

# Media Release

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
Minister for Women



Thursday, 1 June 2021

## **BETTER HEALTH ACCESS FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN BENDIGO**

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Aboriginal children in Bendigo get a positive and healthy start in life through better access to health and mental health services.

The Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative has received more than \$487,000 to help local children access specialist and allied health services.

The funding will support children and their families to access local private health services such as psychiatrists, paediatricians, counsellors, speech therapists and occupational therapists – ensuring better outcomes for both physical and mental health.

To ensure a culturally safe experience for Bendigo's Aboriginal families, the Co-op will employ patient navigators to liaise and coordinate with health providers.

This will ensure consistent care for Aboriginal families and empower them to feel confident and comfortable in the support they receive.

The funding is part of the Victorian Government's COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund – supporting Aboriginal Victorians to deliver community-led initiatives responding to the impacts of COVID-19.

More than 80 initiatives across Victoria have shared in \$10 million since the fund was established in July 2020.

The program supports locally designed initiatives that provide emergency relief, outreach and brokerage for at-risk groups, cultural strengthening, and social and emotional wellbeing.

For more information about the fund, visit: [aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-community-response-and-recovery-fund](https://aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-community-response-and-recovery-fund).

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Gabrielle Williams**

*"We're ensuring Aboriginal children in Bendigo have access to the mental and physical treatment, care and support they need to get the best possible start in life."*

*"We're supporting Aboriginal organisations to build strong communities as we continue our commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal people."*

### **Quote attributable Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards**

*"We're helping Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-op boost the health of the community and provide culturally safe and coordinated support to Aboriginal children and young people across the Bendigo region."*