

Media Release

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Minister for Families & Children
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INNOVATIVE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS EXTENDED TO IMPROVE LIVES

The Andrews Labor Government has extended an initiative that brings together local community leaders and experts to improve services and support for vulnerable children, young people and families.

Meeting with the Inner Gippsland Area Partnership in Morwell today, Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos said the Children and Youth Area Partnerships initiative would be extended across all eight areas until at least 30 June 2019.

Under the initiative, new ways of working together are being tested to respond to local issues. This work is improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people across Victoria.

The Inner Gippsland Area Partnership has achieved a number of improvements to date, including:

- more than a 50 per cent increase in eligible vulnerable children enrolled in Early Start Kindergarten
- more than 200 vulnerable children now receiving a free book a month for their first five years, in partnership with United Way and local agencies
- a fully-funded research collaboration in partnership with Federation University to collect and examine local evidence on what works to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people
- working with young people to co-design solutions that provide more responsive services

Area Partnerships have shown that strengthening the links between local stakeholders helps prevent vulnerable children and young people from falling between the cracks.

The Partnerships will contribute to the Labor Government's reform agenda to make Victoria the Education State, as well as underpinning the ongoing work of the Roadmap for Reform to strengthen and improve Victoria's child protection and family services system.

Area Partnerships in Central Highlands, Inner Gippsland, Mallee, Loddon, Outer Eastern Melbourne, Ovens Murray, Southern Melbourne and Western Melbourne will continue.

A priority for Area Partnerships will be the development of measureable outcomes to track progress, helping improve support for Victorian families and children.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

"Our government is backing local communities to find solutions that improve the lives of children, young people and families in their local area."

"This initiative underpins our ongoing work to strengthen and improve Victoria's child protection and family services system."

"We are investing in improvements to support vulnerable Victorians so they can participate in the Education State and help create the jobs of the future."