

Media Release

The Hon Vicki Ward MP
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Employment



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ABORIGINAL-LED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICE FOR NORTH GEELONG

The Allan Labor Government has worked with Aboriginal communities to deliver a new, Aboriginal-led service to support people affected by family violence in the Barwon Wadawurrung Country area.

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward this week officially opened the Aboriginal Access Point Barwon service, which is being operated by Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative.

The service is fully staffed by an Aboriginal workforce who provide culturally safe support for local Aboriginal families affected by family violence.

Operated by Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, the access point provides culturally appropriate supports and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Wathaurong, Gulidjan and Gadabanud country, in the Geelong, Bellarine and Colac regions.

The Labor Government has invested \$2.6 million to create three Aboriginal-designed and led family violence services complementary to The Orange Door Network. The Barwon service is the second Aboriginal Access Point established in Victoria, with the first launched in the Bayside Peninsula area in July 2023.

People can access support from the service face-to-face with contact points by phone and email and via outreach support for Aboriginal communities and groups.

Aboriginal Access Points are being delivered under the *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way* strategy, the key Aboriginal-led Victorian Agreement that commits community, services and government to strengthening the lives of Aboriginal people, families and communities and ensuring Aboriginal people live free from family violence.

The Labor Government continues to invest in culturally safe services designed to prevent and respond to family violence and advance Aboriginal self-determination.

Information is available at wathaurong.org.au/community-strengthening-team.

Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward

"We are investing in needed Aboriginal-led family violence supports that are culturally safe and tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal people."

Quote attributable to CEO, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Simon Flagg

"Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative welcomes the investment into culturally safe support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our region. This service, alongside services that Wathaurong already provides with The Orange Door, will allow us to support our community who are experiencing or at risk of family violence."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins

"Providing culturally appropriate support services for our Victorian Aboriginal communities is essential to make sure that they are able to access support that is suitable for their needs."

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