



The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Social Services
Member for Kingston

The Hon Justine Elliot MP

Assistant Minister for Social Services
Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Member for Richmond

Ms Sally Sitou MP

Member for Reid

MEDIA RELEASE

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Helping children affected by violence to heal and thrive

The Albanese Labor Government has today launched the Helping Children Heal program in inner west Sydney, to strengthen support for children affected by family and domestic violence.

The new hub in Burwood will provide specialised support for children aged 6-12, to help mitigate the impacts of violence on their wellbeing and development, and support them to heal, grow and thrive in safety.

The Albanese Government has prioritised supporting children and young people affected by family and domestic violence, including recognising children as victim-survivors of violence in their own right for the first time under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*.

In addition to the Helping Children Heal and Supporting Adolescent Boys programs which are rolling out now, as an outcome of the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet, the Albanese Government also announced an \$80 million boost to enhance and expand child-centric trauma-informed supports for children and young people.

This will include:

- Expanding children's access to Specialised Family Violence Services;
- Funding to specialist and community support services, including Aboriginal; Controlled-Community Organisations and rural and regional services, to expand social, therapeutic, legal and other support services provided to

victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and children at risk of or engaging in harmful sexual behaviour;

- Funding to expand and extend funding to Aboriginal Controlled-Community Organisations to provide culturally safe child-centred support available to First Nations children and young people and their families under Specialised Family Violence Services; and
- Funding to expand the Supporting Children After Separation Program to provide specialised, longer-term support for children of separated families who are already engaged in counselling support, to avoid needing to transfer those cases to a Specialised Family Violence Service.

This work will also have a specific focus on First Nations children and young people and prioritise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Sector, in line with Closing the Gap.

Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth stated that supporting children affected by family and domestic violence has been a key priority for the Albanese Government.

“As part of the 2022-23 Budget the Government committed \$3.6 million for the Helping Children Heal program, which is being delivered by the Women’s and Girl’s Emergency Centre (WAGEC),” Minister Rishworth said.

“Helping Children Heal takes a holistic approach to supporting children providing services including trauma support to help children process their experiences, tutoring and education activities, access to therapy, psychology and health care, and information and support for parents.”

“This support, which is available now, will be bolstered by our further investments to expand and enhance other important supports for children and young people.”

Assistant Minister for Social Services and for the Prevention of Family Violence, Justine Elliot, visited the new hub for the official launch of the program in Burwood today.

“Under the National Plan, we are strengthening trauma-informed and targeted support for children who have experienced violence, and the Helping Children Heal program is a critical part of this,” Assistant Minister Elliot said.

“Importantly, this program recognises children as victim-survivors in their own right, with their own voices, experiences and needs - which is critical to breaking the cycle of violence and achieving long-term healing and recovery.

Local Federal Member, Sally Sitou MP, said how important the service will be for the next generation of her community.

“Every child should have the opportunity to thrive, free from the impacts of violence - and I’m proud that the Albanese Labor Government has invested – and is continuing to invest – in programs that make this a reality”, said Ms Sitou.

More information on *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032* is available on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

If you or someone you know is experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family, or sexual violence, call 1800 737 732, text 0458 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au for online chat and video call services.

If you are concerned about your behaviour or use of violence, you can contact the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or visit www.ntv.org.au

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