

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Jobs and Industry
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Women



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FIRST NATIONS YOUTH TO HAVE NEW HUB IN GEELONG

Young First Nations people in Geelong now have access to a range of tailored services and supports in one place with the opening of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative's new youth hub in Norlane.

Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens this week joined the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative to celebrate the opening of Karroong Kanyool – 'Home of the Young'.

Supported by an Allan Labor Government investment of over \$1.6 million, the culturally safe gathering place will provide young First Nations people with access to clinical, social and emotional wellbeing services and supports.

It will also provide young people with the opportunity to connect with each other, strengthen their life skills and participate in cultural activities.

Karroong Kanyool features new consulting suites for visiting health and wellbeing specialists, as well as various activity spaces including a play area, computer and TV rooms, meeting rooms, and an outdoor basketball court with the key surfaced in the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

Construction of the new hub was supported by the Labor Government's Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program.

The Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program funds projects planned by First Nations organisations, ensuring they can deliver what's needed for their own communities. Since 2018, the program has supported 93 projects across Victoria through a combined investment of almost \$39 million.

Applications are now open for round seven of the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program, with over \$11 million available to successful First Nations organisations.

For more information, visit: <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-community-infrastructure-program>.

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty & First Peoples Natalie Hutchins

"When First Nations Victorians run the services and supports that young people in their communities need, we see better outcomes. Community-led projects like this one change young peoples' lives every day".

Quotes attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Christine Couzens

"First Nations Young People need a culturally safe and supported place to connect with community and culture. The Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative has created a great space for Young First Nations People and families to access the services in the one location."

"Karroong Kanyool meaning "Home of Young" is now a space First Nations Young People and families in Geelong can call their own, where they can connect with community and receive the supports and services they need to thrive."