

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026 THE AUSTRALIAN

BUDGET 2026 9



NIKKI SHORT

AIEF students, back from left, LeBron Warrior, Sukeh Noah and Jack Hobday with, front from left, Millie Sutcliffe, Chloe Dennison and Jazara McLean

Help for Aboriginal women and children

INDIGENOUS

THOMAS HENRY

More than \$200m will be spent on a new community-delivered program to tackle violence against Indigenous women and children, after the alleged murder of five-year-old Kumanjayi Little Baby sparked national outrage over the state of town camps in regional communities.

Alongside a \$1.2bn cash splash to accelerate progress on the government's Closing The Gap commitments over the next five years, a new stand-alone program will

take on domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities across the country.

The "Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices" program, which was announced in February, is set to deliver up to 40 community organisations aimed at stamping out violence against Indigenous women and children.

The funding continues the government's shift away from a rights-based approach to improving Indigenous outcomes after the failure of the voice referendum and national outrage over the alleged abduction and murder of five-year-old Kumanjayi Little Baby in Alice Springs last month.

The Northern Territory's network of town camps have been the subject of intense scrutiny after the girl was taken from her bed in the Old Timers camp, days before her body was found in a creek bed.

"An investment of \$167.6m over four years from 2026-27 will fund up to 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations to deliver community-led specialist support services that help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.

The budget papers confirmed

the program would deliver "community-led specialist support services" for Indigenous women and children fleeing domestic, family and sexual violence.

"ACCOs will support up to 12,000 families to reduce family, domestic and sexual violence, while helping to prevent the removal of children from their families," the budget papers read.

"The funding will provide culturally safe, frontline services tailored to local needs for women and children, healing supports for children and young people, and early intervention services."

The measure was also joined by more than a billion dollars in

investment to close the gap over the next five years including almost \$300m to create an additional 3000 jobs under its Remote Jobs and Economic Development program.

The government is also set to fund a range of Indigenous education measures including \$30m for the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation to fund high school scholarships and \$55m for the Clontarf foundation to extend an existing school program for "at-risk Indigenous young men".

"We're investing an extra \$1.2bn to Close the Gap," Dr Chalmers said in his speech.