



Victorian Aboriginal
Children & Young
People's Alliance

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children, Youth and Families Amendment (Supporting Stable and Strong Families) Bill 2025

The Victorian Aboriginal Children & Young People's Alliance (VACYPA) is pleased to see the Children, Youth and Families Amendment (Supporting Stable and Strong Families) Bill 2025 (the SSSF Bill) being debated in the Victorian Legislative Assembly today.

The Bill proposes a new accountability framework across government, requiring Ministers to take responsibility for the safety and well-being of vulnerable children, families, and care leavers.

VACYPA's focus is on supporting Member Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) that deliver child and family services, including working with and holding government to account for their commitments to the rights of Aboriginal children and young people. ACCOs have consistently called for stronger whole-of-government accountability for the well-being of Aboriginal children and families.

Dallas Widdicombe, CEO of Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative and VACYPA Board Member, said, "We know that preventing child protection intervention begins with strong communities, cultural strength, and families being supported to raise children safely, so our future generations thrive. This includes accessible, culturally strong health, wellbeing, education, housing, and other essential services delivered by ACCOs."

"These protective factors sit across multiple government portfolios. Too often, portfolio silos limit coordinated action and fail to recognise the shared responsibility to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in statutory systems."

This challenge was highlighted in VACYPA's 2025 report, [*In their laughter we heal: ACCO aspirations for Aboriginal families, children and young people*](#), where Members call on governments to remove barriers to cross-portfolio, integrated service delivery, including Aboriginal-led early childhood hubs.

As with any reform, the impact of this framework will depend on its implementation. If the Bill passes, VACYPA calls on government to ensure the Children's Services Coordination Board works in genuine partnership with community to design meaningful accountability measures. "Ministers must listen to Aboriginal children and young people and ensure their voices shape SSSF plans and actions," Jason Kanoa VACYPA CEO said.

"Cross-portfolio collaboration will be critical to delivering meaningful change. VACYPA urges Ministers to develop joined-up SSSF plans that respond to the holistic strengths, rights and needs of Aboriginal children and families."

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VACYPA recognises and acknowledges the traditions and culture of all First Nations peoples across Australia. VACYPA honours Elders, past and present, and extends respect to the children of the community, who are the future custodians of Country.