

## Hon Michelle Lensink MLC

Minister for Human Services

## Hon Anne Ruston Senator

Minister for Families and Social Services

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### **New program to keep at-risk families safely together**

Keeping vulnerable South Australian families safely together is the focus of a new \$11.3 million program commencing next year.

The State and Federal Government-backed Resilient Families program will be delivered by [The Benevolent Society](#) and works closely with families to prevent their children at risk of abuse and neglect from entering the child protection system.

The program uses an innovative funding model known as a [Pay by Results contract](#), which rewards the program provider for achieving results, not just for delivering services.

It will focus on families living in the Marion, Onkaparinga, Mt Barker, Murray Bridge and Mid Murray local council areas. This region was chosen as there are currently Intensive Family Support Services being piloted in northern and western Adelaide.

Minister for Human Services Michelle Lensink said the Resilient Families program will support up to 300 children over the next five years.

“Every child in South Australia deserves to grow up in a safe and loving home, which is why this innovative approach will be integral to supporting struggling families to stay together,” said Minister Lensink.

“Social workers and staff will work with each family in their own home to address their specific risk factors and safety concerns, through home visits, crisis intervention, skills development and access to a 24/7 on-call service.

“This new program is one of many programs the Marshall Liberal Government is investing in to better support our most vulnerable South Australians families and children.”

Federal Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston said it was vital governments put in place programs to help ensure all children were able to grow up in secure, safe and stable homes.

“We know that children who stay in out-of-home care for extended periods are at significant risk of immediate and long-term consequences including poor mental health, homelessness, unemployment and unstable relationships,” said Minister Ruston.

“Resilient Families is targeted at families which have been identified as really struggling and is focused on creating a positive home environment to try and prevent children needing to enter out of home care.”

The Benevolent Society was selected following a public call for expressions of interest after having successfully delivered the program interstate under a similar model.

In NSW, Resilient Families recorded an 86 per cent preservation rate of keeping children safe with their families and 32 per cent fewer entries into out-of-home care.

The unique funding model places focus on accountability for the delivery of outcomes, with payments linked to program success, rather than outputs.

In SA, additional performance outcome payments will be made when more than 82 per cent of participating families stay together safely.

The program is designed to complement existing intensive family support services funded by the State Government – the \$3 million [Safe Kids, Families Together](#) pilot being delivered by Anglicare SA and the \$2.2 million intensive support program [designed for Aboriginal families](#) being delivered by KKY in Adelaide’s west.

Resilient Families will initially be based on referrals from the Department for Child Protection, with the primary aim to keep children safe at home, in community and culture.

Referrals will also come from the State Government’s Child and Family Safety Pathway referral system, being developed by the Department of Human Services as part of wider reform of the Child and Family Support System.

The program will begin in July 2021.