



Victorian Aboriginal
Children & Young
People's Alliance

Open letter to
The Hon. Daniel Andrews
Premier of Victoria
1 Treasury Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

26 September 2023

Dear Premier Andrews

On behalf of the Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance (VACYPA), I write to thank you for your term as Premier of Victoria and express the appreciation of our members for your service to Victorian Aboriginal families, children and young people.

As Premier, you have provided inspirational leadership on Aboriginal self-determination and backed your word with action. When you came to office nine years ago, I personally recall you speaking publicly about your commitment to Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing. You have been true to your word and Aboriginal families, children and young people have benefited from that commitment.

The Andrews Labor Government established the foundations for Victoria to progress towards Treaty, creating the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and passing legislation to form an independent authority to help negotiate Treaty. Armed with the powers of a Royal Commission, your Government established the Yoorrook Justice Commission that has recently handed down its report into Victoria's child protection and criminal justice systems.

Yoorrook's first recommendation supports the development of an Aboriginal-led, designed and delivered system for the care and protection of Aboriginal families, children and young people – a position welcomed by the fifteen Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations who are members of the VACYPA. But before Yoorrook Commissioners put out that call, you invited our members to tell you what it would take to move towards an Aboriginal-led service model. We acknowledge that support.

Your Government implemented Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care, an Australian first model for Aboriginal-led child protection, grounded in self-determination. In a further example of your commitment this year, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* was amended to include a Statement of Recognition of the impact of government policies on Aboriginal families and children.

I also acknowledge and thank you for your courageous leadership that helped keep Aboriginal people safe and well through the COVID pandemic.

The VACYPA looks forward to working with your successor and hopes the new Premier continues this Government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and the Aboriginal led reform of the child and family service system.

Again, I thank you for your service and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Karen Heap
Chairperson VACYPA
CEO Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative