

# Media Release

**Jenny Mikakos MLC**

Minister for Families & Children

Minister for Youth Affairs



Monday, 2 October, 2017

## **DELIVERING BETTER MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES TO ABORIGINAL FAMILIES**

The Andrews Labor Government is helping Aboriginal communities deliver improved Maternal and Child Health services to families and children.

Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos today announced in Northcote that the Darebin-based Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency will be one of ten organisations across Victoria to share in \$1.2 million in grants through the Labor Government's Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative.

These grants will help trial new culturally responsive models across the state. Aboriginal families access Maternal and Child Health services at a lower rate compared to non-Aboriginal families – a gap that increases from 4.8 per cent at the initial home visit to 18 per cent at the eight month consultation.

The new models being trialled will help address this - through employing new Aboriginal health and outreach workers, more nurses, increased coordination between local government and Aboriginal organisations, and improving referral and outreach with families including more Maternal and Child Health visits.

The service model will be trialled across Darebin, Latrobe, Swan Hill, Campaspe, Geelong, East Gippsland, Warrnambool, Wyndham, Whittlesea and Mitchell.

The Government has been working with Aboriginal organisations, the Maternal and Child Health sector and local governments to design strategies that provide high quality, culturally safe and responsive services for Aboriginal families.

The initiative is part of the Government's *Roadmap for Reform: Strong families, Safe children and Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026*.

It supports the landmark \$202 million *Early Childhood Reform Plan*, which recognises the importance of giving families support in early childhood so kids are ready for kinder and ready for school.

The reform plan also includes \$55.3 million to help kindergartens make sure all children start school ready, and \$5.4 million to support the Koorie Parents as First Educators and Koorie Supported Playgroups initiatives.

The 10-year *Marrung – Aboriginal Education Plan* will help Koorie families access the early childhood, school, and vocational education and training services they need to achieve their potential, succeed in life and feel strong in their cultural identity.

For more details go to [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/amchigrants.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/amchigrants.aspx)

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos**

*"All Victorians deserve to take advantage of our world-class Maternal and Child Health services, and this will deliver vital parenting support services to more Aboriginal families and children."*

*"This is about closing the gap and ensuring more Aboriginal children are given the best possible start in life to ensure they're ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for life."*

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