

Media Release

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Children

Minister for Disability



Tuesday, 11 March 2025

FREE PARENTING SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is giving families free access to the supports they need close to home at an Aboriginal-led early parenting centre in Frankston.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn today visited the Baluk Balert Barring Early Parenting Centre – which offers free specialist sleep, settling and feeding services, support with the health and wellbeing of both babies and parents and help for families to navigate the challenging early years of parenthood.

Baluk Balert Baring combines traditional and modern health support for parents from the early days of pregnancy until their kids start school. It has support for men transitioning into parenthood, connections to community services like playgroups, and maternal child health services.

The new centre is a response to a clear gap in Aboriginal-led family services in the region that focus on early years, where the First Nations population is projected to grow significantly, by 51 per cent in the five years to 2028.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive in their early years is one of the goals of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The centre provides a home away from home for new parents in the new purpose-built clinic on the Nepean Highway in Frankston, offering First Nations families the choice to access culturally safe early parenting supports.

Every family is unique, so the centre tailors care and support to the needs of each family – increasing the confidence of parents and giving them strategies they can continue to use at home.

The Baluk Balert Barring Early Parenting Centre respects cultural practices and addresses the unique needs of parents, carers, children and local Aboriginal communities.

The Labor Government's \$165 million investment to expand Victoria's early parenting services is delivering 12 new and upgraded Early Parenting Centres, providing support to more than 5,000 additional families every year.

Building on this, the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* also delivered funding to increase the time newborns spend with maternal and child health nurses, as well as funding to support new dads' groups across the state. For more information on early parenting centres visit: betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health.

Quote attributable to Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn

"The road from pregnancy to primary school is wonderful but challenging – now our nation-leading early parenting centre provides Aboriginal families with a dedicated location to get the culturally safe support they need during those crucial first years."

Quote attributable to Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke

"We know how important health services are for families just starting out. Now, this centre will make a real difference to the lives of so many, making sure every child gets the best possible start in life."

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Quote attributable to Member for Hastings Paul Mercurio

“Early parenting centres are an investment in the future health and wellbeing of our children – and Baluk Balert Barring is a place where traditional and modern medical practices combine to deliver free help to Aboriginal Victorians at the newest state-of-the-art facility.”