

Hon Jacinta Allan MP – Premier of Victoria

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

STOPPING CRIME BEFORE IT STARTS – THROUGH SPORT

Victoria's new Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) will stop crime before it starts with programs to get at-risk students into sports, arts and other positive activities to help them stay on track and discourage them from turning to crime.

Premier Jacinta Allan, Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll and Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny today announced the Allan Labor Government will invest \$4.92 million over four years in the *Early intervention Sports and Activities Menu* as part of its nation-leading VRU.

Early Interventions

Beginning in 2026, the VRU's newest program will provide better support for schools by linking them up with established programs that help students find purpose and belonging, particularly during times like school holidays when structured support can make a real difference.

This is all about stopping crime before it starts.

We know that positive activities like getting involved in a team sport or expressing yourself through art or music can have a life-changing effect on young child who is showing signs of being susceptible to crime.

Support available to schools may be sports programs run by professional sporting organisations, targeted cultural programs, or programs based on music and the creative arts. We want to give every at-risk child the opportunity to find something positive that resonates with them.

Initial providers on the list include the following, with more options to be available to all schools from Term 1, 2026:

- *Melbourne Storm* – Storm Waka will support young people, particularly those of Pasifika background, in personal growth and development and help them connect with their culture
- *Melbourne Victory* – the holiday program will be available to schools in the South and East of Melbourne in week 1 and the North and West of Melbourne in week 2 of each term break
- *Western Bulldogs* – the program will engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victoria's West through increasing understanding and connection to community and culture
- *Foundation House* – the Shooters Shoot initiative is a basketball program that will be expanded to more schools to support at-risk students

This investment builds on the VRU's signature program – putting Early Intervention Officers in 20 schools to intervene early in the lives of children who are heading down the wrong path.

Victoria's VRU is based on Violence Reduction Units in Glasgow and London, which dramatically reduced violent youth crime through early interventions – including positive activities like sport and art.

Serious Consequences

We also need serious consequences to reduce violent crime. That's why the Labor Government will today introduce legislation to implement *Adult Time for Violent Crime*.

Adult Time for Violent Crime means courts will treat children like adults if they are convicted of the worst crimes, so jail is more likely, and sentences are longer.

We want these laws in place as soon as possible. MPs won't be leaving Parliament this week until it passes.

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The one thing stopping *Adult Time* becoming law is Jess Wilson and the Liberals, who could still block it or delay it.

As part of its Bill, the Government will also toughen the carjacking offence.

Currently, carjacking doesn't cover stealing a car with children in it – this is covered under the offence of theft, a broader offence which has a lesser maximum penalty.

It doesn't reflect the terrifying trauma caused by this type of violent offending and the complete disregard for the safety of innocent children.

To ensure the consequences for this shocking crime are more serious, the Government will expand the carjacking offence to capture conduct where a person steals a car with a child under the age of 10 inside.

It will be an offence whether or not the person accused of the crime used force against any person, or whether they knew a child was in the vehicle. The principle will be clear: if there's a child inside, it's carjacking.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We can make a difference in the lives of children who could turn to crime by giving them positive things to do, new ways to express themselves, teammates to support on the field, and adults who believe in them."

"Serious consequences for violent crime, and early interventions to stop crime from happening in the first place – we must do both."

"We want Adult Time in place as soon as possible. No one is leaving Parliament this week until it passes."

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"The evidence is clear – staying involved in school and having positive peer relationships and mentors acts as a protective factor for at-risk children that prevents them from crossing over into crime."

"Schools already do an incredible job engaging at-risk students, but they can't do it alone. This will give school leaders and teachers the additional support they need to help those students at risk stay connected."

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny

"When we intervene early and give young people meaningful ways to spend their time, we're not just keeping them busy – we're protecting the community and tackling the root causes of crime."

Quote attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"Sport gives young people purpose, belonging and a positive path forward – and this investment will help at-risk kids find the teammates, mentors and motivation that keep them away from crime."