

# Media Release

**Jenny Mikakos MLC**  
Minister for Families & Children  
Minister for Youth Affairs



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## **NEW ANTI-FAMILY VIOLENCE TRIAL: AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST**

In an Australian first, the Caring Dads program which helps dads realise the impact of family violence is set to begin in Melbourne.

Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos announced \$575,000 for the Children's Protection Society to begin the prevention and early intervention trial.

Around 60 fathers from across Melbourne who are at risk of engaging in violent behaviour, or may have alcohol or other drug issues, will be invited to participate.

The men will attend voluntary group sessions over 17 weeks, learning to understand the impact of trauma on their children and how to be more respectful towards their children's mothers.

The Caring Dads program was first developed in Canada and will combine the expertise of the Children's Protection Society, UnitingCare ReGen, the University of Toronto and Melbourne University.

It is currently run in Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States.

Results from the British trial found mothers and children felt happier and safer because of the program and reported a meaningful improvement in the behaviour of the father.

The program addresses the cycle of family violence by placing children at the centre of the response, and builds on the Andrews Labor Government's work to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

This funding is in addition to the Labor Government's \$168 million *Roadmap for Reform*, an overhaul of the child protection system that is shifting the focus from crisis response to early intervention.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos**

*"We want men to engage in respectful, non-abusive co-parenting with their partners. Where they have exposed their children to violence in the past, they need to realise the impact of their actions on their children."*

*"By intervening early, women and children are kept safe. There is an urgent need to trial new family-focused strategies."*

*"The Andrews Labor Government is working to stop the scourge of family violence and the Caring Dads trial aligns with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence."*

### **Quotes attributable to Children's Protection Society CEO Aileen Ashford**

*"Programs like Caring Dads play such a crucial role in supporting children who experience violence, abuse and neglect."*

*"We applaud the Victorian Government's commitment to the Caring Dads program, and look forward to seeing the positive impact this program will have on Victorian children and families in the future."*

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