

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



Friday, 14 March 2025

SUPPORTING VICTIM SURVIVORS TO STAY SAFE AT HOME

The Allan Labor Government is supporting more women and children experiencing family violence to stay safely in their own home and communities as part of a Victorian-first trial in Geelong.

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Natalie Hutchins today officially launched the start of the Safe At Home initiative in Geelong – with a \$6 million investment to enable victim survivors of family violence to stay safely at home.

For too long, women and children experiencing family violence have been forced to leave their homes to escape violence with life-changing consequences including the risk of homelessness, social isolation and loss of community, schools and workplaces.

Together with McAuley Community Services and Meli, the Labor Government will deliver this three-year trial to enable 54 victim-survivors to remain in their home and community, while the perpetrator is removed from the home and given support to change their behaviour.

Safe At Home can be rapidly activated within 48 hours of referral and will include a single case manager to establish a plan and identify immediate and ongoing needs. It will provide families with specialist supports in housing, employment, child and cultural support if required.

To keep women and children safe, case managers will assess risk and provide access to Flexible Support Packages which can include everything from fixing broken windows and locks to security measures.

Throughout this time, victim survivors and the person who uses violence will be provided with access to a range of services, including counselling, legal and financial advice as well as housing, health and community specialists.

This builds on the Labor Government's package of reforms that will drive action at every stage: responding to victims when violence occurs, delivering a stronger justice response that holds offenders to account, and continuing Victoria's world-leading prevention response – stopping violence before it starts.

The Safe At Home pilot is part of the Labor Government's \$92.8 million *Strengthening Women's Safety Package*, which includes work to prevent violence and provide tailored responses for women and children who experience family violence, while keeping the focus on holding men who use violence accountable.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Natalie Hutchins

"For too long, women and children experiencing family violence have had to disrupt their lives and leave their homes to escape violence."

"We're flipping the script and supporting women and children to stay safely connected to their communities, schools and workplaces, by removing the perpetrator from the home and offering tailored support to the whole household."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara Ella George

"Safe at Home is an innovative model with a strong focus on early intervention whereby adults, babies, children and young people receive individualised, tailored support, enabling them to stay safely in their home and community."

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Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant

“This pilot program offers women and children early intervention and support within the Geelong community, enabling them to stay in their homes safely, rather than being forced to leave.”

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

“Providing families with individualised service and support means that they can stay in their community, which we know is essential to recovery for victim-survivors of family violence.”

Quotes attributable to McAuley CEO, Jocelyn Bignold OAM

“Years of research, collaboration and co-design have gone into the development of the Safe at Home approach, and we are looking forward to implementing this trial with careful monitoring to ensure we establish a practice that will shift the default that sees women leaving, to one where they can stay in their own homes safely.”

Quotes attributable to Meli Acting CEO Bernadette McCartney

“At Meli, we support women and children experiencing violence, as well as working with men who use violence, and the Safe at Home program will enable us to provide an early intervention approach to the whole family where the risk of violence is present.”