

Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Tuesday, 19 May 2020

VICTORIAN SENIORS FESTIVAL CONNECTING LIKE NEVER BEFORE

In its 38th year, the Victorian Seniors Festival is returning in a new digital format streamed directly into the homes of more than one-million Victorian seniors.

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan today officially launched the *Victorian Seniors Festival Reimagined* to ensure Victoria continues to celebrate and keep our seniors community connected.

Due to the current coronavirus restrictions, the annual celebration of older Victorians has been transformed, with the month-long Festival turned into a six-month virtual party. The reimagined theme highlights that our Victorian seniors can still thrive despite the pandemic.

In its new format the Victorian Seniors Festival Reimagined delivers three broadcasts each week, all showcasing some of Australia's biggest and best talent, along with stories recognising and celebrating seniors across the State.

With broadcasts of online events and activities, seniors will be treated to music, stand-up comedy, Bollywood dancing and more – all from the comfort of their own homes. This year's Festival theme, 'In the groove', is a call for all older Victorians to embrace the new opportunities the Festival has to offer.

The virtual Festival will run right through to October and is hosted by Tristan Meecham and Bec Reid, founders of All The Queens Men, and frequent partners of the Victorian Seniors Festival.

The Victorian Government provided \$5.45 million to address social isolation and keep senior Victorians connected as part of the \$59.4 million package it recently announced to support mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

The package includes support for local services that work with seniors, with up to \$50,000 to be provided to a lead organisation in each LGA to deliver on-the-ground supports like coordinating deliveries of supplies, or safely helping people to download apps or software to make connecting with friends and relatives easier.

Our state-wide coronavirus phone line will also be expanded to proactively reach out to people known to be isolated or vulnerable – including senior Victorians – and another \$100,000 will fund the development of radio content for older Victorians, especially those in aged care facilities, with entertainment and music.

For more information about virtual events and activities, visit seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festivalsandawards.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

"The Victorian Seniors Festival is an important part of Victoria's social calendar, and it's great to see it will continue as something for older Victorians to enjoy during this uncertain time."

"We wanted to ensure the reimagined festival had a mixture of activities and broadcasts for everyone to enjoy and by extending the festival to six months we're keeping people connected for longer."

"From Mark Trevorrow – a staple in the Australian comedy scene – to a showcase of opera from a leader and pioneer of First Nations arts and culture Deborah Cheetham AO, there's something for everyone."

Media contact: Claire Martin 0448 411 167 | claire.martin@minstaff.vic.gov.au