

# Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter November 2017

Department of Health and Human Services

## **To: Children, Young People and Family Services Providers**

- Child FIRST and Family Services
- Early Childhood Development Coordinators
- Cradle to Kinder and Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder
- Early Parenting Centres
- Parenting Assessment and Skill Development Services (PASDS)

## **Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare**

### **Children's Resource Program**

### **Homeless Children's Support Services**

#### **Youth Support:**

- Leaving Care and Springboard
- Finding Solutions
- Adolescent Support Program

#### **DHHS, DET, FSV:**

- Local Connections Teams
- Child Protection
- Children and Families Policy Branch
- Children and Youth Area Partnership
- Family Safety Victoria

## **Introduction**

Welcome to our Children, Young People and Family Services Providers Newsletter.

This newsletter has been prepared by the Early Pathways Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide updates in statewide policy and service development to our funded organisations and department programs that deliver services to vulnerable children, young people and families. We hope that you find this informative and useful to the valuable work in your organisations.

We encourage you to please distribute this to staff and managers across your services.

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## Playgroups recognised in annual awards

A community playgroup that helps families connect with first-time parents and the natural environment, has won this year’s Award for Innovation and Excellence in the Victoria Annual Playgroup Awards 2017. Woodend Playgroup – part of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council – received the award. Rainbow Families Playgroup, North Fitzroy, was awarded Playgroup of the Year.

Ten playgroups were recognised at the awards which acknowledge the work of playgroups across Victoria and celebrate the many volunteers, participants and organisers who make these possible.

Playgroup Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation representing playgroups and is funded by membership, fundraising and government grants.

Extra funding of \$200,000 has been allocated for Playgroup Victoria to build stronger connections between Maternal and Child Health First Time Parent Groups and community playgroups. This will ensure first time parents have access to ongoing social support and links to their communities.

To see other categories and winners go to <https://thebigplaygroupmeetup.com.au/playgroupawards/>

## Giving mums and babies a healthy start

More mothers and babies across the state will receive support thanks to additional funding of \$1.7million announced to expand the *Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies* program to rural and regional Victoria.

The *Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies* program aims to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable pregnant women and their babies by helping them access services to support them through pregnancy and beyond.

*Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies* is currently provided in nine outer metropolitan growth areas, and will expand to Ballarat, Echuca, Gippsland, Goulburn Valley, the Grampians, Latrobe, Mildura, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

For more information go to [DHHS/healthy-mothers-healthy-babies](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/healthy-mothers-healthy-babies)

## More sick babies to access donated breast milk

More of Victoria's sick and premature babies will be able to access pasteurised donated breast milk, with the expansion of the state's only breast milk bank at the Mercy Hospital for Women.

The Mercy Health Breast Milk Bank will start receiving donations of breast milk from another three neonatal intensive care services in Melbourne from 10 October 2017.

The Breast Milk Bank will collaborate with the Royal Women's Hospital, Monash Medical Centre and the Royal Children's Hospital to establish satellite sites. This is expected to triple the number of breastmilk donors and recipients in Victoria.

All donors will have to pass a screening questionnaire and blood testing before being accepted

For more information go to <http://www.mercyhealthbreastmilkbank.com.au/>

## No Jab No Play changes to crack down on GPs

New No Jab No Play requirements are being introduced to prevent medical practitioners from making false statements about a child's ability to be immunised.

Changes introduced on 15 November 2017 will mean letters and other documents produced by GPs or other immunisation providers will no longer be acceptable as proof of immunisation.

Under the legislation, only Immunisation History Statements from the Australian Immunisation Register will be accepted as evidence of a medical reason why a child is not immunised when enrolling in childcare or kindergarten under No Jab No Play laws.

The amendments will also simplify the process for early childhood providers for assessing a child's immunisation for the purposes of enrolment. Enrolment will only be confirmed once the Immunisation History Statement has been provided.

Parents will also need to provide these statements – and early childhood services will need to collect them – at regular intervals to verify that a child attending a service has received all the necessary immunisations for their age.

Last month, Victoria achieved its best ever immunisation coverage with nearly 95 per cent of 5-year old kids now protected against preventable and serious life-threatening diseases.

To receive reminders of when your child's immunisations are due, download the *VaxOnTime Victoria* app.

## Securing more pre-purchased kinder places

The permanent extension of the successful pre-purchased kindergarten places pilot was announced on 23 November 2017, with an investment of \$2.3million.

Pre-purchased kindergarten places are created for vulnerable families and children known to child protection, refugees and Koorie children, and concession card holders so that they can still attend a local service at no cost to families and carers, even if they miss the enrolment dates.

More than 650 pre-purchased places will be available for families at about 230 services across Victoria next year – up from the 450 places this year.

The pre-purchased places program changes lives by helping families overcome barriers to participating in kindergarten such as enrolling late, moving into new areas, or being cared for out of home.

## Empowering Aboriginal communities to help their children receive the care they need

In an Australian first the Victorian Government is taking the next step in Aboriginal self-determination with the launch of the Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care Program.

The program realises the implementation of Section 18 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 giving greater responsibility for the safety and protection of vulnerable children subject to Children's Court protection orders to approved Aboriginal organisations.

This new approach to child protection recognises that the needs of Aboriginal children and young people are best met by Aboriginal community services, allowing them to provide support to these children and their families in a manner that best meets their cultural and community needs.

Section 18 allows the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to authorise the principal officer of an Aboriginal agency to perform specified functions and powers in relation to an Aboriginal child subject to a Children's Court protection order.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency will be the first Aboriginal organisation authorised for the new program under Section 18. They will take responsibility for case planning and care management of 36 Aboriginal children and young people in the Northern Metropolitan region.

Trial pilots of the new program are underway in the Dja Dja Warrung region by Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative and in the Northern Metropolitan Region by Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.

Six of the 13 children involved in the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency pilot were re-unified and there has been strong family engagement with Aboriginal agency staff in the current Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative pilot.

## **Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027**

Korin Korin Balit-Djak emerges at a significant time for both Aboriginal communities in Victoria and the government. It follows the government's commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians.

The Department of Health and Human Services commissioned work that has informed both Korin Korin Balit-Djak and the discussion about Aboriginal self-determination across all areas of the Victorian Government and community. This research and discussion has underpinned a new policy platform for Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety.

Korin Korin Balit-Djak is informed by an extensive consultation process with Aboriginal communities across Victoria, as well as a strong evidence base, including Koolin Balit evaluation findings (Victorian Government 2012). The plan details how the department will work with Aboriginal communities, community organisations, other government departments and mainstream service providers - now and into the future - to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/aboriginal-health/korin-korin-balit-djak>

## **Koori men's behavioural change program launched**

The Koori men's behavioural change program was launched 10 November 2017. The new \$3 million program aims to break the cycle of inter-generational trauma of family violence in Aboriginal families and communities.

Delivered by Koori men for Koori men, the Dardi Munwurro Strong Spirit Residential Men's Behavioural Change Program provides behaviour change programs for perpetrators with a focus on parenting, life skills and post-release support.

The program helps address Aboriginal male offending, with an intensive residential diversion program for perpetrators of family violence, and is a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

To support the program, the Collingwood Football Club is providing three furnished three-bedroom houses which will provide accommodation for Koori men. A Koori elder will live on-site to give cultural support and guidance.

The club has also provided a permanent program facility at the Victoria Park Community Centre in Collingwood, to provide support programs as part of the Ngarra Jarranounith Place. Ngarra Jarranounith Place will support men through a range of therapeutic family violence and personal development programs.

## Ending family violence in Aboriginal communities

To help prevent, reduce and respond to family violence in Aboriginal communities across Victoria forty five new projects will begin in November 2017.

The \$650,000 investment in community based projects was recommended by 11 Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups, and will be allocated to aboriginal community controlled organisations who have designed their own projects to meet their community's needs.

The groups identified priority areas for funding in their communities include:

- Supporting young Aboriginal women and children in Mildura to connect to culture and heal through traditional dance, language and storytelling
- Empowering local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men from the Warrnambool area to mentor young men at risk of perpetrating by sharing information about family violence in a safe supportive space and participating in cultural activities together.

These projects will be delivered by 36 Community Service Organisations, as part of the 2017/18 *Indigenous Family Violence Strategy Community Initiatives Fund*.

The launch of these projects coincides with the *Victoria Against Violence* campaign, which is a key part of the UN's orange-themed UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign from 25 November to 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

## More rehab beds, better treatment and safer streets

A new plan to tackle ice and heroin deaths and help Victorians get treatment for addiction was announced on 31 October 2017.

The \$87 million *Drug Rehabilitation Plan* builds on the work done through the *Ice Action Plan*.

With the number of Victorians losing their lives because of a heroin overdose now the highest it has been for nearly 20 years, a safety-first, medical approach will be undertaken with an initial two year trial of a medically supervised injecting room at the North Richmond Community Health Centre.

This includes an option to extend the trial for a further three years.

The medically supervised injecting room will commence from June 2018 and will have the strictest oversight including:

- Allowing only people aged over 18 years to use the facility, with a ban on children attending
- Ensuring that illegal drugs won't be provided or dealt at the facility
- Putting in place additional security measures, including 13 new CCTV cameras near the facility and in surrounding streets
- Ensuring Victoria Police works closely with the Department of Health and Human Services to support community safety while minimising drug harm.

An expert panel of health and community representatives will be appointed to oversee and review the effectiveness of the medically supervised injecting room. The Panel will report back annually, with the first report provided by June 2019.

As part of this plan there will also be an expansion of treatment services, boost to training and an investment in 100 more residential rehab beds.

These extra beds will mean 400 more Victorians each year will get the help they need to beat their addiction and create long-lasting change in their lives. The beds are expected to open by March 2018.

New residential rehabilitation facilities are also being established in key regional areas.

A new rapid detox withdrawal model will be trialled for those individuals experiencing particularly complex addiction and conditions who present at hospitals.

This will support an additional 100 people a year to engage in drug treatment.

For more information go to <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-treatment-services/drug-rehabilitation-plan>

## Victoria goes orange for a future free of violence

The third annual Victoria Against Violence campaign begins 24 November 2017, challenging the attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence and violence against women. The campaign will start with the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Walk Against Family Violence.

Following the Walk, the campaign will officially launch with an exhibition of artist Alisa Tanaka-King's *The Bird Girls* project, dedicated to women whose lives were taken by family violence.

The Arts Centre will light its spire up in the colour orange. A number of other landmarks will also go orange throughout the 16 days, including the Melbourne Star, Bolte Bridge, AAMI Park and Trades Hall.

The Commonwealth Bank VicSpirit and Bushrangers cricket teams are encouraging Victorians to go orange, while Metro Trains will show their support with their '16 Stations for 16 Days' initiative that will see 16 stations throughout Victoria go orange.

To be part of the *Victoria Against Violence* campaign at work, in the community or at home, the public can wear or display orange and use the #GoOrange and #PutYourHandUp hashtags on social media.

The *Victoria Against Violence* campaign is a key part of the UN's orange themed UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign from today 25 November to 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

To find out more visit [vic.gov.au/women/family-violence-prevention](http://vic.gov.au/women/family-violence-prevention)

## Inspiring young people to join Victorian Youth Congress

Young people from across Victoria will make their voices heard as members of the first Victorian Youth Congress. Members of the Youth Congress are aged between 12 and 25 years old and come from metropolitan and rural areas, including Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong, Nagambie, Ararat, and Gippsland.

Youth congress includes Aboriginal young people, LGBTI young people, young people living with a disability and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

At the Youth Summit earlier this year, hundreds of young Victorians came together to identify priority issues for young people, including mental health, education, housing and homelessness, and employment.

These issues will shape the direction of the Youth Congress during its first term.

For more information go to <http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/government-info-assistance/youth-programs/victorian-government-youth-policy>

## More Disability supports for people in Eastern Melbourne

More than 15,000 people with a disability will get the support they need with the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Inner and Outer Eastern Melbourne, from November 2017.

The scheme will see around 15,400 Victorians living in the two areas access supports, including 2,100 people who will receive supports for the very first time.

The Government is supporting people and organisations transition to the NDIS with a \$20 million Transition Support Package for a range of practical and targeted readiness activities for people with disability and their families and carers, the disability workforce and service providers.

22 organisations will receive funding as part of round two of the package, which will help people adapt to the new way the NDIS will work.

Support will be provided through online resources, workshops, information sessions, consultancy, resources and direct one-to-one support.

The NDIS is a national approach to providing individualised support and services to people with disability. It will mean better outcomes for people with disability who will have greater choice and control over the services and decisions affecting their lives.

The NDIS will be fully operational across Victoria by mid-2019 and will support more than 105,000 Victorians with a disability.

For more information go to [www.vic.gov.au/ndis](http://www.vic.gov.au/ndis)

## Have your say on the African Communities Action Plan

African Ministerial Working Group are seeking feedback from the community on a draft plan to create more social and economic opportunities for African Victorians.

The African Communities Action Plan is being developed by the 22-member working group, which was formed in 2016 and is made up of African community leaders and young people.

The draft plan includes a range of community-designed actions related to education, employment, business development, community cohesion, leadership, women and youth.

The African Communities Action Plan aims to address the needs of all African Victorians, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups that could benefit from greater support.

The central role of African community members in the plan's development reflects the move towards a more participatory approach to planning and delivering programs for African communities.

The draft African Communities Action Plan is available at [multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://multicultural.vic.gov.au). Feedback can be emailed to [amwg.secretariat@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:amwg.secretariat@dpc.vic.gov.au) until 15 December 2017.

The working group will submit the final plan early next year.

## Holding family violence perpetrators to account

Under the Family Violence Perpetrator Intervention Grants Program which opened 22 November 2017, profit and not-for-profit groups will be able to apply for up to \$400,000 in funding to pilot new interventions for perpetrators of family violence aged over 18 years in Victoria.

The grants form part of a \$7.9 million package delivered through the *Victorian Budget 2017/18* to implement a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence to trial and evaluate new perpetrator interventions within the justice system.

Applications for the grants are now open and close at 5pm on Wednesday 20 December 2017, with funded programs to be completed by June 2019.

Information about the grants program can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website at [justice.vic.gov.au/pi-grants](http://justice.vic.gov.au/pi-grants)

## New App: makes parenting fun

A new ground-breaking app is making parenting fun and interactive by giving parents of children from birth up to three years of age simple skills to support their child's development.

The Day by Day: Learning Together app sees parents complete activities that are organised into different everyday environments such as the kitchen, bathroom, outdoors and travelling. They can even design the characters to look like themselves and their child.

The app, which is available on Android and Apple smart phones and tablets, is designed so that there are no data usage costs after it has been installed.

Save the Children, one of Australia's largest aid and development agencies, oversaw the development of the app by working with researchers, policy makers and practitioners and consulting with parents.

[Download the Apple version of the app](#)

[Download the Android version of the app](#)

## Research of generations pave the way to a healthy future

Up to 100,000 Victorian babies could be enlisted to provide clues to what factors influence the healthy development of children in one of the world's largest longitudinal studies of children. The Generation Victoria project or *Gen V* was announced at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute 30 November 2017.

The project is a partnership between the Government, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

*Gen V* will provide comprehensive data to help guide researchers and governments in tackling issues including obesity, allergies, infection, social exclusion, poor mental health, learning and chronic health conditions such as diabetes and autism spectrum disorder.

Parents of every baby born in 2020 and 2021 would be invited to be followed for five years to create a holistic picture of the health and wellbeing and development of children, generating broad and continuously expanding data that can be used to inform policy and service delivery.

To support genetic research and genomic technology, the *Genetic and Genomic Healthcare Framework for Victoria 2021* was released.

As genomics is increasingly incorporated into routine healthcare and public health, clinical evidence is needed to support the appropriate use of genomic information in improving the health of all Victorians.

## International Day of People with Disability 3 December 2017

The National Disability Awards honour and recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals, teams and organisations that have improved the lives of Australians with disability. To see the winners of the National Disability Awards and to find out more about International Day of People with Disability go to <http://www.idpwd.com.au/>

## TAFE will take you there

TAFE can kickstart your career or create a pathway to university. There are hundreds of courses, at TAFEs across Victoria, to give you skills and training to help get the job you want.

<http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Students/Pages/tafe.aspx?Redirect=1>

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Please feel free to send this newsletter onto all staff within your organisation.

Regards

Early Pathways Team

Children Families Disability and Operations Division  
Department of Health and Human Services Victoria