

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Children
Minister for Disability



Thursday, 1 February 2024

A NEW SOCIAL SERVICES REGULATOR WITH STRONGER POWERS

Vulnerable Victorians will be better protected with the new Social Services Regulator commencing next Monday, 5 February – set to streamline and simplify regulation of social services and reduce red tape.

Minister for Children and Disability Lizzie Blandthorn today announced Jonathan Kaplan will serve as the new independent regulator which is tasked with protecting people from harm.

Mr Kaplan was previously the CEO of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, which regulates education and training in schools and vocational education and training providers and enforces the Child Safe Standards in schools.

From 1 July, the Allan Labor Government's new system will establish a single set of Social Service standards and a single registration process for hundreds of community organisations.

Services covered will include family violence, sexual assault, homelessness, Supported Residential Services, and disability services not within the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It will also oversee government-funded children, youth and family services.

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

The regulator can identify shortcomings in service delivery and work with providers to improve standards, issue fines to providers and initiate criminal proceedings for aggravated breaches of the Standards where there has been wilful and serious non-compliance.

To improve regulatory oversight and make the system easier to navigate for people with disability, legislative amendments will consolidate Victoria's social services safeguarding entities.

The Disability Services Commissioner will merge with the new Social Services Regulator this year, with similar reforms planned for the Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner and Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria within the next two years.

A complaints division will be established to cover all regulated social services, once further legislative amendments have been made, informed through key stakeholder consultation.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children and Disability Lizzie Blandthorn

"We are strengthening safeguards in our social services sector, ensuring Victorians can be confident they will be protected. Mr Kaplan's track record demonstrates he has the experience and credentials to be the new Regulator."

Quotes attributable to incoming Social Services Regulator Jonathan Kaplan

"I am delighted to be taking up this vital role, which will serve to strengthen oversight of the social services system, protecting the rights of those Victorians who need these services the most."

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