

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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BACKING EVERY MARYBOROUGH CHILD TO HAVE A CHANCE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping every child in Maryborough to have the best start in life with new support for a program that helps children grow up safe, healthy and confident.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today opened the Go Goldfields' new headquarters at Maryborough and announced a \$1 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to support the program's *Every Child, Every Chance* initiative.

Maryborough in the Central Goldfields is the fourth most disadvantaged area in Victoria, with the region facing challenges that inhibit the growth and development of children. This new funding will work to support positive, long-term outcomes for local children and their families.

Go Goldfields will bring together community, business, government and non-for-profit partners to focus on five key priorities. This includes supporting mothers through pregnancy with access to pre-birth seminars and promotion to first trimester antenatal visits.

In addition to this, there will be emphasis on parenting programs, cultural safety training for health workers and a healing space to treat children who have experienced family violence, as well as ensuring schools and early childhood centres work together to co-ordinate the transition from kinder to school.

Every Child, Every Chance was established in late 2020 – a collaboration between key government agencies including the Department of Health and the Department of Education, local health and education providers and the Central Goldfields Shire.

The program will be overseen by an independent Chair and community members and will build on learnings from almost a decade of Go Goldfields initiatives. It will focus on driving change for all children from the early stages of pregnancy to eight years of age.

Go Goldfields' *Every Child, Every Chance* initiative is supported by the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership as part of their goal to give the best start for every child across the region.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"Every child deserves every chance – that's why we're backing the important work of Go Goldfields to deliver life-changing programs to Maryborough's children and their families."

"We know that every region faces unique challenges and opportunities that require a local approach and we are ensuring that the right support reaches those who need it."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"A child's start to life is so important to their future prospects and happiness. Go Goldfields is a vital part of the local community and this new support will allow them to continue to help local families."