

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Families and Children
Minister for Early Childhood Education
Minister for Youth Affairs



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

Thursday, 26 April, 2018

BUILDING A STRONG FUTURE FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Aboriginal kids in care will remain better connected to culture, country and community, under new initiatives from the Andrews Labor Government.

The *Victorian Budget 2018/19* includes \$47.3 million to support implementation of *Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement* – a ground breaking tripartite partnership between the Aboriginal communities, government and community service organisations.

The Agreement, and the accompanying Strategic Action Plan, aims to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection and care system by:

- Continuing assistance for Aboriginal organisations to allow them to support more Aboriginal children and young people on protection orders
- Transitioning case management of more Aboriginal children in out-of-home care to Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations
- Improving cultural connection for Aboriginal young people in care
- Strengthening evidence-based policy and practice for services involving Aboriginal families and children.

The Budget also includes a further \$10.8 million to target over-representation in Victoria's youth justice system by extending the community-based Koori Youth Justice program and examining the cases of about 250 young people to identify the underlying causes for their offending.

An Elder support program will also be established to link young Aboriginal people in custody with respected role models and mentors from their own communities.

Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos was today joined by representatives from the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, the Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, to sign the agreement at Parliament House.

The Aboriginal Children's Forum will oversee implementation of the Agreement, which comes off the back of the Labor Government's *Korin Balit-Djak* in 2017 – a 10-year plan to revolutionise how Victoria's health and human services' work with Aboriginal communities.

The Agreement and Strategic Action Plan also aligns with the Labor Government's \$168 million *Roadmap for Reform* to give Aboriginal people a larger role in the care and decision making for Aboriginal children in care.

Quote attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

"We're breaking new ground in supporting Aboriginal children and families – this is the most comprehensive and collaborative approach our state has ever seen."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Natalie Hutchins

"We want to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care, but we know we can't do it alone. Aboriginal organisations are a critical piece of the puzzle."

Media Contact: Crys Ja 0434 367 449 | crys.ja@minstaff.vic.gov.au