

MEDIA RELEASE

7 May 2024

Growing pressure on families recognised in Premier Allan’s first budget

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare was pleased to find a focus on relieving the growing pressure on families in [today’s state budget](#), which shows the Allan Government’s commitment to supporting children and young people.

The 2024-25 Victorian State Budget tabled in parliament today by Treasurer Tim Pallas has been framed as a budget for families that is “sensible and disciplined”.

The Centre’s CEO Deb Tsorbaris welcomes measures responding to the economic and social pressures on families and continued funding for the essential child and family services sector over the next two years.

She says the Centre will work closely with Government to embed child and family service funding as long-term investment to combat the immense pressures on vulnerable families who might otherwise have contact with the child protection system.

“The cost of living supports in the form of the \$400 School Saving Bonus means children will directly benefit from this investment,” she says.

The School Saving Bonus provides \$287 million to deliver a \$400 payment for all government and eligible non-government school students to help cover the cost of uniforms and activities such as school camps, excursions and sporting events and will be available in time for term 1, 2025.

In its [budget submission](#), the Centre highlighted the need for continued investment in child and family services sector to scale early intervention and support services for disadvantaged children and families.

Ms Tsorbaris says the \$374 million to continue to protect at-risk children and young people will ensure the continuation of early intervention and family reunification services to keep families together and children safe.

This includes:

- \$198 million in early intervention and family reunification to keep families together and children safe, through the Strong Families, Safe Children initiative.
- \$128 million to support the child protection workforce to keep children safe and help those families who are most in need.
- \$38 million to support carers providing home-based care for children and young people. This includes the continuation of the promising CareHub model.

“Our sector is key to providing support to families at the earliest sign of need to prevent a trajectory of intensive, high-cost, tertiary services in addition to the irretrievable breakdown of families and continuation of the cycle of intergenerational trauma,” says Ms Tsorbaris.

The Centre also welcomed \$8.4 million to better support children in out-of-home care and strengthen the LOOKOUT program in schools and kinders, alongside funding for new LOOKOUT learning advisors to provide wrap-around care for young people.

Family violence funding includes \$211 million for women’s safety, to hold perpetrators to account and help victim-survivors, with \$9.2 million toward the growth and capacity of the family violence workforce in assessing and managing family violence risk and wellbeing issues for children and young people.

“Keeping kids at the centre of our family and gendered violence response is critical if we hope to break down intergenerational harm,” says Ms Tsorbaris.

Other budget announcements included:

- Funding to support the extension of the Yoorrook Justice Commission as the formal truth-telling process with Aboriginal Victorians.
- Youth Justice funding of \$28.4 million to support students in the justice system and \$34.8 million to prevent young people from re-entering the justice system. These are important initiatives to ensure support for kids to get back on track.
- \$165 million allocated to fund the redress scheme for Victorian care leavers before 1990, which acknowledges the physical, psychological and emotional abuse and neglect they suffered while in care.
- Continuation of Free Kinder and rollout of three-year-old kinder, with \$29 million to support more families with Universal, Enhanced and Aboriginal Maternal Child Health programs, and \$4 million to continue pediatric services through the Victorian Aboriginal Health Services.

Ms Tsorbaris says the Centre will continue to work with the Government to ensure children, young people, and families are safe and supported, and remain central to policy and funding to solve major economic and social challenges.

Ends.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Ms Tsorbaris, please contact Louise Johnson – 0400 241 179 – louise.johnson@cfecfw.asn.au

About the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

The Centre is Victoria’s peak body for child and family services. For over 100 years, the Centre has advocated for the rights and wellbeing of children, young people, and families in Victoria,

ensuring their right to be heard, to be safe, to access education and to remain connected to family, community and culture. Visit www.cfecfw.asn.au for more information.