

Immediate Review into Child Safety

LG SECTOR BRIEF



15.7.2025



The voice for
local government

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities and the governments that represent them—are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Introduction

The MAV was pleased to see the swift response from the Victorian Premier in announcing a 'short and sharp' review to focus on immediate actions to be taken in relation to the recent situation in a number of Victorian childcare centres. As the level of government closest to communities and as service providers with frontline experience councils are well placed to inform and provide contributions and valuable insights to support the implementation of the Reviews recommendations.

We have provided our initial contribution to the Premier and the Minister, reinforcing the need for a coordinated approach. This Members Brief outlines our early response and underscores that any further input must be guided by an integrated and comprehensive lens. Recognising the complexity of the issue, MAV has framed its recommendations under two categories: Immediate Actions and Broader Systems Reform. Given the Review's Terms of Reference were only announced yesterday, MAV may seek additional input from members in the coming weeks. [Rapid Child Safety Review | vic.gov.au](#)

Every child deserves to grow up safe—and councils play an essential role in safeguarding that right. Ensuring child safety is a shared responsibility across every adult, institution and layer of government. When systems fail and harm occurs, accountability must be upheld. The MAV stands with our member councils in calling for coordinated, cross-sector reform, including genuine collaboration with the Early Childhood Education and Care sector, to deliver lasting change that protects every child.

'This is not the first time, and it won't be the last, unless governments across the federation take urgent action to implement the evidence-based recommendations from numerous inquiries over past decades that will help keep our children safe,' Commissioner Hollonds said. AHRC: 2025

Initial Recommendations provided to the Review

1. Immediate

Recommendation 1

Immediate Review of Child Safety Policies and all Working with Children Checks and Staff Qualifications

Rationale: All Approved Providers and agencies supplying staff to ECEC services must urgently review their child safe policies, and ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities. Confirm that all personnel have current, valid WWCCs and required qualifications.

Recommendation 2

Increase funding for the Victorian ECEC Regulator

Rationale: The Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD) must be resourced to proactively monitor and assess services, with a baseline expectation of assessment at least every three years.

Recommendation 3

Establish an Approved Provider Administrator Model

Rationale: Introduce a formal Administrator model for services that consistently underperform, allowing for immediate improvement without disrupting families.

Recommendation 4

Mandate immediate and ongoing training in child safe standards and mandatory reporting

Rationale: Require all Approved Providers, Agencies and all staff working in ECEC services to undertake immediate training/refresher training on their obligations under the law and regulatory frameworks applicable to this sector, including child safe standards and mandatory reporting. This training should be compulsory on an annual basis.

Recommendation 5

Commence work on a National Working with Children Check (WWCC) data base (in real time)

Rationale: A national Working with Children Check (WWCC) database was recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Specifically, recommendation 3(a)(i) from the Royal Commission's WWCCs report in 2015 called for states and territories to establish a central database accessible to all jurisdictions. August 2015

Recommendation 6

Empowering Parents and Carers

Rationale: The State government should provide trusted, accessible, and bilingual information for families about child safety in early education, including a checklist of questions they can ask services about safety practices, staffing, reporting, and supervision. This could also extend to information on signs they can identify about signs of abuse so parents can have something to support them in their personal observations.

2. Broader Systems Reform

The MAV wishes to acknowledge there are good and skilled people working in the sector and specifically in our council-run services. Whilst this situation is not a reflection on the many great staff working in the sector it does highlight the pressure and gaps the ECEC system is facing. This incident highlights the need for deeper structural reform and sustained national attention to early childhood safety and workforce development

There has been much said about broader systems reform for many years, with prominent and respected voices (including local government) calling for greater system stewardship, improved data sharing across jurisdictions including local government, greater accountability at the front end when training staff to work in the sector through to more rigorous and joined up approval processes before someone gets to build and run a childcare centre.

Recommendation 7

Multigovernmental stewardship of the ECEC system

Rationale: The three levels of government in Australia fund, support, plan for and hold data on the ECEC service system. They are also the primary overseers of child safety. The Commonwealth to establish a multigovernmental arrangement that sees local, state and federal governments as stewards of the ECEC system.

Recommendation 8

Establish National Registration for all staff working in ECEC settings and improve data sharing arrangements

Rationale: State-based registrations exist for early childhood teachers and health professionals. Although we know this is problematic, all ECEC staff should be registered through a national framework that ensures minimum standards, tracks professional conduct, and provides accountability.

Recommendation 9

Invest in the Workforce for the Long Term

Rationale: Workforce shortages, casualisation, and high turnover are direct results of underinvestment. The sector needs sustainable funding and long-term strategies to attract, train, and retain high-quality educators. Loopholes in qualifications requirements need to be closed.

Conclusion

This is a critical juncture—one that demands both immediate action to address system failures and enduring reform to prevent future harm. The MAV will continue to work alongside councils, ensuring their insights and expertise help shape the Review and drive meaningful, long-lasting change for Victorian children and families.

For further information please contact Kath Brackett, Director Community and Sector Development kbrackett@mav.asn.au or Kim Howland, Manager Community Wellbeing, khowland@mav.asn.au

MAV would be pleased to provide clarification on any information in this submission. For further information, please contact, <Insert name>, <Insert position>, at <insert email>.

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