

# PRESS RELEASE



Victorian Aboriginal  
Children & Young  
People's Alliance

5 May 2026

## In hard times, Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance welcomes expansion of Aboriginal-led programs

The Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance (VACYPA) welcomes the expansion of the Community Protecting Boorais program in the 2026 State Budget. The \$5.1 million allocated over two years will enable an additional Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) to provide an Aboriginal designed, led and delivered service for Aboriginal families that come into contact with child protection.

“Community Protecting Boorais has been a game changer for Aboriginal families. ACCOs know how to walk alongside families and build supportive relationships that help children thrive” said Karen Heap, VACYPA Chairperson. “We are glad to see government backing what works, even when the economic environment is tight.”

The cost-of-living pressures experienced by all families are increasing demand across VACYPA's 15 member ACCOs. They see families every day struggling to keep food on the table and make ends meet. VACYPA acknowledges the cost of living supports provided in this budget, including 20% reduction in car registration, half price public transport, increased FoodBank funding and more breakfast clubs. Increased financial counselling will also help families budget better.

The pressures on Aboriginal families come from all directions. As the Yoorrook Justice Commission stated, systemic racism compounds entrenched problems with housing, employment, justice and health. VACYPA notes the modest initiatives funded in this budget and holds hope that the \$6 million allocated to implement and coordinate Yoorrook Justice Commission's recommendations will bring real results, not extension of existing delays.

VACYPA is concerned about the funding cliff in 2027 when \$140 million funding for Aboriginal child and family services lapses. In a tough environment like now, job security is essential for every worker. Yet more than 300 ACCO jobs lack certainty beyond June 2027.

“Workforce is the biggest challenge we face in program implementation. We can't afford to risk losing the fantastic workers ACCOs have recruited” said Jason Kanoa, VACYPA CEO. “We look forward to the Victorian Government committing to ongoing support before we go to the polls in November.”

VACYPA welcomes \$30.6 million allocated to Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative to build a new purpose-built facility in North Geelong for the local community. Integrated holistic services are what ACCOs do best, but funding for infrastructure is scarce.

To that end VACYPA also welcomes funding for The Nest, an integrated support service for Aboriginal families, children and young people needing intensive support. This model has been Aboriginal designed and led. Funding will provide the model to be implemented in two sites within ACCOs helping to improve outcomes for families in culturally safe and holistic ways.

ENDS

**Media Contact:**

Jason Kanoa, CEO

[ceo@vacypalliance.org](mailto:ceo@vacypalliance.org)

