

Wednesday, 2 July 2025

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Every Victorian was horrified by the sickening allegations that were made public yesterday.

And I know that right across our state, they turned to one another and asked how this sort of alleged offending could ever be possible within a childcare centre.

I say again: this is a criminal matter and I won't say or do anything that could jeopardise the process for justice.

But families must be able to trust that their children are safe in childcare.

And I will do everything in my power to make sure they can.

Childcare is regulated under a national framework, and I appreciate the substantial work is already underway by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to strengthen safety in the sector.

But Victorian families cannot wait.

So I will not wait.

I acknowledge there is work to create a national register of childcare workers.

But this needs to happen now.

That's why we will start building the Victorian register to give families an extra layer of checks and balances as soon as possible.

Work is also ongoing at a national level to ban the use of personal devices in childcare centres – in Victoria we'll bring that forward.

To avoid delay we're putting all Victorian childcare centres on notice that they will be required to adopt a ban on personal devices by Friday 26 September.

Childcare centres who don't comply will have a ban imposed on them as a condition of license and may face fines up to \$50,000.

We will also commission an urgent review into childcare safety in Victoria.

We will announce who will lead the review by the end of the week.

This short and sharp review will be focused on immediate actions we can take, based on work from the Commonwealth and other states and territories reviews.

I want this Victorian review to examine options for installing CCTV in childcare centres.

But it will also look at the national framework for childcare to see if we can go further, and act faster, on any of the measures currently being considered at a national level.

The review will report back to the Government on Friday 15 August.

For more information, visit: vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation.

We will adopt every recommendation of the review and implement them as quickly as possible.

Following yesterday, I know too many families are suffering unbearable pain and uncertainty.

I cannot imagine what they are going through.

But I know this is the type of news that turns normal life completely upside down.

That's why affected families will be eligible for a \$5,000 Immediate Needs Payment.

This will be made available to families whose children are referred for precautionary testing.

It will support parents and carers to take time off work, help them find other care arrangements, and cover the cost of any medical or mental health appointments.

It is some practical help at an impossibly difficult time.

There has been a high volume of calls to the hotline, and I thank everyone for their patience during what is obviously an immensely distressing experience.

Dedicated nurses and public health officials are working around the clock to give families the answers they need.

I want to once more recognise the many dedicated carers and educators across the Early Childhood Education sector who have been so deeply affected by these horrendous allegations and thank them for the important work they do.

And I especially thank them for the support they are giving to parents and families today.

I want to again thank the Victoria Police officers who are continuing to work on this active criminal investigation.

I know that Victorian parents are feeling angry and deeply distressed by these allegations.

I feel that, too.

That's why my Government will take every action possible – as soon as possible – to strengthen safety standards in early childhood education and care, to keep Victorian children safe.