

PRESS RELEASE



Victorian Aboriginal
Children & Young
People's Alliance

Promising First Steps – Victorian State Budget Response

The Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance has today acknowledged the State Budget investment in Aboriginal families, describing it as 'a good starting point' for supporting comprehensive action that will deliver generational reform.

Whilst the Budget did not deliver on all the Alliance had been advocating for, Acting Chair, Ms. Darlene Thomas, said that when considered in context of the overall State Budget, the Alliance members, and the Aboriginal children and families they support, have fared well.

Ms. Thomas says that in recent months the Premier and Minister for Child Protection had both met with the Alliance, seeking its views on the action required to enable better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families in Victoria. During these meetings the Alliance spoke to the challenges facing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and shared its agenda for reform.

"All evidence points to the current system failing Aboriginal families and children, resulting in their over-representation in out of home care, and poorer health and educational outcomes.

"In Victoria, an Aboriginal child is 22 times more likely to be placed in out of home care than a non-Aboriginal child and this statistic is not getting better. We need to do things differently if we want to see a different result."

Ms. Thomas said the Alliance is of the view that the Premier and Minister accepted the flaws in the current system and the need for change. However, she stressed that there is a difference between acknowledging the issues and acting on them.

"Yesterday's Budget is an indication of the Government's appetite to support reform that will deliver better lifelong outcomes for our Aboriginal communities and whilst we are disappointed that some of our key priorities were not funded, we will work hard to make the very most of what was included."

Among the initiatives to receive funding in the State Budget 2023 / 2024 are:

- Aboriginal led Family Services to divert families from the child protection system
- Additional Koori Supported Playgroups across the state
- Expansion of Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care
- Continuation and expansion of Community Protecting Boorais
- ACCO child and family service development including workforce support.

Ms. Thomas said the Alliance is committed to ongoing conversations with both the Premier and Minister Blandthorn, with a shared vision for delivering a culturally informed approach to Aboriginal child and family services that will ensure generational impact.

"We will continue to call on the Government to comprehensively invest in Aboriginal Victorians, in their wisdom, their experience and critically, in their future."

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