



Select Committee on the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Victoria

Hearing Date: 25 February 2026

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children

Received date: 19 May 2026

1. **The CHAIR, p. 17**

Question Asked:

Were you or any of the ACCOs engaged at any time over the course of the rapid review, the six weeks?

John BURTON: Not that I am aware of, but we would have to seek further information to see if there were any invitations.

The CHAIR: Can you take that on notice, please?

Response: To gather information for this response, we held a short consultation with Victorian ACCO ECEC services attending an EYS meeting in May 2026. We also reached out directly to an additional service.

The Victorian Government did not undertake a meaningful process to engage with ACCO ECEC sector in Victoria, nor the wider non-profit ECEC sector. They also wrote a submission. One ACCO service did report engaging with the rapid review but only after concerted proactive effort to do so. None of the other services SNAICC spoke to had been involved in the Child Safety Rapid Review in Victoria and their general impression was that there had been “no consultation.”

2. **The CHAIR, p. 18**

Question Asked:

Have SNAICC or the ACCOs that you work with here in Victoria had a lot of interaction with the new regulator in terms of bringing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience and lenses and in terms of closing the gap in early childhood accessibility?

Miranda EDWARDS: We would again have to take that on notice and actually go out and ask.

Response:

In our consultation with the Victorian ACCO sector, services made it clear that there has been no meaningful effort made by the Victorian Government or VECRA to engage with, get to know, visit, or develop relationships with ACCOs in Victoria. Nor was any deliberate effort made to understand and

incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, doing and lived experiences in establishment of VECRA. This is disappointing and unacceptable, given the Victorian Government's commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Rushing the establishment of new regulatory bodies without adequate or meaningful engagement with Aboriginal organisations is certain to result in policy which does not effectively meet their needs or centre their worldviews.

The outcomes of this inadequate approach to policy development are already being felt. One ACCO service has reported that a recent spot check by VECRA was very different to previous regulatory spot checks, and the impression left was that it was substantially more about compliance and surveillance rather than getting to know the service, understanding their service practice and provision and supporting quality uplift. There was no consultation from DE with services before, during or after the process.

3. Michael GALEA, p. 19

Question Asked:

What sort of funding do you get to do that program?

John BURTON: I would have to come back to you on the exact funding amount. The staff team in Victoria would be around four people – is that correct – who are working to support the sector. There are 13 ACCOs in the child care, preschool, kindergarten space here in Victoria. So they are working across that, which is great.

Michael GALEA: Terrific. Thank you. And any other data on notice please feel free to provide.

Response: Following a philanthropic investment to establish the Early Years Support program (then, THRYVE), SNAICC has received sporadic funding from the Commonwealth government to support EYS operations. However, despite noticeable positive outcomes across the sector, no sustained commitment of funding has been allocated by the Government after December 2026.

This drip feeding from the Commonwealth since the completion of the multiyear grant has been via the mid-year economic & fiscal outlook allocation (MYEFO) which happens in November each year. This makes planning and allocating resources very difficult for services, with allocations occurring so close to a calendar year grant agreement,

Previous allocations of financial support for the EYS program include:

- The first 3-year agreement was from Jan 2022-Dec 2024 (\$8.3M) and was split across the 3 pilot states of Victoria, WA and NSW, and a

national coordination team. The four teams received roughly the same amount.

- Following this, SNIACC received a one-year agreement for 2025 calendar year (\$2,122,050) and a one-year agreement for 2026 calendar year (\$2,188,290). These funding amounts support operations in the three states plus a national team.
- The first 2 grants agreements were administered through NIAA. But the overseeing of the agreement has now (and going forward) been transferred to Dept Education.
- Across WA, Victoria and NSW, SNAICC has received a range of small philanthropic grants for specific activities and resources in the EYS program.

4. **Georgie CROZIER, p. 23**

Question Asked:

Can I just follow on from that line of questioning from Dr Mansfield? How many Indigenous children attend ACCO services?

Miranda EDWARDS: In Victoria?

Georgie CROZIER: You referenced the 10 years. I am just keen to see what the figures are. You were saying 10 years ago you were working on these areas. So what numbers are we looking at?

Miranda EDWARDS: That was me personally when I ran a service. I am not sure, but we would have to take that on notice to find out the numbers.

John BURTON: There are around 13 ACCO services in Victoria. I do not know if we would have immediately the average numbers in each service, for example.

Georgie CROZIER: You can take it on notice.

Response:

With the establishment of the new Gordon Kindergarten operated by BDAC, there are now 14 ACCO ECECs operating in Victoria. There is no data available on the exact numbers of children attending those services, though we estimate that it is between 850 – 1,050 Aboriginal children.

According to the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2026 – Early childhood education and care data tables*, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending ACCO services nationally was **40,031** in 2023–24 (up from 33,366 in 2022–23 and 27,551 in 2021–22).

5. **Georgie CROZIER, pp. 24-25**

Question Asked:

Have you done modelling on what that looks like, and how much that would be?

John BURTON: We have done modelling nationally on what that looks like, including what a base level of funding for a service is and how you then do adjustments to the need of the community, to geography – like extra costs for remoteness and those sorts of things. So we have a model that describes what the costs would be. I cannot –

Georgie CROZIER: Can you provide that to the committee, the modelling?

John BURTON: Yes. We can provide that funding model to the committee.

Response: SNAICC has undertaken national modelling on a sustainable *block-based* funding approach for ACCO-led integrated early years services. The preferred model is a dedicated ACCO Early Years Service Model (outside the Child Care Subsidy), with a single recurrent funding stream made up of:

- a base funding entitlement for core services plus funding for the “glue” needed to operate and integrate services;
- a flexible funding component for community-designated activities; and
- needs-based loadings so funding responds to population size, remoteness and vulnerability.

The modelling includes a “funding floor” (minimum entitlement) for a small metropolitan service with average or lower vulnerability; at this floor, base plus flexible funding is costed at approximately \$1.2 million per service per year (recurrent). Flexible funding is modelled at 25% of the base entitlement.

Funding is then adjusted through loadings, including a remoteness loading of 0% (metropolitan), 10% (regional) and 40% (remote), and a vulnerability loading of up to 50% for the most disadvantaged communities (with 25% for the next quintile).

The modelling shows that, once population size, remoteness and vulnerability loadings are applied, total recurrent funding can increase substantially (for example, a remote, very large, high-vulnerability service is costed at up to approximately \$10.6 million per service per year).

The funding model is set out in SNAICC’s report *Funding Model Options for ACCO Integrated Early Years Services – Final Report* (May 2024), including the recommended funding model architecture and costing assumptions.