

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Thursday, 26 September 2024

KITCHEN GARDENS TO HELP OLDER VICTORIANS BLOOM

The Allan Labor Government is brightening the lives of Victorians living in Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS) – with \$1.68 million in grants funded to improve or construct kitchen gardens.

Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt today announced more than 70 aged care services have received funding through the second round of the *Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS) and Community Kitchen Garden Initiative*.

The grants program was established in 2021 following a recommendation from the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*, that called for aged care services to place a greater emphasis on improving community engagement, reducing social isolation, and enhancing resident wellbeing.

The goals and design of the gardens are decided by the residents of the aged care service giving them the autonomy to prepare and enjoy the food they have grown, with the social aspect of maintaining these gardens also playing an important role in strengthening the connections of residents.

The program was launched in 2021 and was designed to support residents to age well through community connection, accessible outdoor spaces and lifestyle programs to keep people active – with the first round delivering significant and tangible benefits to health and wellbeing of residents across Victoria's PSRACS.

Recipients in the second round include Andrews House operated by West Gippsland Healthcare Group – whose residents have been able to take advantage of a \$60,000 grant for a new garden to grow and produce fresh veggies to eat.

At the Geoffrey Cutter Centre operated by Grampians Health, residents received \$75,000 for a new garden that will support gardening for pleasure and socialising.

A number of services, including Alan David Lodge operated by Barwon Health and Glenarm Nursing Home operated by Kerang District Health, have been awarded funding to refresh and improve existing gardens.

The Allan Labor Government is Australia's largest provider of public aged care, investing more than \$700 million since 2016 to deliver new and upgraded facilities across the state, including more than \$160 million in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* to improve aged care facilities in regional Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ageing Ingrid Stitt

"We know that gardening is beneficial for both physical and mental health, and these grants are helping older Victorians keep up a hobby they love and enjoy good company, all while receiving the aged care they need."

"Victoria is one of the only states in the country providing a public option for aged care, and we're proud that we continue to deliver initiatives that enhance the quality-of-care older Victorians deserve."