



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA  
Legal and Social Issues Committee – Legislative Assembly

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Can we do better with early childhood development in our diverse communities?

Early childhood development is being examined by the Legislative Assembly's Legal and Social Issues Committee, with a focus on the experiences of and programs available for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Committee is inviting public submissions from community members and organisations about young children's involvement in health services, early childhood education and care, early years of schooling, local community programs, and child and family support services. An important focus for the inquiry will be how involvement in these services and programs can help children and their families feel connected with their local communities.

"Victoria is one of the most culturally diverse states in Australia and the Committee wants to find out what's happening in our many communities in relation to early childhood development," Committee Chair Natalie Suleyman said.

"This is a broad-ranging inquiry that will examine the types of services and programs people are accessing, how well those programs are working, and what improvements can be made to ensure that young Victorians can get the best possible start to life," Ms Suleyman said.

For this inquiry, early childhood covers the period from birth to eight years old.

"We are focusing on culturally and linguistically diverse communities because we want to ensure that people who have arrived in Victoria from overseas, including newly arrived refugees, or community members who are not from an English-speaking background do not face any barriers when it comes to early childhood development," Ms Suleyman said.

"Whether it's schooling, health or participation in local activities, it's important that all young Victorians can benefit from living in our state, regardless of where their families have come from. So this inquiry will help us understand any issues that culturally diverse families are facing in giving their children a good start in life."

As part of the inquiry, the Committee will be considering best practice models that have been successfully implemented interstate and internationally.

"We'll be looking at what's working and what can be improved here in our state, and in doing that we also want to learn what others have done to see if there are approaches that we can use in Victoria that may benefit our communities," Ms Suleyman said.

Written submissions to the inquiry are welcome until 11 October 2019.

The Committee is interested in hearing from community members who wish to share their stories and experiences. Anyone needing assistance with how to make a contribution to this inquiry, including assistance with writing to the Committee, can contact the Committee secretariat by phoning 8682 2843.

Details on how to make a submission, and an outline of the key issues covered by the inquiry's terms of reference, are available from the Committee's [website](#).

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