

Foundational Supports Submission



5.12.2024



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.

DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This submission has been prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state. © Copyright MAV

Table of contents

1	<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
2	<i>Introduction</i>	6
3	<i>Report information</i>	7
3.1	<i>General supports</i>	7
3.2	<i>Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their families, carers and kin</i>	12
4	<i>Conclusions/Findings</i>	16
4.1	<i>General supports</i>	16
4.2	<i>Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their families, carers and kin</i>	16
5	<i>Recommendations</i>	17

1 Executive Summary

The MAV welcomes this opportunity to make a submission regarding Foundational Supports for people with disability, families, carers and kin.

The NDIS provides supports to eligible people with disability. Many people with disability are not on the NDIS. The recent NDIS Review provided strong evidence that some people with disability who are not on the NDIS may need more help than what is offered through mainstream or community services, like early childhood education, schools, and community mental health programs. This is where additional Foundational Supports can assist.

The Commonwealth State and Territory governments are working together on Foundational Supports. They are currently consulting with people with disability, and other stakeholders, to identify what should be included in 'Foundational Supports'. Governments have committed to co-designing Foundational Supports.

This submission is considered through the lens of where and how the Victorian local government sector could influence the planning, co-design, and implementation of Foundational Supports in step with their communities.

This submission will focus on both aspects of Foundational Supports currently open for consultation by the Australian Government Department of Social Services:

- General Supports, and
- Supports for Children (specific supports for children under 9 with developmental concern, delay or disability and their families, carers and kin).

Councils in Victoria play a vital role in promoting disability inclusion at the local level. They act as civic leaders, planners, employers, advocates, and managers of public spaces. Additionally, they provide community, arts, and sports or leisure services. Councils often collaborate with community organisations and individuals, using a place-based approach to enhance their efforts.

Victorian councils play a vital role in supporting children and families by providing Maternal and Child Health services, early years programs, and sector leadership.

Some councils are providers of Home and Community Care Program for Younger People.

The MAV makes the following recommendations in this submission.

Recommendations	
General Supports	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a new funded model of 'Community Connectors/Navigators' to be employed by councils (who opt-in) to offer place-based and accessible navigation across local service systems and community activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage the strengths of Victorian councils' to build capacity in communities for support and inclusion of

	<p>people living with disability in Victoria through a joined-up system of all governments working in partnership.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and fund a program model reflective of the strengths of the former Victorian BIC Program and replicate it nationally for consistency in community capacity building and inclusion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align outcomes and measures of progress across the levels of government for collective impact, with improved data sets at the local government area level. Data would provide evidence of impact and value to attract additional resourcing to enhance or scale initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the Victorian Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP) as part of the Foundational supports available in Victoria, building upon the strengths of the program and addressing the challenges and gaps raised by the sector during the program review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urgently increase funding to reflect real operational costs to deliver a refreshed HACC-PYP program within the Foundational Support system for sustainability.
<p>Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their family, carers and kin</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian councils must be represented in continuing consultation on the planning, co-design, and implementation of Foundational supports.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following must underpin Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their family, carers and kin: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shared commitment across the sector and with the government <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working together for Victorian Children Building on Victorian Leadership in early years Partnering for better outcomes Evidence-based solutions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing practice expertise, that embeds family expertise, into policy Learning from what works Co-designing sustainable solutions Systems integration <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting existing strengths Bridging service gaps together Creating clear pathways for families

	<p>4. Safeguarding and quality</p> <p>a. The best interests of every child are central to policy and practice</p> <p>b. Share reforms communications with the sector, and families.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain focus on both Foundational supports and inclusive education to complement each other.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support is needed from all levels of government, the sector and First Nations communities, to strengthen partnerships with Koorie services and communities, to improve access pathways to health services and early childhood education.

2 Introduction

The MAV welcomes this opportunity to make a submission regarding Foundational Supports for people with disability, their families, carers, and kin. The MAV is the peak representative and advocacy body for Victoria's 79 councils. The MAV was formed in 1879, and the Municipal Association Act 1907 appointed the MAV the official voice of local government in Victoria.

The NDIS provides supports to eligible people with disability. Many people with disability are not on the NDIS. The recent NDIS Review provided strong evidence that some people with disability who are not on the NDIS may need more help than what is offered through mainstream or community services, like early childhood education, schools, and community mental health programs. This is where additional Foundational Supports can assist.

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments are working together on Foundational Supports and are currently consulting with people with disability, and other stakeholders, to identify what should be included in 'Foundational Supports'. Governments have committed to co-designing Foundational Supports.

This submission will focus on both aspects of Foundational Supports currently open for consultation by the Australian Government Department of Social Services:

- General Supports, and
- Supports for Children (specific supports for children under 9 with developmental concern, delay and/or disability and their families, carers and kin).

Councils in Victoria play a vital role in promoting disability inclusion at the local level. They act as civic leaders, planners, employers, advocates, and managers of public spaces. Additionally, they provide community, arts, and sports or leisure services. Councils often collaborate with community organisations and individuals, using a place-based approach to enhance their efforts.

Victorian councils play a vital role in supporting children and families by providing Maternal and Child Health services, early years programs, and sector leadership.

Some councils in Victoria continue to provide the state-managed Home and Community Care Program for Young People (HACC PYP). This program supports daily living activities and promotes social inclusion for individuals with disabilities who are not participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

3 Report information

3.1 General supports

The consultation on General Supports is exploring categories of supports for:

- A reformed information, advice and referral service offering
- A reformed capacity building service offering, through the lens of:
 - For individuals
 - For families, carers and kin
 - For communities

This submission emphasises the potential of collaborating with local governments to enhance community capacity building. Capacity building is a core strength of local government and a primary focus of general support. It not only involves improving the capabilities of individuals and families but also aims to enhance community resilience. Effective community capacity building can lead to better access to local information. The place-based approach adopted by councils enables them to engage with individuals in their own environments.

Councils possess a deep understanding of their community's needs and strengths, including population diversity and existing inequities. They cultivate relationships with community leaders, leverage local knowledge, and serve as effective points of contact for engaging with residents.

3.1.1 A reformed information, advice, and referral service offering

It is important to understand that local governments are considered by many in their communities to be a trusted and reliable source of local information. There is no current resourcing nor formal roles for Victorian councils to support community members with disability and their families with navigational supports across service systems. The MAV would like to highlight the precedent to scope local governments into the information, advice, and referral service pillar of the Foundational Supports system, such as Community Connector roles outlined in the Case Study below.

To strengthen and formalise the role that councils are well placed to offer as 'Community Connectors' via a Foundational Supports framework would require adequate resourcing for dedicated staff for councils opting into such a model. Dedicated 'local connector/navigational' roles would enable accessible support to local information and navigational supports across various systems and community activities. Councils are well placed to understand the needs and diversity of their communities, already have some connection to local service systems, have an awareness of service gaps, and most critically, have a strong awareness and connection to local community activities and events, support groups, volunteer pathways, local employment pathway initiatives, and community resources.

The MAV recommends developing a new funded model of 'Community Connectors' to be employed by councils (who opt-in) to offer place-based and accessible navigation across local service systems and community activities.

Case study: Community Connector roles in local government

A growing number of Victorian councils have reimagined their role to support community members with dedicated roles that provide information and support to navigate local service systems. The roles are predominantly funded from general

council revenue and, therefore, do not fall under any external policy scope or guidance, and the roles vary from council to council. The recent shift (July 2024) from Victorian councils' involvement in the aged care assessment model was a significant driver behind the establishment of many of these new roles to support older residents. Up until 30 June 2024, 42 Victorian councils were subcontracted by the Victorian government to provide Regional Assessment Services for older people to access aged care. This was reduced to only 2 councils from 1 July 2024, with another national reform to introduce the Single Assessment System in December 2024 that may result in no Victorian councils having a connection to this service.

Some councils have established new 'Community Connector' roles to support older residents with information, navigation, and connection to local community supports and service systems. It is important to note that the roles are not specific to navigating the aged care system (although they may be able to support early access to information or barriers) and are more focused on supporting older residents to access other community services and activities or government services at their time of need. These roles are focused on individual capacity building and do not undertake case management.

This innovative model offers a 'blueprint' to co-design new place-based navigational supports under a reformed Foundational Supports model to support people living with disability across the life stages.

3.1.2 Community Capacity Building

Local governments are ideally placed to lead and develop capacity for social and civic inclusion for people with disabilities. A state-funded partnership with the government would help councils achieve better outcomes.

Councils prioritise the needs of their local communities while also responding to federal and state legislation and policy directions. They play a crucial role in partnering with various stakeholders to design and develop the social, built, economic, and natural environments that promote the health and well-being of all community members, with a focus on accessibility, inclusion, and universal design.

For individuals living with disabilities and their caregivers, councils can offer valuable local information, act as a liaison with service providers, coordinate and support community networks, advocate for access and inclusion, and strengthen the capacity of local organisations and community groups.

Victorian Councils are required to have Disability Action Plans under the Disability Act 2006 (Vic) to:

- Reduce barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- Reduce barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- Promote inclusion and participation in the community of persons with disability
- Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.¹

¹ (Victorian) Disability Act 2006, Section 38

Additional resourcing would strengthen the community capacity-building capabilities of Victorian councils. The following case study demonstrates a program that was highly valued in Victoria before the rollout of NDIS. With a partnership approach and new funding, a program framework could be reimagined for the current ecosystem of foundational supports. Such a model can be replicable across jurisdictions if supported by the Federal and Victorian Governments.

Case Study: Victorian Government Building Inclusive Communities Program (BIC)

The Victorian Government's Building Inclusive Communities Program (BIC) funded the appointment of dedicated disability roles (Metro, Rural, and Deaf Access Officers) in councils across Victoria. This initiative supported 27 rural and regional councils and 32 metropolitan councils, with a total investment of \$7.3 million.

Launched in 2002, the BIC program ended after the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as it was believed that Local Area Coordinators (LACs) could fulfil similar roles.

The BIC Program aimed to:

- Empower people with disabilities to participate in their communities.
- Strengthen community capacity to support individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Facilitate local community planning that involves people with disabilities, families, service providers, and organisations.
- Enhance the capacity of existing disability service providers.
- Improve access to information about relevant services and activities.

A national program model based on the Victorian BIC Program could enhance consistency in inclusion and capacity building across Australia. Currently, social inclusion for people with disabilities is poorly defined, and effective measurement tools are limited.

Local governments are well-positioned to promote social and civic inclusion for people with disabilities, but this requires funding and partnerships with the government.

3.1.3 Leveraging inter-governmental collaboration for community capacity building

Localised data is crucial for measuring impact and identifying needs. While NDIS data sets provide some insights, they only reflect the experiences of about 10 percent of the population with disabilities. Data collection at the local level is often inadequate, with key information frequently absent from these data sets. There is a lack of comprehensive data on community-level activities and the effectiveness of initiatives at the municipal level. Additionally, there is currently no alignment of outcomes and collective impact across different levels of government, making it more difficult to secure funding to enhance or scale initiatives.

Overarching policies such as Australia's Disability Strategy do not clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each level of government, even though they aspire to create a 'joined-up system'. Local governments are well placed to understand local needs and require dedicated resourcing and frameworks for a consistent approach to a joined-up system.

Access to foundational supports is essential, as mainstream services must be available to everyone in the community, regardless of their disability or NDIS status. Services outside the NDIS are often crucial for the daily lives of people with disabilities. For instance, access to the built environment and transportation is vital.

Making real progress necessitates a coordinated effort among governments at all levels, including local governments, and adequate resources. Investing in local social inclusion will enhance community awareness regarding the rights of individuals with disabilities and demonstrate how everyone can contribute to improving inclusion. Consequently, this will increase the available support—both mainstream and targeted—for all people with disabilities, regardless of their NDIS status.

3.1.4 Integration of service systems across the life-stages

Local government is crucial in delivering universal services and supporting secondary and tertiary services for its residents and communities. However, they face challenges managing multiple government system requirements, affecting efficiency and service delivery. The MAV advocates for a modern, integrated service system to address these inefficiencies with a focus on a joined-up approach to the life stages of our citizens.

Current national and state policies aim to enhance health and wellbeing, but the lack of integrated systems limits the ability to track and evaluate these outcomes effectively over the life span. There is a significant opportunity to plan for and develop an integrated data system. Such a system could follow a child from conception through universal and targeted services, capturing a holistic view of their needs and outcomes, and could be expanded into adulthood where supports are identified to provide optimal outcomes.

Current national and state policy aims to improve health and wellbeing outcomes across the lifecycle; however, the service system cannot cross-reference parameters that could measure these outcomes. Consequently, if we start at early childhood and move through the life stages, it is currently not possible to track the individual, family and/or service changes over time, understand subpopulation and whole of population data, or effectively evaluate and improve current services.

The MAV suggests that a conceptual model should be developed from a life stage perspective, rather than a program perspective. It should follow a person across their life stages and support the service system to better respond to individual needs in a proportionate and if needed targeted way.

3.1.5 Targeted supports - Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP)

The Victorian Government oversees the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP). This program supports younger individuals with disabilities whose ability to live independently is at risk. Services are specifically designed for younger people with moderate, severe, or profound disabilities, as well as their unpaid caregivers. In 2023, the Victorian Government conducted a review of HACC-PYP, just before the release of the NDIS Review. The findings and recommendations from this review have not yet been made available to the sector and are currently under consideration as part of the Foundational Support arrangements.

Currently, the sector's concerns raised during the review remain unresolved. These concerns include the belief that the HACC-PYP may no longer be suitable for its intended purpose, that it is underfunded, that it lacks awareness and promotion, and that it is disconnected from the NDIS. As a result, it fails to create a cohesive support system for individuals living with disabilities in Victoria.

Recommendations

- Develop a new funded model of 'Community Connectors/Navigators' to be employed by councils (who opt in) to offer place-based and accessible navigation across local service systems and community activities.
- Leverage the strengths of Victorian councils' to build capacity in communities for support and inclusion of people living with disability in Victoria through a joined-up system of all governments working in partnership.
- Develop a conceptual model from a life stage perspective, rather than a program perspective, to follow a person across their life stages and support the service system to better respond to individuals' needs in a proportionate and, if needed, targeted way.
- Update and fund a program model reflective of the strengths of the former Victorian BIC Program and replicate nationally for consistency in community capacity building and inclusion.
- Align outcomes and measures of progress across the levels of government for collective impact, with improved data sets at local government area level. Data would provide evidence of impact and value to attract additional resourcing to enhance or scale initiatives.
- Refresh the Victorian Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP) as part of the Foundational supports available in Victoria, building upon the strengths of the program and addressing the challenges and gaps raised by the sector during the program review.
- Urgently increase funding to reflect real operational costs to deliver a refreshed HACC-PYP program within the Foundational Support system for sustainability.

3.2 Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their families, carers and kin

Victorian local governments are major providers, planners and coordinators of services and facilities for children and their families, carers and kin. Strong and historical partnership arrangements are in place between the Victorian Government, MAV and councils.

Victorian councils are deeply committed to the education, safety, health, well-being, and overall quality of life for young Australians. They have long advocated for children's rights within their communities, including the right to access early childhood education and care, regardless of their location or socio-economic status.

Councils, as the level of government closest to the community, play a vital role in planning and delivering important infrastructure. They are responsible for providing Maternal and Child Health services, and many councils also directly operate early childhood education and care programs.

Victorian councils must be represented in continuing consultation on the planning, co-design, and implementation of Foundational supports.

3.2.1 Role of local government in the children and families service system

In Victoria, local government is the main provider of universal services for children and families. In many cases, they are also involved in planning and delivering secondary and tertiary services. They also support and provide unique enabling services that support the referral, entry, access to, and connection of children and families into the broader service system.

The MAV works in partnership with the Victorian Government on policy directions, funding and continuous improvement for maternal and child health services in conjunction with other early childhood services.

In Victoria, all levels of government are stewards of the child and family system. Sitting alongside the stewardship role of Governments are a set of principles – accessibility, equity, affordability and quality. [The Victorian Early Years Compact 2017 -2027](#) provides an approach for a joined-up, place-based service system across the State Government working in partnership with the MAV representing local government. Through this Compact, the parties seek the following outcomes for Victoria's children and their families:

- All young children are engaged, confident and creative learners.
- All children are safe, cared for and experience optimal health and development.
- Vulnerability, location and disadvantage do not determine outcomes for young children.
- Families feel well supported by high-quality, inclusive services for children and families in the early years.
- Families are connected to culture, actively participate in community life and can access help when and where they need it.

3.2.2 [The Victorian Child and Family Support Alliance](#)

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have invested a considerable amount of time and reform into improving inclusive practice in child and family services and the education and care sectors in recent years.

This set of reforms has not come without issue. Workforce capacity and training have been identified as significant barriers to children and families accessing information and supports to ensure continuous developmental trajectories and connection with their community.

The Victorian Child and Family Supports Alliance (VCaFSA) is a collaborative body of leaders and organisations from Victorian Disability and Child and Family services that represent the voices of mainstream early childhood services, Disability, and community-based not-for-profit sectors.

VCaFSA was established to advocate for, co-design, and then implement Foundational Supports for children and their families, carers, and kin to ensure that they are timely, tailored, and readily accessible to all.

The Victorian Child and Family Services Alliance (VCaFSA) is an alliance of organisations and experts that can provide up-to-date and responsive information and research from the community sector to the Victorian government to ensure that Foundational Supports are differentiated from inclusion supports and that they are effectively addressing the vital needs of children with developmental delay and disability.

The MAV is an active member of VCaFSA and is using this submission to amplify the following key messages of the Alliance to support the Federal Government in developing a best-practice, evidence-informed Foundational Supports system.

The following must underpin Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their family, carers and kin:

1. **Shared commitment** across the sector and with the government
 - a. Working together for Victorian Children
 - b. Building on Victorian Leadership in early years
 - c. Partnering for better outcomes
2. **Evidence-based solutions**
 - a. Bringing practice expertise, that embeds family expertise, to policy
 - b. Learning from what works
 - c. Co-designing sustainable solutions
3. **Systems integration**
 - a. Connecting existing strengths
 - b. Bridging service gaps together
 - c. Creating clear pathways for families
4. **Safeguarding and quality**
 - a. The best interests of every child must be central to policy and practice
 - b. Communications about changes to pathways should be shared with the sector, followed by families.

3.2.3 [Foundational Support and Inclusive Education](#)

Foundational support and inclusive education, while distinct concepts, work together to provide comprehensive assistance for children with developmental delays or disabilities. Foundational support equips and empowers families to advocate for their child's development, helping children enter inclusive educational settings with stronger foundational skills and greater confidence. In turn, inclusive education offers a mainstream environment that welcomes children from diverse backgrounds, promoting social integration and educational equity.

Foundational supports focus on empowering families and communities to provide targeted, developmentally appropriate support for children with developmental delays and disabilities. Inclusive education, meanwhile, ensures that all children have equal access to mainstream educational settings, promoting social inclusion and equity. Together, these approaches create a supportive environment that meets the unique needs of children with developmental delays and disabilities across various aspects of their lives.

3.2.4 Partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Services

Victorian councils are committed to collaborating closely with Aboriginal Community Controlled Services and communities, particularly to support access to health services and early childhood education. Such partnerships must continue to be supported by the sector, every level of government and First Nations communities, to improve health outcomes and educational opportunities, fostering overall community well-being and equity. Additionally, ongoing collaboration strengthens relationships and trust between councils, governments, and First Nations communities, promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Recommendations

- Victorian councils must be represented in continuing consultation on the planning, co-design, and implementation of Foundational supports.
- The following must underpin Foundational Supports for children with development delay or disability, and their family, carers and kin:
 1. **Shared commitment** across the sector and with the government
 - a. Working together for Victorian Children
 - b. Building on Victorian Leadership in early years
 - c. Partnering for better outcomes
 2. **Evidence-based solutions**
 - a. Bringing practice expertise, that embeds family expertise, to policy
 - b. Learning from what works
 - c. Co-designing sustainable solutions
 3. **Systems integration**
 - a. Connecting existing strengths
 - b. Bridging service gaps together
 - c. Creating clear pathways for families
 4. **Safeguarding and quality**
 - a. The best interests of every child are central to policy and practice
 - b. Communication plan messaging shared with the sector, then families
- Maintain focus on both Foundational supports and inclusive education to complement each other.
- Continued support is needed from all levels of government, the sector and First Nations communities, to strengthen partnerships with Koorie services and communities, to improve access pathways to health services and early childhood education.

4 Conclusions/Findings

4.1 General supports

This submission outlines the potential achievements when Federal and State Governments support local governments through a committed, long-term partnership approach aimed at building inclusive communities. It is important to recognise that local governments play a unique stewardship and governance role within their municipalities, offering civic leadership that focuses on access, inclusion, and the planning necessary for long-term population health and well-being. Council's natural constituency of residents and stewardship responsibility, local governments are ideally positioned to engage in community capacity building alongside other levels of government.

The Municipal Association of Victoria emphasises the need for state and federal governments to recognise the statewide framework that supports community inclusion and to allocate appropriate resources under the Foundational Supports model.

4.2 Foundational Supports for children with developmental delay or disability, and their families, carers and kin

The MAV is committed to collaborating with governments and stakeholders in the Victorian early childhood sector. Our goal is to influence and guide both the Federal and Victorian Governments in planning, co-designing, and implementing a cohesive ecosystem of foundational supports for children with developmental delays or disabilities, along with their families, carers, and kin.

We aim to build upon the strengths of existing systems and leverage the expertise within the sector to create inclusive education systems and foundational supports that work in harmony and effectively meet the needs of Victorian families.

These partnerships will extend through the current consultation period and beyond, allowing for a more thorough co-design of foundational supports than what is represented in this submission. The MAV will advocate for the expertise and interests of councils and their communities throughout this process.

5 Recommendations

The following offers a complete list of recommendations from MAV on Foundational Supports for people with disability, their families, carers and kin.

General supports

- Develop a new funded model of 'Community Connectors/Navigators' to be employed by councils (who opt in) to offer place-based and accessible navigation across local service systems and community activities.
- Leverage the strengths of Victorian councils' to build capacity in communities for support and inclusion of people living with disability in Victoria through a joined-up system of all governments working in partnership.
- Develop a conceptual model from a life stage perspective, rather than a program perspective, to follow a person across their life stages and support the service system to better respond to individuals' needs in a proportionate and, if needed, targeted way.
- Update and fund a program model reflective of the strengths of the former Victorian BIC Program and replicate nationally for consistency in community capacity building and inclusion.
- Align outcomes and measures of progress across the levels of government for collective impact, with improved data sets at local government area level. Data would provide evidence of impact and value to attract additional resourcing to enhance or scale initiatives.
- Refresh the Victorian Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP) as part of the Foundational supports available in Victoria, building upon the strengths of the program and addressing the challenges and gaps raised by the sector during the program review.
- Urgently increase funding to reflect real operational costs to deliver a refreshed HACC-PYP program within the Foundational Support system for sustainability.

Recommendations

- Victorian councils must be represented in continuing consultation on the planning, co-design, and implementation of Foundational supports.
- The following must underpin Foundational Supports for children with development delay or disability, and their family, carers and kin:
 1. **Shared commitment** across the sector and with the government
 - a. Working together for Victorian Children
 - b. Building on Victorian Leadership in early years
 - c. Partnering for better outcomes
 2. **Evidence-based solutions**
 - a. Bringing practice expertise, that embeds family expertise, to policy
 - b. Learning from what works
 - c. Co-designing sustainable solutions
 3. **Systems integration**
 - a. Connecting existing strengths
 - b. Bridging service gaps together
 - c. Creating clear pathways for families
 4. **Safeguarding and quality**
 - a. The best interests of every child are central to policy and practice
 - b. Communication plan messaging shared with the sector, then families
- Maintain focus on both Foundational supports and inclusive education to complement each other.
- Continued support is needed from all levels of government, the sector and First Nations communities, to strengthen partnerships with Koorie services and communities, to improve access pathways to health services and early childhood education.

MAV would be pleased to provide clarification on any information in this submission. For further information, please contact, Kim Howland, Manager Community Wellbeing, at KHowland@mav.asn.au.

Municipal Association of Victoria
Level 5, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002
PO Box 24131, 15 Southern Cross Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000
Telephone: 03 9667 5555 Email: inquiries@mav.asn.au
www.mav.asn.au