demaio said.

“Many Victorians have emerged from the second wave eager to be more involved in community activities, so we’re excited to support 460 local organisations to continue their important work.

“Our Reimagining Health grants will help a wide range of community groups, including sports clubs, arts organisations and youth groups, bring to life innovative locally-led and owned projects which support the health and wellbeing of those hardest hit by the pandemic.”

Among the grant recipients is United Through Football, a local organisation which aims to support and engage young people from public housing estates, including the 9 in North Melbourne and Flemington locked down in July. The organisation will receive a \$50,000 grant to offer sport and social activities in 2021.

Ahmed Dini from United Through Football is looking forward to getting more families involved in fun activities with this funding.

“This funding will make a huge impact on the public housing residents impacted by COVID-19, particularly among African communities,” Mr Dini said.



“Our summer programming will enable fun and social interaction through football and basketball tournaments. We also plan to offer other recreational activities, like camping, swimming, horse-riding, go-carting and ice-skating. We aim to build community capacity and give young people as well as their families some hope and civic pride after what they have endured throughout the pandemic.”

Other funded projects include establishing a network of chatty cafes in Ballarat to help locals combat isolation, supporting a rugby club to introduce fun cooking and nutrition classes and providing young people with upcycled bikes plus the skills to ride and maintain them. View the full list of projects here: vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/reimagining-health-grants

About the VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study: [Follow-up survey](#)

Around 2,000 Victorians were surveyed in September 2020, during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. This survey is the second in a series, following the initial *VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study* conducted between March and May 2020, during the first wave. Learn more at vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/vichealth-coronavirus-victorian-wellbeing-impact-study-follow-up-survey