

MEDIA RELEASE



New VAC campaign to address risky drinking behaviours amongst LBQ women in regional Victoria as part of VicHealth initiative

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 JULY 2017 - Through VicHealth's [Alcohol Culture Change Initiative](#), the Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) will be leading a two-year project to address potentially risky drinking behaviours amongst lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women living in regional Victoria.

Aimed to increase social support for low-risk drinking and reduce the impact of alcohol, the project will receive over \$200,000 to develop and implement a health promotion campaign aimed at creating a culture of support and encouragement to reduce risky drinking in four regional areas of Victoria including Bendigo, Ballarat, Morwell, and Geelong.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said, "We know that one-size doesn't fit all – Victoria is a diverse state with many drinking cultures. These new projects will target groups of people most likely to drink at risky levels."

VAC CEO Simon Ruth said, "We know that drinking behaviours amongst same sex attracted women pose considerable risks to their ongoing health and wellbeing. This funding will allow us to expand upon our existing services to reach those women in regional centres, and challenge some assumed social norms and attitudes around drinking by encouraging positive behaviour change and peer support."

The project aims to establish focus groups from its four key regional centres to consult in the development of a social marketing campaign. Furthermore, the project will work closely with LBQ women's community networks and health service providers in regional settings and raise awareness of risky behaviours and support pathways.

"As a community-led organisation, lesbian, bisexual, and queer women have played an important role in VAC's work since it's very founding. That tradition will carry on as this project aims to understand and influence the values, attitudes and beliefs of LBQ women and their support networks of friends, family, and co-workers," said Ruth.

Rechter added, "This initiative is about people socially supporting one another to reduce high risk drinking, resulting in reduced harm for themselves, their family and friends, those in the vicinity and the broader community."

For more information on VicHealth's Alcohol Change Initiative, go to: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/alcohol-culture-change-initiative.

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