

Hon Jacinta Allan MP – Premier of Victoria

Thursday, 26 February 2026

LABOR PREVENTS CRIME BY PROTECTING KIDS FROM GANGS

Labor is intervening early to stop gangs from grooming and recruiting our young people into a life of crime.

The Premier today announced the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) will roll out a new anti-gang program.

It will help families and teens spot the signs of grooming early and gain the tools to say no and get help.

Think Village will run the nation-leading program and deliver community workshops designed with local leaders.

The workshops will teach parents how to recognise online grooming, and the tactics gangs use on social media, encrypted apps and gaming platforms.

It will be supported by a new statewide digital campaign to help young people recognise grooming and get help.

As part of the total \$1 million investment, VRU will also develop a new initiative to break up youth gangs.

The VRU will work with young people at the highest risk of being pulled into gang activity and connect them with support to steer them away from violence.

The VRU draws on proven overseas approaches to break the cycle of youth violence.

In the UK, VRUs have cut violent crime significantly, with:

- a 48 per cent drop in violent crime in Scotland
- a 28 per cent decrease in knife crime injuries among young people in London

The VRU operates across Government to tackle and disrupt violence.

Education, health, mental health, housing, police, community and the justice system – nothing is off-limits.

Last year, the Liberals called for the VRU to be cancelled.

They'll cut early intervention and mentoring because they don't really believe in it.

Only Labor has new solutions to make life safer for families. Liberals have no solutions – only cuts.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Our plan to reduce violent youth crime delivers both serious consequences and early interventions."

"These crime ringleaders deserve to face a life sentence and the kids they prey on need help. We'll deliver both."

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny

"Programs like these worked overseas to reduce violent youth crime, and we've brought them to Victoria."

Quote attributable to Minister for Police Anthony Carbines

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“The VRU is protecting kids from organised crime gangs and police are working to catch the evil ringleaders.”

Quotes attributable to Interim VRU CEO Andrea Davidson

“Young people get drawn into crime in ways that adults might not understand – that's why we're working directly with young people, families and local leaders to deliver programs to reduce youth crime and violence.”

“The VRU is stopping violence before it starts through early intervention, strengthening communities and evidence-led action.”

Quotes attributable to Hanad Hersi and Mahamed Ahmed, joint CEOs and founders, Think Village

“We're excited to bring this specialised, evidence-based program to students, parents and carers across Victoria.”

“Research and insights from our practitioners in the field has shown that working with schools and local communities is crucial to prevent violence, by building a strong ecosystem of support around young people.”