

Media Release

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



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BOOSTING PROTECTIONS FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN

The Victorian Government is strengthening assistance to vulnerable children and families through a new strategy to support and develop the child protection workforce.

The new *Child Protection Workforce Strategy* will help meet current and future demand to assist at-risk families – helping more families stay together.

Building on record investments to boost the workforce, the strategy will create a new learning centre for practitioners, expand psychological support programs and provide additional support to help practitioners relocate to areas where recruitment is challenging.

Recognising Aboriginal communities are best placed to understand the needs of Aboriginal children and their families, partnerships with Aboriginal-led agencies will be prioritised to recruit more Aboriginal child protection practitioners to help children stay connected to culture, community and Country.

Improved cultural awareness training will assist child protection practitioners to deliver more culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal children and their families.

Ongoing partnerships with leading tertiary providers across Victoria, complimented by the student employment program, will support a stronger skills and recruitment pipeline.

The Strategy aims to attract and retain a diverse workforce, while prioritising worker safety and delivering evidence-based best practice. It was created with input from practitioners and industry experts, and builds on the work of the Child Protection Workforce Strategy 2017-2020.

Implementation of the Strategy will be supported by \$5 million over the next three years.

The Government is ensuring all children are given the same opportunities in life through a massive \$1.2 billion boost to the children and families system in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* – on top of the unprecedented \$1 billion in last year's Budget that is providing more support than ever before for at-risk children, their families and carers.

This includes \$335 million in earlier intervention initiatives under the *Roadmap for Reform: Strong families, Safe Children*, such as the new Family Preservation and Reunification Response model providing families with support to prevent children entering care where possible, or to support a child in care to return safely home.

This year's Budget also delivered \$171 million to boost the number of child protection workers on the frontline by recruiting 280 new practitioners – bringing the total to more than 1,180 permanent new positions since 2014.

To view the Strategy, visit vic.gov.au/childprotectionjobs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Child Protection Luke Donnellan

"We are transforming the system supporting vulnerable children and families to give kids the best chance at a happy, healthy life."

"Victoria's Child Protection workforce plays a vital role keeping children, young people and families safe – so we're making sure they have the support, the skills and the resources they need to do this important work."

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