

Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Wednesday, 4 August 2021

NEW WATCHDOG TO BOOST SOCIAL SERVICES PROTECTIONS

The Andrews Labor Government is strengthening protections for vulnerable Victorians by establishing a new social services regulator.

The proposed Social Services Regulation Act will streamline and simplify the existing regulation of social services, reducing red tape for the community sector while bolstering enforcement powers to protect people from harm.

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers and Minister for Child Protection Luke Donnellan will introduce the reforms into Parliament on Wednesday – paving the way for support services delivered by more than 1200 organisations to be overseen by a single regulator.

Services covered will include family violence, homelessness, Supported Residential Services, children youth and families, and disability services not within the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The new system will establish a single set of standards and a single registration process, as well as an independent regulator with a statutory office holder appointed.

The new regulator replaces the current Human Services Regulator and provides decision-making separation between the responsibilities of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and regulatory decisions exercised by the regulator.

The regulator can identify shortcomings in service delivery and work with providers to improve standards, issue fines to providers in breach of their responsibilities, and de-register organisations for serious non-compliance.

The reforms will modernise regulation, protecting the safety and human rights of service users while supporting service providers to comply with the new standards.

The legislation also enables the regulator to recognise other regulatory schemes, delivering a more coordinated, simpler system for organisations that must comply with more than one scheme.

Service users and providers have been engaged in the design of the reform over the past two years and will contribute to developing regulations for the new regulator.

The scheme will be phased in from 1 July 2023 to give time for the sector to transition to the new arrangements.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

“A new regulator will boost oversight to ensure Victorians can have comfort they are protected across all social services.”

“New, stronger powers will mean the independent regulator has more tools to take action when providers are not doing the right thing by their clients.”

Media contact: David Donaldson 0400 881 562 | david.donaldson@minstaff.vic.gov.au