

PRESS RELEASE

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Victorian Aboriginal
Children & Young
People's Alliance

Disappointing News for the Aboriginal Child and Family Service Sector

The Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance today responds to the State Budget with disappointment at the lack of long-term needs-based funding for regional Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and local communities delivering child and family services.

We acknowledge the increased investment in Family Preservation and Reunification program, supporting services responding to family violence and increased support to students. However, Aboriginal led system reform for children and families can't occur without a strong peak body for regional ACCOs. We renew our invitation to the Ministers and Cabinet to fund our work as the peak body supporting regional ACCOs delivering services for Aboriginal children and families.

Chief Executive Officer Jason Kanoa stated "The needs of ACCOs in the Child and Family Services Sector are only growing. We can't pretend that things are working well when regional communities are dealing with crisis and stopping our most important work in early help and community strengthening. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing has the Wungurilwil Gaggapduir Partnership Agreement with the Aboriginal Child and Family Service Sector which has yet to be delivered in full or on time."

Jason acknowledged the previous years and ongoing investment in ACCOs as preferred service providers across the state but expressed frustration at the State's unwillingness to support regional ACCOs providing child and family services. "In a budget with strong support for peak organisations including the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW) and the Koorie Youth Council (KYC), our network has been left out in the cold."

Board Chair Karen Heap appealed for reasonable funding agreements. "Aboriginal families deserve more support. We can't do more with less. If the State Government wants to get real about Closing the Gap they need to commit to self-determination. We support the Treaty process and the First People's Assembly, but Aboriginal communities have needs right now. We can't afford to wait before making the changes necessary to bring real lasting change."

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