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# Social Services Regulator visits Mildura

Victoria’s Social Services Regulator was in Mildura on Friday 30 May to meet with two local services and learn about the work they’re doing to keep the Mallee community safe from avoidable harm.

Jonathan Kaplan is Victoria’s [Social Services Regulator](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator), an independent statutory authority established in July 2024 to oversee the regulation of services in Victoria including family violence, sexual assault, homelessness, supported residential services, and disability services not within the National Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as government-funded children, youth, and family services.

Mr Kaplan was invited by the CEO of Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS), Perlin Simon, to visit the region and hear first-hand of the unique challenges and opportunities the organisation experiences delivering sustainable, grassroots services and providing the local community with a vehicle for self-determination.

MDAS provides a wide range of support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities based in the local government areas of Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council and Gannawarra Shire, including maternal and child health, aged and disability services, youth support, family violence programs, and homelessness and housing.

Mr Kaplan also met with the CEO of Mallee Sexual Assault Unit, Leigh Rhode, to hear about the work this organisation does to support victims of sexual assault, including 24-hour crisis care, medical care, crisis counselling, community education and support groups.

New legislation introduced in July 2024 requires all Victorian social services to register with the Social Services Regulator, and visiting regional services helps the Regulator ensure services have the information and support they need to meet Social Services and Child Safe Standards.

The Regulator is committed to supporting providers across regional Victoria and has previously met with other services in Mildura as well as Bendigo, Shepparton, Echuca, Wangaratta, Ballarat, Warrnambool, Geelong, Warragul, Morwell, Sale and Lakes Entrance. Visiting service providers across the state is part of the Social Services Regulator’s approach to strengthening protections for social services users and safeguarding vulnerable Victorians from harm, abuse and neglect.

For information about the Social Services Regulator, please visit [www.ssr.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssr.vic.gov.au).

**Quotes attributable to Jonathan Kaplan, Social Services Regulator:**

***“****I was pleased to be invited to visit Mallee District Aboriginal Services during Reconciliation Week. They provide vital support to their local community, and as the Regulator, I’m committed to listening, learning and working in genuine partnership to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”*

*“Hearing directly from local service providers Mallee District Aboriginal Services and Mallee Sexual Assault Unit today has been insightful. Both organisations provide important services to the local community and they’re working hard to provide the care, dignity and support their clients deserve.”*

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