



**Victorian Budget**  
2023/24

# Doing What Matters

Overview



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Budget Paper No. 1 – Treasurer's Speech  
Budget Paper No. 2 – Strategy and Outlook  
Budget Paper No. 3 – Service Delivery  
Budget Paper No. 4 – State Capital Program  
Budget Paper No. 5 – Statement of Finances  
(incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No. 3)

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# Treasurer's Message

This Budget builds on the Andrews Labor Government's record of delivering for all Victorians.



It's a Budget that plans for hospitals and delivers the healthcare that keep us well – and it furthers our commitment to building Victoria's mental health system.

It delivers the schools and early learning that set our kids up for success.

It delivers the well-paid jobs and training opportunities that underpin our prosperity, and the new State Electricity Commission to help build a more sustainable future.

It delivers the services that support those in our community who need a helping hand.

And it continues to deliver on our investments in transport infrastructure that drive our state forward.

It's also a budget that responds to our times. There has been a spike in inflation across the world, and central banks have responded by raising interest rates. Everyone with a mortgage is feeling the pinch.

During the pandemic, we used our strong balance sheet to protect household budgets and businesses. We did this to buttress our state from the worst health and economic shock our state has experienced since World War II.

But global conditions have changed, and we now must confront our situation squarely and repay the impact of the spending that kept Victoria moving during the pandemic.

That's why this Budget includes a COVID Debt Repayment Plan.

Victoria is in a strong position to bounce back from these national and global challenges.

Our economy is performing well. The unemployment rate is below 4 per cent as it has been for most of the past year – which hasn't happened for nearly 50 years.

The Government's responsible plan puts Victoria on a sustainable path to grasp the opportunities ahead.

We're doing what matters for Victorians: creating jobs, driving economic growth, building a better future and delivering on every one of our election commitments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'T. Pallas'.

Tim Pallas  
**Treasurer of Victoria**

# Doing what matters

## Our record of delivery

Since we came to government, we haven't wasted a day delivering the services and projects that matter to Victorians.

Health systems around the world were hit hard by the pandemic, and ours was no different. But we've invested in our hospitals – and the dedicated workers we need to run them – so Victorians can get the very best care.

Cranes dominate our skyline. Underground, we're just as busy, building the transport network of the future.

We're building, fixing and widening our suburban and regional roads to cut congestion and get Victorians home to their families sooner and safer.

We've put power back in the hands of Victorians with the popular \$250 Power Saving Bonus. It's helping households across the state get the best deal on their energy bills, while providing the cost of living relief Victorians need right now.

We're giving Victorian kids the best start in life – we've invested in hundreds of school upgrades across Victoria to deliver high-quality classrooms and facilities to make sure every student gets the world-class education they deserve.

From Wangaratta to Warrnambool, we're building the road and rail, schools and hospitals that country communities deserve.

And when our regions have faced the toughest of times – from bushfires to floods – we've been there to help.

Our investments include:

- » Removing dangerous and congested Level Crossings across Melbourne – a further \$6.5 billion to remove another 25, taking the total to 110 gone for good by 2030
- » Building our mental health system from the ground up – an unprecedented investment of \$5.7 billion across the past three Budgets for the Mental Health Royal Commission recommendations, making sure Victorians can get the care they need, when they need it, close to home
- » *Best Start, Best Life* and Three-Year-Old Kinder – more than \$4.4 billion to get on with delivering Free Kinder, Three-Year-Old Kinder, Pre-Prep and 50 government-owned and operated Early Learning Centres
- » The *COVID Catch-Up Plan* – \$1.5 billion to boost deferred elective surgery and ease the pressure on our hospitals
- » Tripling the size of the Victorian Homebuyer Fund – \$1.1 billion injection to help thousands more Victorians realise their dream of owning a home
- » Flood response – \$1.8 billion in immediate relief funding made available to respond to the urgent activities
- » More than 20 hospitals have been built or upgraded and we're giving our healthcare workforce the helping hands they need with \$270 million to make it free to study nursing and midwifery for nurses that join the public health system
- » Investing in the Big Build, and supporting businesses with direct grants and the New Jobs Tax Credit – which has supported meeting the Government's Jobs Plan target of 400 000 new jobs by 2025, more than two years early, and is making sure to not leave any worker, sector, or community behind.

And with the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*, we're delivering on every commitment we made at the last election, all while repaying the COVID debt.







## Doing what we said we'd do

Last year, we took a positive plan to the Victorian people.

It was a plan for better hospitals, world-class schools, and the road and rail our growing state needs.

It was a plan for cleaner, cheaper renewable energy, a plan for the very best start in life for our kids, and a plan to help Victorians with the rising cost of living.

And with this Budget, we're delivering every commitment we made at the last election, all while repaying the COVID debt.

It was a plan to keep doing what matters. This includes:

- » \$1 billion to bring back the State Electricity Commission (SEC), re-establishing government-owned energy and investing in renewables
- » \$694 million for a road blitz to upgrade key roads and intersections to improve network efficiency, travel times and road safety
- » \$650 million to upgrade the Melton Line, giving commuters in Melbourne's West better train services
- » \$601 million to buy 23 more VLocity trains to be manufactured in Victoria, supporting local jobs
- » \$450 million to support the delivery of new and upgraded low-fee Independent and Catholic schools
- » \$400 million to deliver another round of the \$250 Power Saving Bonus, driving down the cost of energy bills for Victorian households
- » \$320 million to plan the delivery of major investments at seven hospitals across the state to ensure Victorians receive the highest quality healthcare
- » \$266 million to upgrade 43 government schools across Victoria, giving our kids the high-quality classrooms and learning facilities they deserve
- » \$235 million to support students with disability and their families, including expanding the Outside School Hours Care program
- » \$201 million for new and upgraded community sport and recreation facilities, delivering sporting spaces the whole community can be proud of and more Victorians can use
- » \$190 million to make regional public transport fares fair across Victoria, capping the cost at the metro rate
- » \$186 million to expand eligibility for VET subsidies, so more Victorians can get the training they need for the jobs they want in high-demand industries
- » \$170 million for the Building Better TAFE Fund, which provides four TAFE projects and establishes the TAFE Clean Energy Fund to improve lifelong education pathways, workforce skills and capacity
- » \$167 million to provide support for more nurses and midwives, strengthen nurse to patient ratios and improve public health service staffing levels
- » \$154 million to give women's health the focus and funding it deserves, including 20 new comprehensive women's health clinics at public hospitals
- » \$91 million to continue the work towards 50 local mental health services and keep delivering other community-based services, opening more 'front doors' for Victorians to access care earlier and closer to home
- » \$62 million to deliver better local roads and safety upgrades for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists
- » \$46 million to train the next generation of paramedics and introduce specialist paramedic practitioners, providing urgent care faster.

These are the things that matter – and the things we promised to Victorians. And with this Budget, we're doing what we said we'd do.



# A plan for growth

## Building from a strong foundation

The Victorian economy is strong and it's growing.

Today, demand for workers is high, and there are close to a record number of Victorians in work. The unemployment rate is below 4 per cent as it has been for most of the past year – which hasn't happened for nearly 50 years.

Across the world, countries are grappling with high inflation and interest rate hikes – and Australia is no different. But Victoria's economy will weather these challenges from a position of strength.

In 2021-22, Victoria's real gross state product growth was the highest of any Australian state. And it's expected to remain solid this financial year.

It's this healthy economy – alongside everything Victoria has to offer – that's again attracting large numbers of people to our state, with our population growing by 300 people every day.

Out of a total \$21.2 billion spent on economic-related measures, more than \$14 billion in support was provided to help businesses and the economy survive and recover. Crucially, these measures ensured the Victorian economy could bounce back once the worst of the pandemic was over.

Other important investments were made to ensure our households and communities were supported and strengthened.

## Acting decisively for Victorians

When the pandemic reached our shores, the Andrews Labor Government acted quickly and decisively to protect Victorians and the state's economy.

We spent around \$40.1 billion in support to deliver the necessary health response, keep workers in jobs and businesses afloat, and assist households. We also provided rent relief so Victorians could keep a roof over their heads, supported people to test and isolate, and relieved stress on businesses with direct financial support.

At the same time, we set out a clear four-step fiscal plan for the medium term:

- » Step one: Creating jobs, reducing unemployment and restoring economic growth
- » Step two: Returning to an operating cash surplus
- » Step three: Returning to operating surpluses
- » Step four: Stabilising debt levels.

Our plan is working. We've kept striving to create the jobs that underpin our state's economic growth, while returning to operating cash surpluses and operating surpluses.

And in this Budget, we're taking the targeted and responsible actions we need to, so we can achieve step four in the medium term.



## General government fiscal aggregates

	Unit of measure	2021/22 actual	2022/23 revised	2023/24 budget	2024/25 estimate	2025/26 estimate	2026/27 estimate
Net result from transactions	\$ billion	(13.8)	(10.3)	(4.0)	(1.1)	1.0	1.2
Net cash flows from operating activities	\$ billion	(8.9)	2.9	0.8	4.3	6.5	6.5
Government infrastructure investment <sup>(a)(b)</sup>	\$ billion	18.7	22.5	22.4	20.6	18.6	16.9
Net debt	\$ billion	100.0	116.7	135.4	151.2	162.2	171.4
Net debt to GSP <sup>(c)</sup>	per cent	19.4	20.6	22.6	23.9	24.4	24.5

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance

Notes:

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes general government net infrastructure investment and the estimated construction costs of public private partnership projects.

<sup>(b)</sup> Includes the estimated private sector construction related expenditure associated with the North East Link held in the public non-financial corporations (PNFC) sector.

<sup>(c)</sup> The ratios to gross state product (GSP) may vary from publications year to year due to revisions to the Australian Bureau of Statistics GSP data.

## Victorian economic forecasts<sup>(a)</sup> (per cent)

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 forecast	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 projection	2026/27 projection
Real gross state product	5.6	2.75	1.50	2.50	2.75	2.75
Employment	3.9	3.50	0.75	1.00	1.75	1.75
Unemployment rate <sup>(b)</sup>	4.3	3.75	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75
Consumer price index <sup>(c)</sup>	4.0	7.00	4.25	2.75	2.50	2.50
Wage price index <sup>(d)</sup>	2.4	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25
Population <sup>(e)</sup>	1.1	1.90	1.90	1.80	1.70	1.70

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics; Department of Treasury and Finance

Notes:

<sup>(a)</sup> Percentage change in year-average terms compared with the previous year, except for the unemployment rate (see note (b)) and population (see note (e)). Forecasts are rounded to the nearest 0.25 percentage points, except for population (see note (e)).

The key assumptions underlying the economic forecasts include interest rates that broadly follow market economists' expectations, an Australian dollar trade weighted index of 61.6, and oil prices that follow the path suggested by oil futures.

<sup>(b)</sup> Year average.

<sup>(c)</sup> Melbourne consumer price index. The Commonwealth's CPI forecasts included in its 2023-24 Budget are 6 per cent over the year to June 2023 and 3.25 per cent over the year to June 2024. Differences in magnitude between the Victorian and Commonwealth forecasts are largely presentational, mainly reflecting that growth rates in year-average terms and in over-the-year terms are not comparable.

<sup>(d)</sup> Wage price index, Victoria (based on total hourly rates of pay, excluding bonuses).

<sup>(e)</sup> Percentage change over the year to 30 June. Forecasts are rounded to the nearest 0.1 percentage point.





**Healthcare: where and when you need it**

**Bringing back the SEC**

**Powering the economy**

**The best start in life for all Victorians**

**Getting Victorians home sooner and safer**

**A fairer Victoria**

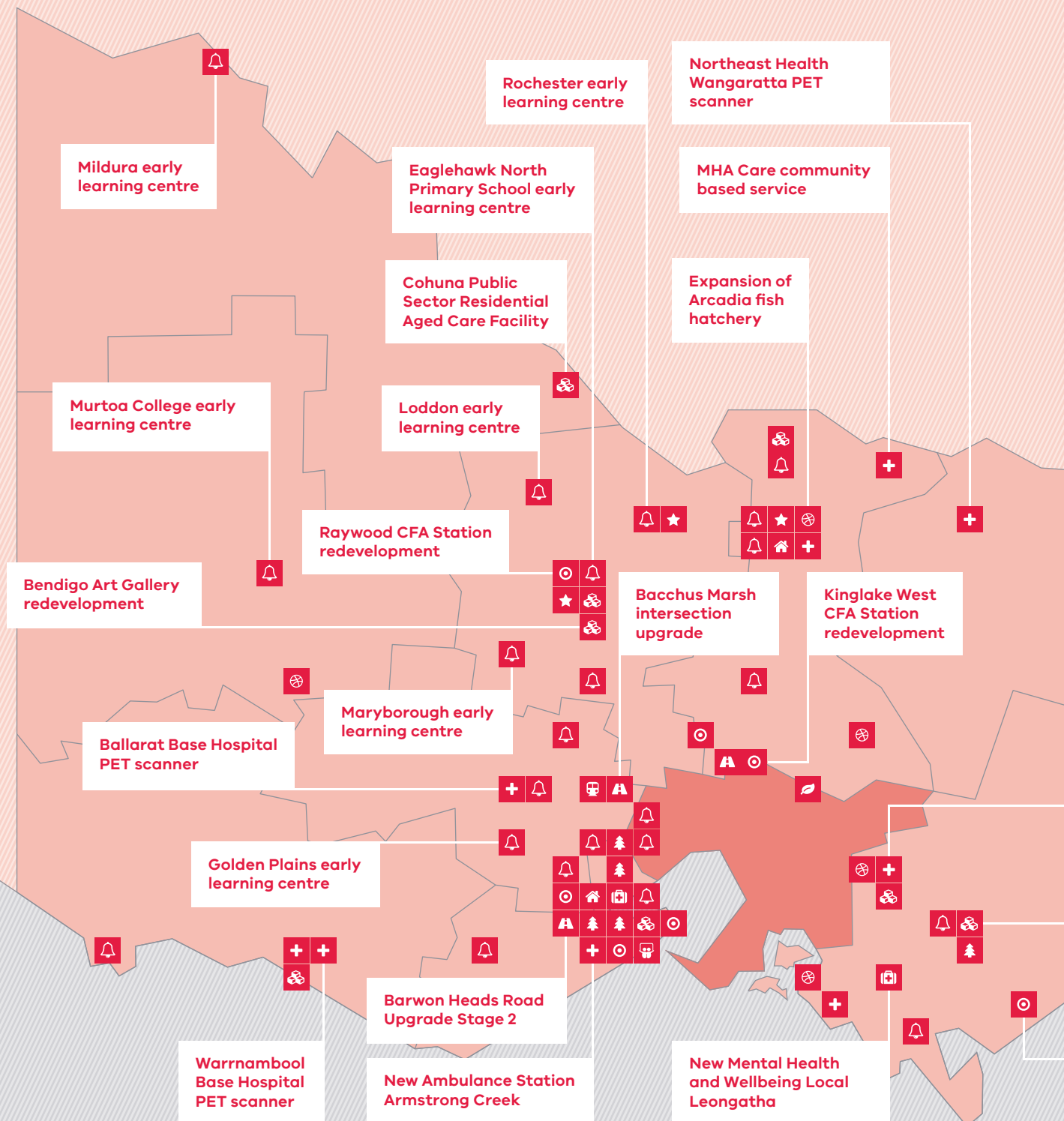
**Supporting rural and regional Victoria**







# Investing in every corner of the state





## STATEWIDE

- » \$2.8 billion over ten years on road maintenance and renewal, including flood recovery works
- » \$1 billion to bring back the State Electricity Commission (SEC), re-establishing government-owned energy and investing in renewables
- » \$694 million for a road blitz to upgrade key roads and intersections to improve network efficiency, travel times and road safety
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- » \$190 million to make regional public transport fares fair across Victoria, by capping fares at metro prices
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- » \$170 million for the Building Better TAFE Fund, which provides four TAFE projects and establishes the TAFE Clean Energy Fund to improve lifelong education pathways, workforce skills and capacity
- » \$167 million to provide support for more nurses and midwives, strengthen nurse to patient ratios and improve public health service staffing levels
- » \$162 million to deliver better aged care services for regional Victorians with new residential facilities at Cohuna, Maffra and Numurkah
- » \$154 million to give women's health the focus and funding it deserves, including 20 new comprehensive women's health clinics at public hospitals
- » \$91 million to continue the work towards 50 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and continue delivery of other community based services, opening more 'front doors' for Victorians to access care earlier and closer to home
- » \$46 million to train the next generation of paramedics and introduce specialist paramedic practitioners, providing urgent care faster.



**New West  
Gippsland Hospital**

**Lakes Entrance  
oyster farm**



**Maffra Public  
Sector Residential  
Aged Care Facility**



**Clean Energy Centre TAFE –  
Gippsland's Morwell campus**

**Yarram CFA Station  
redevelopment**



Clean energy



Education



Emergency services



Environment and parkland



Health



Justice



Mental health



Public housing



Public transport



Regional investment



Roads



Sport and recreation



Strong communities



# Healthcare: where and when you need it

Across the world, the pandemic drove home the importance of great local healthcare – as well as the dedicated workers who look after us all.

In Victoria, our health system has been stretched like never before. Increases in patients with COVID-19 are just one part of the picture: the pandemic also disrupted care, slowed down recovery times, and saw people putting off visits to their GP. All of this has put huge demand on our hospitals and healthcare professionals.

We've worked hard to ease that unprecedented pressure on the system. Last year, we launched our *Pandemic Repair Plan* for more staff, better hospitals and first-class care.

This is included in the \$54 billion we've invested in our healthcare system – as well as the workers we need to run it – since coming to government in 2014.

We'll keep investing in health, so Victorians can get the very best of care – where and when they need it. This Budget provides a further \$4.9 billion to build and upgrade hospitals, boost healthcare services and give our healthcare workforce the support they need.

## New and improved hospitals

This Budget invests in building hospitals, supporting our health system to meet growing demand and support our hardworking healthcare workers to ensure Victorians get the care they need, close to home.

An initial investment of \$320 million for the Hospital Infrastructure Delivery Fund will start preparing for:

- » A new hospital and public sector residential aged care facility for West Gippsland
- » A bigger and better Monash Medical Centre with more operating theatres and a new intensive care unit
- » An expanded emergency department, new intensive care unit and new outpatient clinic at Dandenong Hospital
- » A new emergency department and inpatient tower at Northern Hospital
- » An expanded emergency department and upgraded short stay unit at Austin Hospital
- » A new emergency department and inpatient towers at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Melbourne's growing eastern suburbs
- » Extra beds, a new birthing complex and new outpatient clinic for Wonthaggi Hospital.

We'll invest \$969 million to ensure new and upgraded facilities are patient ready, with capacity to treat more than 300 additional patients and 80 extra beds supported across Victoria, including at the Royal Children's Hospital, Albury Hospital and Wonthaggi Hospital.



## Specialist equipment and care

When you or a loved one are waiting on a diagnosis, rapid access to a PET scan can make all the difference. We'll invest \$44 million for eight more PET scanners across Victoria.

To better support children with cancer and patients requiring highly specialised care, we'll invest:

- » \$103 million to increase access to highly-specialised therapies and genomic testing for people with rare diseases and cancer
- » \$35 million for additional research, training and clinical care funding to fight childhood cancer, helping to save lives. This package delivers on the Government's election commitment to support the Victorian Paediatric Cancer Consortium.

This Budget invests in programs to protect and strengthen infrastructure, including:

- » \$40 million towards the Metropolitan Health Infrastructure Fund, providing grants to upgrade essential equipment and renew, reconfigure and refurbish metropolitan health services' infrastructure
- » \$34 million to support a range of security tools and services to protect against cyber threats for Victorian public health services and Ambulance Victoria, and upgrade ICT infrastructure.

## Supporting our healthcare workforce

Every Victorian who's ever been a patient or had a loved one in hospital knows the value of our nurses, midwives, paramedics, doctors and allied health professionals.

The Andrews Labor Government has strongly supported our healthcare workforce – and we always will.

In this Budget, we're investing \$201 million in a range of initiatives to give our healthcare workers the helping hand they need, including:

- » \$73 million for additional nursing staff in intensive care, high dependency and emergency department units
- » \$37 million in sign-on bonuses for new nursing graduates to encourage them to enter the public system
- » \$34 million to improve midwife to patient ratios on night shifts in maternity services to provide more skilled care
- » \$32 million for medical graduate incentives to undertake general practitioner (GP) training
- » \$15 million to expand the health workforce, including financial and international recruitment incentives
- » \$6.1 million to employ an additional 30 nurses to provide residential in-reach services for older Victorians
- » \$4 million to create centralised portals for education and employment checks.





## Boosting emergency care

Our paramedics do an incredible job. Victorians deeply value the work that they do, looking after our loved ones and saving lives – 365 days a year.

Throughout the pandemic, they've been under pressure like never before – with record demand for ambulance callouts and emergency care happening when there were often staff shortages due to illness.

The Andrews Labor Government has already boosted the workforce by around 2 000 paramedics since coming to government, including an intake of more than 700 paramedics in 2021-22.

We're recruiting more Triple Zero call takers, delivering new ambulances and equipment, and building and upgrading stations across our state.

But when it comes to those minutes and seconds that save lives – there's always more to do.

In this Budget, we'll keep investing to make sure paramedics have the facilities and support they need to quickly respond to local emergencies and save lives, including:

- » A \$201 million system wide boost to support timely emergency care, including more ambulance services and improvements to emergency department programs, to get patients the care they need as quickly as possible
- » \$46 million to train the next generation of paramedics – deploying specialist paramedic practitioners to provide urgent treatment faster, training an additional 40 Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance paramedics and establishing a Centre for Paramedicine in partnership with Victoria University
- » \$30 million for a new ambulance station in Armstrong Creek, including land acquisition, to service the growing local community by improving ambulance response times and better support paramedics in the City of Greater Geelong and surrounding regions.

In this Budget,  
we'll keep investing  
to make sure  
paramedics have  
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and save lives

## Investing in women's health

Women and girls make up more than half of our population. And yet their health is somehow seen as a 'niche issue'.

Conditions including dysmenorrhoea (period pain), fibroids and menopausal symptoms will affect around 80 per cent of women in their lifetime. But still, they go under diagnosed and untreated.

The Andrews Labor Government has made important investments in women's health, including funding Victoria's first clinic focused on women's heart health and our state's first ever sexual and reproductive health phoneline. But there's still more to do.

In this Budget, we'll give women's health the serious focus and funding it deserves, with:

- » \$86 million to help parents with their newborn babies, including more access to free Maternal and Child Health services and lactation consultants, additional support for fathers' groups and multicultural communities, a new early parenting centre and a centre dedicated to Aboriginal families and children. Funding will also support the Baby Bundle program
- » \$65 million for 10 800 additional laparoscopies to help treat debilitating endometriosis, which affects one in every nine girls and women
- » \$58 million for 20 new women's health clinics and a dedicated Aboriginal-led women's clinic, to overcome some of the barriers to treatment that women face such as cost, confidentiality, geographical location of services, cultural and communication differences. The clinics will mean women can access specialists – gynecologist, urologist, along with specialist nursing and allied health in one spot, making it easier and faster to get the world-class care women need and deserve
- » \$50 million to enable more Victorian families to access public fertility care, with up to 3 375 treatment cycles funded each year
- » \$12 million for research initiatives that will directly benefit women's health, such as an inquiry into women's pain management and early work to establish a Women's Health Research Institute
- » \$10 million to establish nine sexual and reproductive health hubs in addition to the 11 existing hubs and continued funding for the Local Public Health Unit networked hub and spoke primary care model, to provide free or very low cost clinical services that, when they are available through a GP, are associated with out-of-pocket costs
- » \$5.3 million for a mobile women's health clinic to improve access for women in regional and remote Victoria to specialised women's health services.

This Budget includes \$421 million for  
nine health initiatives focused on  
early intervention

## Improving access to primary care

When it comes to making sure Victorians get the care they need close to home, the Andrews Labor Government has a strong record: delivering new GP Respiratory Clinics and rolling out Priority Primary Care Centres across our state.

But for many Victorians right now it's almost impossible to get in to see a doctor – particularly one that bulk bills. When you wake up feeling sick, or you run out of your prescription medication, it doesn't do you any good if you can't get in to see your GP for more than a week.

GPs are the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, but not being able to see a doctor affects Victoria's whole health system. When you can't see your GP, you're forced to turn to other services – like your local emergency department or ambulance service – even if you don't need acute care.

While the Commonwealth is investing in a package of measures to address immediate challenges in primary care and lay the foundations for long-term Medicare reform, we're investing now to make sure Victorians can get care when they need it, and before they need an emergency response.

This Budget will provide \$154 million to boost access to primary care for more Victorians, including:

- » \$43 million to expand primary health services through public providers in women's prisons, increasing access to medical officers and integrated care
- » \$38 million so young people can access health assessments as they enter statutory care within the child protection system

- » \$29 million to keep operating Priority Primary Care Centres and GP Respiratory Clinics for urgent but non-emergency patient care, and for preventative and community health programs, diverting pressure and demand away from emergency departments
- » \$20 million to deliver a pilot for pharmacists to treat minor illnesses like minor skin conditions and uncomplicated urinary tract infections, reissue contraceptive prescriptions and administer more public health vaccinations
- » \$17 million to extend the school dental program, Smile Squad, to low-fee non-government primary and secondary schools – so more Victorian students get critical early oral care, free of charge
- » \$8.3 million to support the continuation of Disability Liaison Officers to identify and address barriers for people with disability in accessing health services, and continue the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program to support people with disability.

This Budget includes \$421 million for nine health initiatives focused on early intervention. This brings our total investment in early intervention over three budgets to \$1.5 billion, which will change the trajectory of people's lives, and is anticipated to generate at least \$1.8 billion of benefits over the next decade.

Benefits include improved health and wellbeing, avoided costs from state services, higher workforce participation, lower welfare payments and less out-of-pocket health costs to those needing care.





## Caring for older Victorians

We all deserve to be looked after in our later years. We'll keep investing to ensure Victorians are treated with respect as they age.

A \$162 million package will provide better aged care services for regional Victorians, we are building three new public facilities to deliver modern, dementia-friendly facilities and support residents with complex care needs.

Builds at Cohuna, Maffra and Numurkah will ensure older Victorians can remain connected to their communities, in facilities providing contemporary care that supports their independence and privacy.

An additional \$42 million will be invested in public sector residential aged care services to maintain nurse to patient ratios and provide high-quality care to vulnerable older Victorians.

Building on our previous investments in in-home care, this additional funding for residential in-reach services will free up valuable ambulance and emergency department resources, easing pressure on our hospital system.

## More beds and improved capacity

This Budget is investing \$157 million to provide 22 new beds at Melbourne Health, 10 new integrated care residential beds and 12 statewide eating disorder treatment centre beds at Alfred Health, as well as other key bed-based mental health initiatives.

We'll also consult the sector to identify opportunities where we might be able to provide care earlier to support young people living with eating disorders.

## Looking after mental health

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System told us that when it comes to accessing mental healthcare, too often, Victorians struggled to get the support they need. People found themselves falling through the gap in the 'missing middle' – 'not sick enough' to access clinical care, or 'too sick' to be treated outside a hospital.

The pandemic really drove home the need for mental health services you can access where and when you need them. Demand for mental health services has grown significantly since 2020, and it's remained higher than pre-pandemic levels as demonstrated by the number of active mental health consumers.

We promised Victorians we'd build our mental health system from the ground up, and that we'd implement every single recommendation from the Royal Commission. Implementing those recommendations will take a decade or more of reform – and across three Budgets, we've invested \$5.7 billion to get on with it.

This year, we'll invest a further \$776 million for critical bed-based services, AOD services, infrastructure, earlier support in community mental health services and the roll-out of the new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act*.

## Infrastructure to support better mental health

In response to the Royal Commission, we established a dedicated capital investment fund to provide the mental health infrastructure Victorians need.

This year, through the Mental Health Capital Fund, we'll invest:

- » \$53 million for planning and development, including detailed design for Stage 3 of the redevelopment of the Thomas Embling Hospital
- » \$10 million to upgrade infrastructure across a range of health services so they can keep delivering the services Victorians need most in their local communities.

These initiatives build on the record investment of \$1.5 billion in previous budgets in mental health infrastructure in response to the Royal Commission.

We promised Victorians we'd build our mental health system from the ground up, and that's exactly what we're doing

## Better community mental health services

The Royal Commission told us that when it came to accessing care, some Victorians don't know where to turn, or who to turn to.

That's why in 2021-22, we invested \$264 million in local care, providing a 'front door' for Victorians to get the help they need with Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals (Wellbeing Locals). Local Services focus on early intervention, ensuring Victorians get the care they need much sooner and much closer to their families and communities.

The first six of them are now open, and another 21 are already funded and underway.

In this Budget, we're investing \$91 million to begin work on three new Wellbeing Locals in Northcote, Leongatha and Narre Warren and continue delivery of other community based services. This funding will also kickstart planning on another 20 Wellbeing Locals – bringing us another step closer to delivering on our promise to build 50 across Victoria.

It's estimated each ongoing Wellbeing Locals will generate economic and fiscal benefits of more than \$70 million within a decade.

We are also investing \$81 million to expand specialist forensic mental health services for Victorians with mental health conditions, to improve their wellbeing and help them stay out of the justice system.

## Our mental health and wellbeing system

The Royal Commission recommended we replace the former Mental Health Act 2014 with a new, fit-for-purpose *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act* that serves as the foundation for a world-class mental health and wellbeing system.

The new Act, which comes into effect on 1 September 2023, will support an integrated, contemporary and adaptable mental health system – one that places lived experience at its heart. It also underpins the expansion of the mental health workforce, supporting the dedicated professionals who care for Victorians every day.

Funding in this Budget will support:

- » The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, which will provide stronger leadership, oversight and accountability
- » The next stage of operations for the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, supporting mental health research, services and workforce development
- » The operations of the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and the Mental Health Tribunal to uphold quality and safety, and protect the rights and dignity of people with mental illness
- » Ongoing legislative reform and evaluation to support a strong and evidence-based legislative framework.





# Bringing back the SEC

Victorians remember the State Electricity Commission (SEC). It meant a fair deal on your power prices and good, stable jobs for Victorian workers.

But 30 years ago, our energy networks were sold off to private multinationals.

These companies increased prices, sacked workers and made a fortune – hurting Victorian families and businesses.

Now, they've told us they're leaving.

The Andrews Labor Government has a plan to bring back the SEC – re-establishing government-owned energy and driving down power bills.

It means transitioning Victoria to cleaner, cheaper renewable electricity to help meet our ambitious targets of 95 per cent renewable energy by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2045 – because we recognise the importance of protecting our climate for future Victorians.

At the same time, it'll help create thousands of jobs for Victorians.

But most importantly, it'll be run for people. And Victorians will be back in control of their energy supply.

## For the good of all Victorians, for good

We'll revive the SEC as an active energy market participant and make an initial investment of \$1 billion to replace unreliable and privately-owned coal with cleaner and cheaper renewable energy – with all profits invested back into the network.

Since 2019-20, we've invested \$4.5 billion to accelerate our energy transition by increasing our renewable generation capacity, strengthening our networks, and encouraging households to take up rooftop solar with our Solar Homes program. And we'll keep going.

We've already hit the ground running, taking the first steps to bring back the SEC. Since December 2022, we have:

- » Appointed an Interim Chief Executive Officer
- » Appointed six of Australia's most prominent energy experts and business leaders to an Expert Advisory Panel to guide the SEC's work
- » Launched a market search for the SEC's pioneer investment, calling for registrations of interest from the private sector to identify suitable renewable energy generation and storage projects across the state
- » Invested \$21 million to prepare the SEC for its new role in our energy market, including setting up a presence in Morwell and Melbourne, with an additional \$24 million to be provided in 2023-24.

And because we know how important it is to protect the SEC for future generations, we'll enshrine the SEC in Victoria's Constitution with legislation.





## Training the next generation of SEC workers

Bringing back the SEC won't just deliver more renewable energy, lower power bills and reduced carbon emissions – it'll also create jobs.

Our SEC will help find and train the next generation of skilled tradespeople: maintenance workers, lineys, electricians, welders, painters and mechanics.

The Andrews Labor Government's commitment to transition to 95 per cent renewable energy by 2035, facilitated by the investments of the SEC, will support 59 000 renewable energy jobs. A guaranteed 10 per cent – or 6 000 – of those jobs will be apprenticeships and traineeships.

In this Budget, we'll invest:

- » \$19 million for 10 000 students to undertake work experience placements in the clean energy sector and other priority sectors
- » \$16 million to deliver two new clean energy worker training centres – one for hydrogen and one for wind to prepare workers for our emerging industries
- » \$12 million to establish a SEC Centre of Training Excellence to coordinate and accredit courses in clean energy – and attend career nights across government schools
- » \$7.5 million to create a new clean energy pathway for schools which includes introducing clean energy as a VCE Vocational Major from 2024.

Work will also begin on the Victorian Energy Jobs Plan that will identify the skills and training needed to support our renewable energy industries including offshore wind and solar.

We'll also support our TAFEs and training providers to help prepare our growing highly skilled workforce.

We're investing \$116 million to build and operate six new Tech Schools across the state and establishing a Clean Energy Equipment Fund to improve hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

And we'll establish a \$50 million TAFE Clean Energy Fund, as part of the \$170 million Building Better TAFE Fund, the first investments will deliver new and upgraded facilities, including:

- » Stage 2 of the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre at Federation TAFE
- » A Clean Energy Centre at TAFE Gippsland's Morwell Campus
- » A Building Innovation and Design Centre at South West TAFE.

To make sure the workers we're training are guaranteed a long-term pipeline of work, we will also institute local procurement requirements on government-owned and supported renewable energy projects.



# Powering the economy

Victoria's economy is well-placed to weather the current challenges of high inflation and rising interest rates. It's no accident, and a lot of it comes down to the significant work the Andrews Labor Government has done to support jobs.

Every Victorian deserves the security and dignity of a good, stable job with a decent wage. A job is about more than just a pay cheque – it means being able to provide for your family and plan for the future.

Since November 2014, our economy has generated 690 000 new jobs, including more than 175 000 jobs in regional Victoria.

When the pandemic hit our shores in 2020, we invested to protect Victorian lives and livelihoods. We had a target to create 400 000 jobs by 2025, with half of them created by 2022.

Today, Victoria has already far exceeded our ambitious goal, more than two years ahead of schedule – with employment rising by more than 460 000 since September 2020.

Now, we want to do even more – creating more opportunities for Victorians to find a job and giving them the training they need for the future.

## Backing Victoria's thriving industries

In this Budget we're not only investing to support Victorians in the short term, we're investing in their futures. That means investing in our state's future – and with it, driving the creation of a smart and modern economy.

We'll keep working to boost Victoria's economy with targeted industry investments to drive innovation, secure our supply chains, support businesses and back our regions.

This includes investing more than \$900 million in medical research and in this Budget, we're going even further. We'll invest a further \$12 million to continue supporting our growing mRNA industry – so more life-saving therapies can be discovered and manufactured in Victoria.

We'll invest \$21 million to establish a Manufacturing and Industry Sovereignty Fund, providing grants to support the development, expansion and retention of Victoria's strategic manufacturing capability.

We're also providing \$87 million to support the growth and sustainability of the Victorian racing industry, which has around 3 000 jobs across the state – with many of those in regional areas.





## Supporting Victorians in the workplace

We're making workplaces fairer and safer for all Victorians, and giving jobseekers the help they need to find work. That's why this Budget will provide:

- » \$35 million to support disadvantaged jobseekers in Victoria by extending the Jobs Victoria Mentors program, supporting disadvantaged jobseekers and removing the barriers they face when it comes to finding work
- » \$24 million to set up a dedicated monitoring and enforcement unit for the construction sector within WorkSafe
- » \$6 million to support the implementation of the Fair Jobs Code, the operation of Ethical Clothing Australia and the accreditation process for the Ethical Supplier Register – protecting garment workers and improving the ability of consumers to make informed and ethical purchasing decisions.

Since November  
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regional Victoria







## **Our creative state: a place to do business**

Victoria is home to some of our nation's most popular creative and cultural events. Every year, these events attract hundreds of thousands of visitors, boosting local businesses, supporting local economies, and creating local jobs.

With the Andrews Labor Government already supporting many events across our state, this year's Budget keeps backing the industries and individuals contributing to a creative Victoria – especially across regional Victoria – with:

- » \$35 million to support live music and community broadcasting, including around 10 000 gigs, getting more artists back on stage through grants for musicians to perform at live music venues as well as for music festivals, big and small
- » \$23 million to expand the Major Events Fund, promoting Victoria's calendar of events and strengthening our position as the nation's top location for major events
- » \$21 million to support a bigger and better Bendigo Art Gallery.

This year's Budget  
keeps backing  
the industries  
and individuals  
contributing to a  
creative Victoria –  
especially across  
regional Victoria

## Training for the skills our economy needs

The Andrews Labor Government promised to save TAFE, re-open and upgrade campuses, and introduce Free TAFE – and that’s exactly what we’ve done.

We’ve put more than 70 courses on the Free TAFE list – helping more Victorians get the skills they need for the jobs they want.

But now, we’re going to make TAFE even better.

We’ve expanded eligibility for free and subsidised TAFE and training – so all Victorians can study for in-demand jobs like healthcare, mental health, construction, early childhood and hospitality.

Previously it was difficult for Victorians with higher qualifications to study a subsidised TAFE course – we’ve changed that and made it easier for Victorians to reskill.

We’ve also changed the once-in-a-lifetime limit, so Victorians can take multiple Free TAFE courses, when they are continuing priority training pathways.

And we’ve promised to change the law to protect TAFE funding.

Free TAFE is helping us train Victorians so we can continue to have a highly qualified social service workforce, continue our Big Build, achieve our clean energy ambitions and grow our economy.

In this Budget, we’ll invest:

- » \$186 million to expand the eligibility criteria for subsidised training courses, including Free TAFE, to make it more widely available for every Victorian who wants to get the skills they need for the job they want – supporting local jobs and boosting our economy with a pipeline of highly-skilled, in-demand workers
- » \$90 million to meet the expected demand for training while providing additional literacy, numeracy and digital support for Free TAFE students
- » \$90 million for TAFEs to continue to provide priority skills, job placement support, improve student wellbeing and to maintain high-quality workforces.

And we’ll build and upgrade TAFE campuses across the state, so Victorians can keep studying in quality facilities. We’re investing \$170 million in the Building Better TAFE Fund which includes the delivery of:

- » A new TAFE in Melton, which will be a dedicated construction skills facility
- » A new Sunbury campus for the Bendigo Kangan Institute, to provide quality facilities and training in this growth area
- » A Disability Services Hub and a redevelopment of the Student Hub at the Gordon TAFE Geelong
- » A Community Health and Learning Hub in Bendigo TAFE Castlemaine to deliver training in a range of health fields including aged care, nursing, family violence and telehealth.

We’ll further support apprentices and trainees to succeed with \$1.5 million to establish and deliver the Apprenticeships Taskforce. This builds on the important work of Apprenticeships Victoria and Apprenticeship Support Officers in championing the fair treatment of all apprentices and trainees.

We’re doing what matters for Victorians – building and upgrading TAFE campuses across our state, making more courses free and supporting people to upskill or make a mid-career change to a great new job.



## Economic reform to create jobs

A competitive and efficient tax system plays a vital role in boosting business investment and driving our economic growth.

That's why the Andrews Labor Government is working towards a significant program of tax reform, including:

- » Increasing the payroll tax threshold
- » Abolition of business insurance duties
- » Commercial and industrial stamp duty reforms.

We are making payroll taxes fairer for business. The current payroll tax-free threshold of \$700 000 is too low.

To better support small businesses across our state, from 1 July 2024 we will raise the tax-free threshold to \$900 000, with a further increase to \$1 million from 1 July 2025.

These reforms will save around 26 000 Victorian businesses up to \$14 550 per year, and around 6 000 of those businesses will stop paying payroll tax altogether.

These benefits will be phased out for larger business to ensure support is well targeted.

And we are cutting the cost of running a business further by abolishing business insurance duty, becoming the first state in Australia to do so.

The rate of insurance duty on fire and industrial special risks, public and product liability, professional indemnity, employers' liability, and marine and aviation insurance will be reduced by 1 percentage point each year from 1 July 2024.

These reforms could save businesses around \$3 200 on professional indemnity insurance and \$2 400 on fire and other special risk insurance cumulatively over 10 years.

We're also making it easier to start and run a small business in Victoria through our regulatory reform agenda, driving business investment and growth by cutting red tape and streamlining licencing and approvals processes.

This Budget provides \$38 million for a government-wide Regulatory Reform program, helping us identify and drive real reforms which maximise benefits for Victorian businesses and consumers. We will streamline application and approvals processes, improve information flow and provide faster licencing at local and state levels, helping new and growing small businesses.

## Landmark Reform

We are proud to announce the intention to introduce a once-in-a-generation reform that transitions away from stamp duty for commercial and industrial properties.

This reform will encourage investment in Victorian business, support jobs, and improve productivity. It can provide the flexibility to help businesses establish and grow. The transition away from stamp duty for commercial and industrial properties will occur after the next sale, with the annual property tax applying 10 years after the sale.

Importantly, this reform will not affect current owners of commercial and industrial properties, as the property will only be subject to the new arrangements once it transacts. It also won't affect owners of residential property.

It is important that industry is engaged in such a landmark reform to ensure the design of the reform supports property owners through the transition. That is why we will commence targeted consultation in the coming months to assist with the introduction of the reform from 1 July 2024.



# The best start in life for all Victorians

From kinder, to great local schools – education changes lives.

Kinder gives the youngest Victorians the very best start in life, and gives parents – particularly working mums – the choice to do what’s best for their families. That’s why we made kinder free, and with this Budget we’re building more kindergartens as part of our *Best Start, Best Life* reforms.

Every Victorian family, wherever they live, should be able to count on a quality local school. That’s why we’ve committed to building 100 new schools and delivering hundreds of upgrades right across the state.

This Budget provides \$2.1 billion to build new schools and maintain and upgrade existing ones, bringing our total investment to more than \$14.9 billion.

The Budget also includes a package of support which will transform the lives of students living with disability and their carers and families.

## The best start for the best life

We know that 90 per cent of a child’s brain develops before the age of five, so early education is important to give kids the very best start in life.

That’s why the Andrews Labor Government is rolling out *Best Start, Best Life* and Three-Year-Old Kinder. Building on the more than \$4.4 billion invested to date, we’re funding a further \$1.7 billion to continue delivering this ambitious reform.

We’re delivering more places at more kinders so parents can enrol their child at a great centre, close to home.

This Budget brings our total investment to date in the *Best Start, Best Life* and Three-Year-Old Kinder reform to \$6.2 billion. This includes:

- » \$1.6 billion to roll out Three-Year-Old Kinder and increase capacity by building new kindergarten facilities
- » \$1.4 billion for Free Kinder to give Victorian parents – especially mums – the choice to return to work if they want to and provide savings to families each year, up to \$2 500 in 2023
- » \$1.3 billion to build around 100 new kindergartens, with the majority to be located at or nearby government schools to help avoid the double drop off
- » \$921 million to deliver 35 new government-owned and operated Early Learning Centres by 2027
- » \$303 million for around 35 new early learning facilities at low-fee non government schools, and to expand early learning facilities on local government sites.

Funding will progressively transition Four-Year-Old Kindergarten to Pre-Prep, providing 30 hours per week of play-based learning and to attract and retain the kinder workforce.

We promised to deliver Three-Year-Old Kinder and that’s exactly what we’ve done. This year Victorian children can access between five and 15 hours of funded learning each week.

In this Budget we are investing \$1.8 billion in early childhood and Pre-Prep, including funding to make our existing kinders even better with:

- » \$48 million to support existing kinders and toy libraries to purchase equipment, provide additional Bush Kinder programs, and continue existing and create 10 new bilingual kinders
- » \$18 million to strengthen and modernise existing inclusion support for children with disability and additional needs
- » \$10 million for local councils and eligible providers to improve local kindergarten facilities.



The Andrews Labor Government will build 50 government-owned and operated Early Learning Centres across Victoria in communities that have the greatest need for more childcare and kindergarten places. They will offer local childcare and kindergarten and where possible, will be located with other valuable community facilities like maternal and child health services, playgroups and schools.

Government-owned and operated Early Learning Centres have been confirmed in a total of 30 locations, with a further 20 sites to be announced.

Announced sites include:

- » Creswick-Clunes
- » Dandenong
- » Eaglehawk North Primary School (2025 opening)
- » Foster
- » Frankston North
- » Glenroy
- » Golden Plains
- » Hallam
- » Hampton Park-Lynbrook
- » Heidelberg West
- » Kings Park
- » Lalor
- » Loddon
- » Maryborough
- » Melton South
- » Mildura
- » Moomba Park Primary School (2025 opening)
- » Murtoa College (2025 opening)
- » Noble Park East
- » Numurkah
- » Portarlington
- » Portland
- » Reservoir
- » Rochester
- » Rockbank-Mount Cottrell
- » Seymour
- » Shepparton
- » Sunshine Primary School (2025 opening)
- » Werribee
- » Yallourn North-Glengarry



## Great local schools for every Victorian family

Every young Victorian should be able to count on a great local school wherever they live, and whatever their needs are.

That's why this Budget invests \$618 million to build nine new local schools, an additional stage at two recently opened schools, and planning and early works for three more new schools.

The nine new schools funded in this Budget put us on track to open 100 new schools across the state by 2026. This includes 13 schools that opened their doors for students in 2023, and 14 that are currently in construction.

The Andrews Labor Government has funded a \$24 million School Upgrades Delivery Fund, which enables planning and development for upgrades at 54 schools.

We are investing \$266 million across 43 schools to deliver high-quality classrooms and facilities.

The Budget also makes other investments as we build the Education State:

- » \$321 million for essential maintenance at schools and outdoor facilities
- » \$182 million for relocatable buildings to create new learning spaces at schools that are reaching their capacity
- » \$91 million to expand capacity to meet enrolment growth anticipated for the 2027 school year at four established area schools
- » \$26 million for a New Schools Planning Fund, including planning for a future secondary college for the Armstrong Creek West and Mount Duneed community
- » \$10 million to fund minor capital projects at schools across the state
- » \$10 million for the Inclusive Schools Fund, to meet the educational and social needs of all children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs
- » \$10 million for facility modifications to improve accessibility, which may include installation of ramps and handrails, and alterations for vision and hearing-impaired students.

Land will be acquired for future new schools.

This Budget brings our total investment in building new, maintaining and upgrading schools to more than \$14.9 billion since coming to government.

We are investing \$450 million towards building and upgrading low-fee Independent and Catholic schools to make sure that no matter where Victorians choose to educate their kids, they'll have access to a great local school.



## Transforming our specialist schools

Parents of children with disability feel like they're navigating a system that has been set up to fail them. It shouldn't be this hard.

This Budget delivers a \$235 million package to help students living with disability, their carers and families.

The package provides \$122 million to support one of the biggest challenges for families of children with disability – out of hours care. The Budget expands the Outside School Hours Care program to 30 specialist schools, giving more kids the high-intensity support they need.

This Budget delivers  
a \$235 million  
package to help  
students living  
with disability, their  
carers and families

The Budget delivers on our election commitments, including:

- » \$25 million to build therapy pools at specialist schools
- » \$7.5 million to help get more speech pathologists and occupational therapists to regional Victoria
- » \$7.3 million for TAFE transition officers to help students with disability
- » \$6.3 million for more extracurricular activities in specialist schools
- » \$4.8 million to integrate more therapy animals into the government school community
- » \$3.8 million to get more disability workers into rural and regional areas
- » \$3 million to help the Association for Children with Disability
- » \$1.7 million to help healthcare workers better communicate with people with autism
- » \$100 000 for specialist schools to access an app for people who are non-verbal.

And on top of our election commitments, the Budget also funds:

- » \$32 million to continue and expand the Students with Disabilities Transport Program, which provides transport assistance for students with disability to attend specialist schools.



## Supporting students and helping parents

Great schools are just the beginning of a great education.

Excursions, camps and sports give students new experiences, beyond what can be taught in a classroom. That's why we're removing barriers like cost, and helping students who face these challenges so they can focus on what matters – learning.

To support our young people to engage in learning we're funding:

- » \$169 million to help cover the costs of school excursions, camps and sporting activities for students in need
- » \$105 million to support engagement and learning by continuing programs that deliver school breakfasts, affordable school uniforms, and glasses for kids
- » \$20 million to expand refugee education support programs that improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with a refugee background and their families
- » \$20 million to identify and support early school leavers who are lost or disengaged from the education and training system

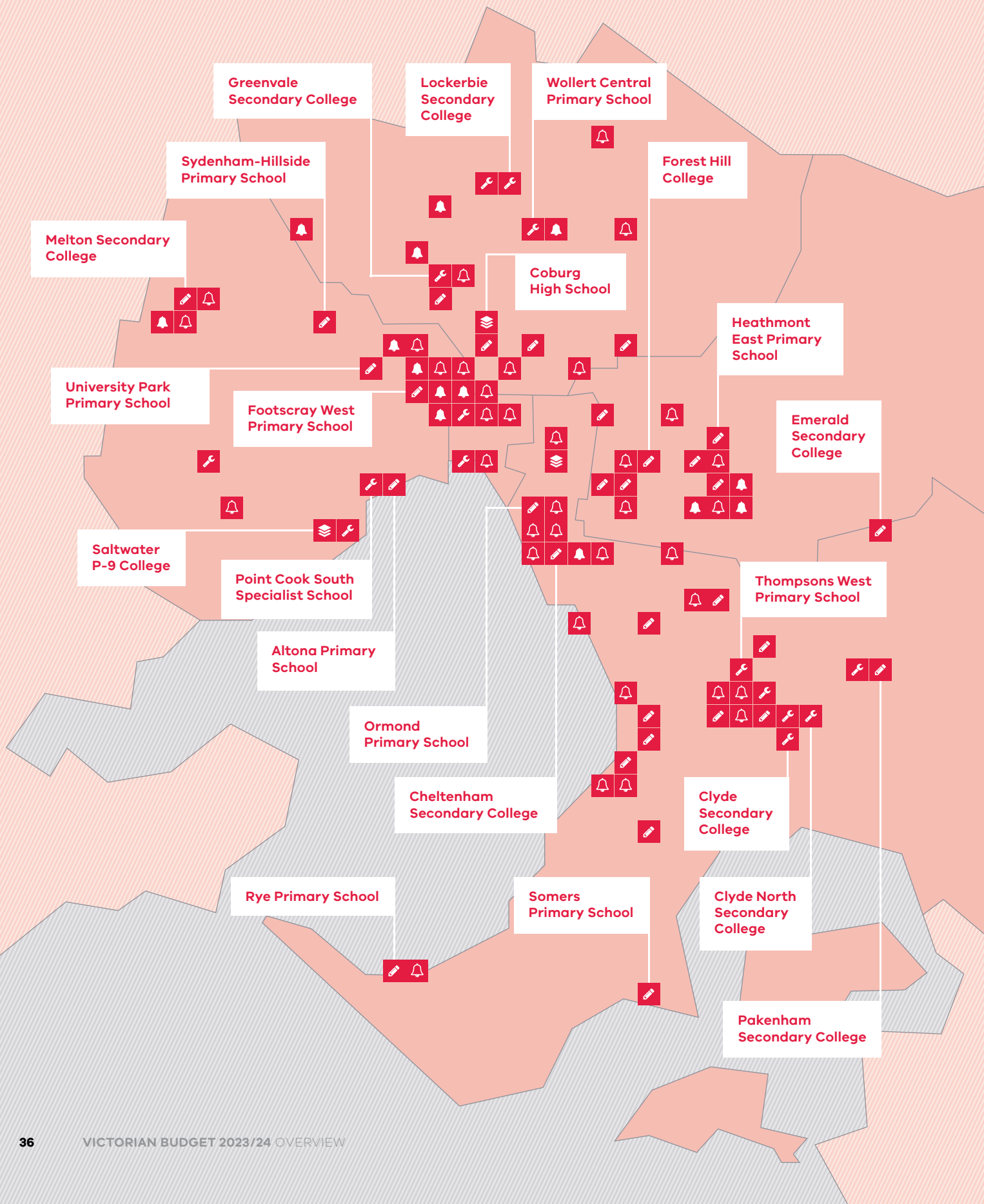
- » \$13 million to offer education programs for young people who are at risk of disengagement from school, including targeted support for African and Pasifika young people
- » \$5.7 million to deliver I CAN to support students with autism
- » \$4.6 million to deliver the Safe Schools program to support LGBTIQ+ students.

This Budget includes \$40 million for two education initiatives focused on early intervention that are expected to generate more than \$115 million in economic and fiscal benefits over the next decade.

We're also investing \$205 million to support and develop more world-class teachers in our schools, as we know how critical teachers are to improving educational outcomes and supporting our students across the state.

\$40 million is provided to develop lesson planning and curriculum material aligned to the new Victorian Curriculum F-10 to help ease the workload of Victorian teachers and deliver better outcomes for students. Teachers will also have access to professional learning programs and other curriculum resources to support them to implement the new curriculum.

# Metro schools





## NEW METRO SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

- » Clyde North Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Clyde North Secondary College (Interim Name)
- » Fishermans Bend Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Lockerbie Secondary College (Interim Name)
- » Pakenham North West Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Point Cook South P-9 College (Interim Name)
- » Riverdale North Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Thompsons West Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Wollert Central Primary School (Interim Name)

## ADDITIONAL STAGES OF NEW METRO SCHOOLS

- » Clyde Secondary College
- » Greenvale Secondary College

## PLANNING AND EARLY WORKS FOR NEW SCHOOLS

- » Casey Central Primary School (Interim Name)
- » Lockerbie Specialist School (Interim Name)
- » Point Cook South Specialist School (Interim Name)

## METRO SCHOOL UPGRADES: ESTABLISHED AREA GROWTH FOR 2027

- » Coburg High School
- » Richmond Primary School
- » Saltwater P-9 College

## METRO SCHOOL UPGRADES

- » Aldercourt Primary School
- » Altona Primary School
- » Bayswater South Primary School
- » Bethal Primary School
- » Cheltenham Secondary College
- » Cranbourne East Secondary College
- » Cranbourne Park Primary School
- » Eltham High School

- » Emerald Secondary College
- » Fleetwood Primary School
- » Footscray West Primary School
- » Forest Hill College
- » Hallam Secondary College
- » Heathmont East Primary School
- » John Fawcner College
- » Kent Park Primary School
- » Keysborough Gardens Primary School
- » Koonung Secondary College
- » Mahogany Rise Primary School
- » Melton Secondary College
- » Mount Waverley Primary School
- » Ormond Primary School
- » Overport Primary School
- » Pakenham Secondary College
- » Parkhill Primary School
- » Preston Primary School
- » Rye Primary School
- » Somers Primary School
- » Somerville Primary School
- » Sydenham-Hillside Primary School
- » University Park Primary School

## UPGRADES FOR LOW-FEE INDEPENDENT AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### New campus:

- » Holy Trinity Primary School (Sunbury)
- » Kolbe College, new campus (Mickleham)
- » New Catholic Primary school (Wollert)

### Upgrades:

- » Mary, Queen of Heaven Primary School (Greenvale)
- » Sacred Heart Primary School (Sandringham)
- » Sacred Heart Primary School (St Albans)
- » St John the Baptist Primary School (Ferntree Gully)
- » St Joseph's School (Boronia)
- » St Jude the Apostle School (Scoresby)
- » St Lawrence of Brindisi Primary School (Weir Views)
- » St Margaret's Primary School (Maribyrnong)
- » St Michael's Primary School (North Melbourne)
- » St Monica's Primary School (Moonee Ponds)
- » St Peter's Primary School (Keilor East)



New schools and additional stages



School upgrades



School upgrades: growth for 2027

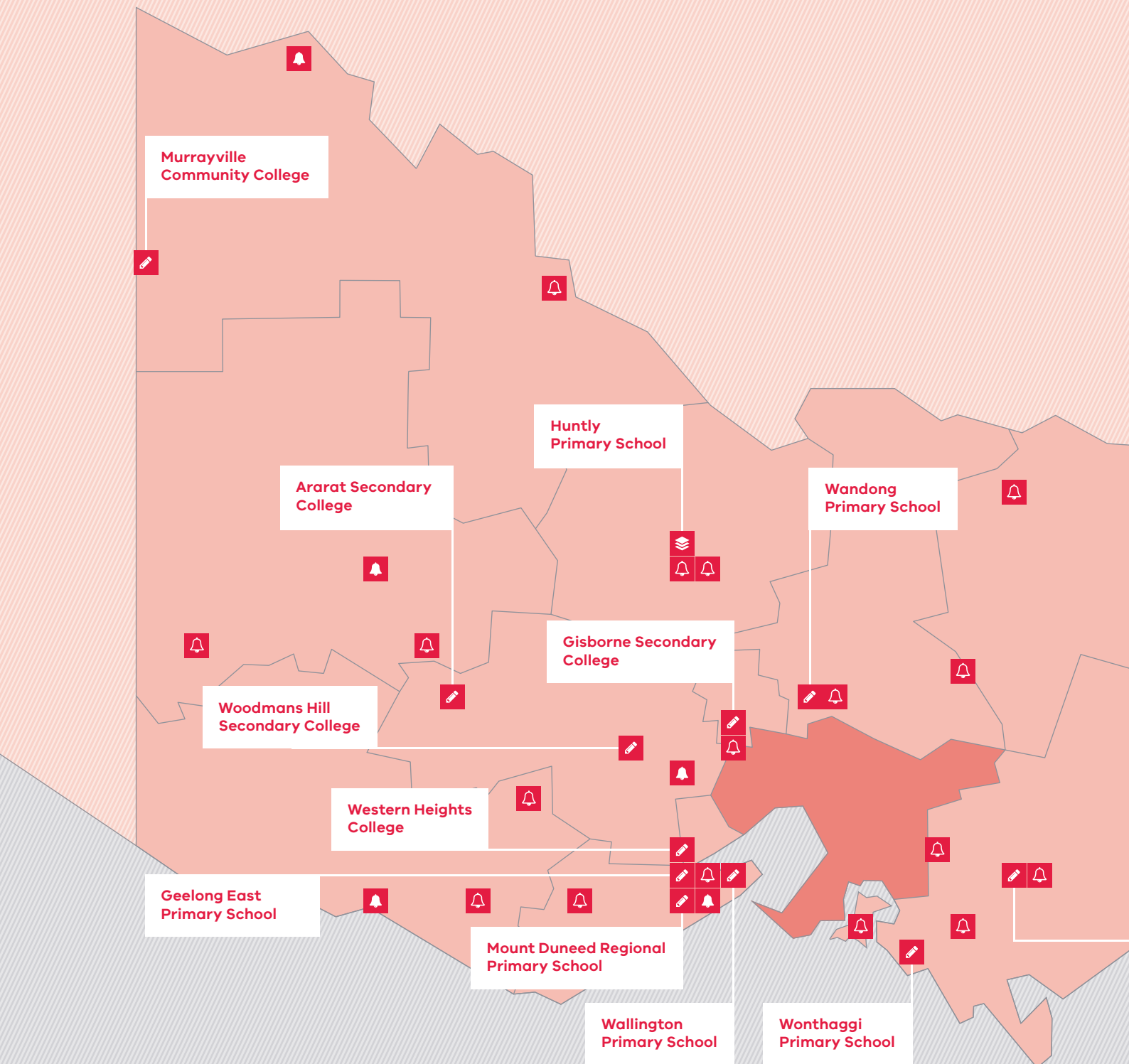


Upgrades for non-government schools



Planning for school upgrades

# Regional schools



## REGIONAL SCHOOL UPGRADES: ESTABLISHED AREA GROWTH FOR 2027

- » Huntly Primary School

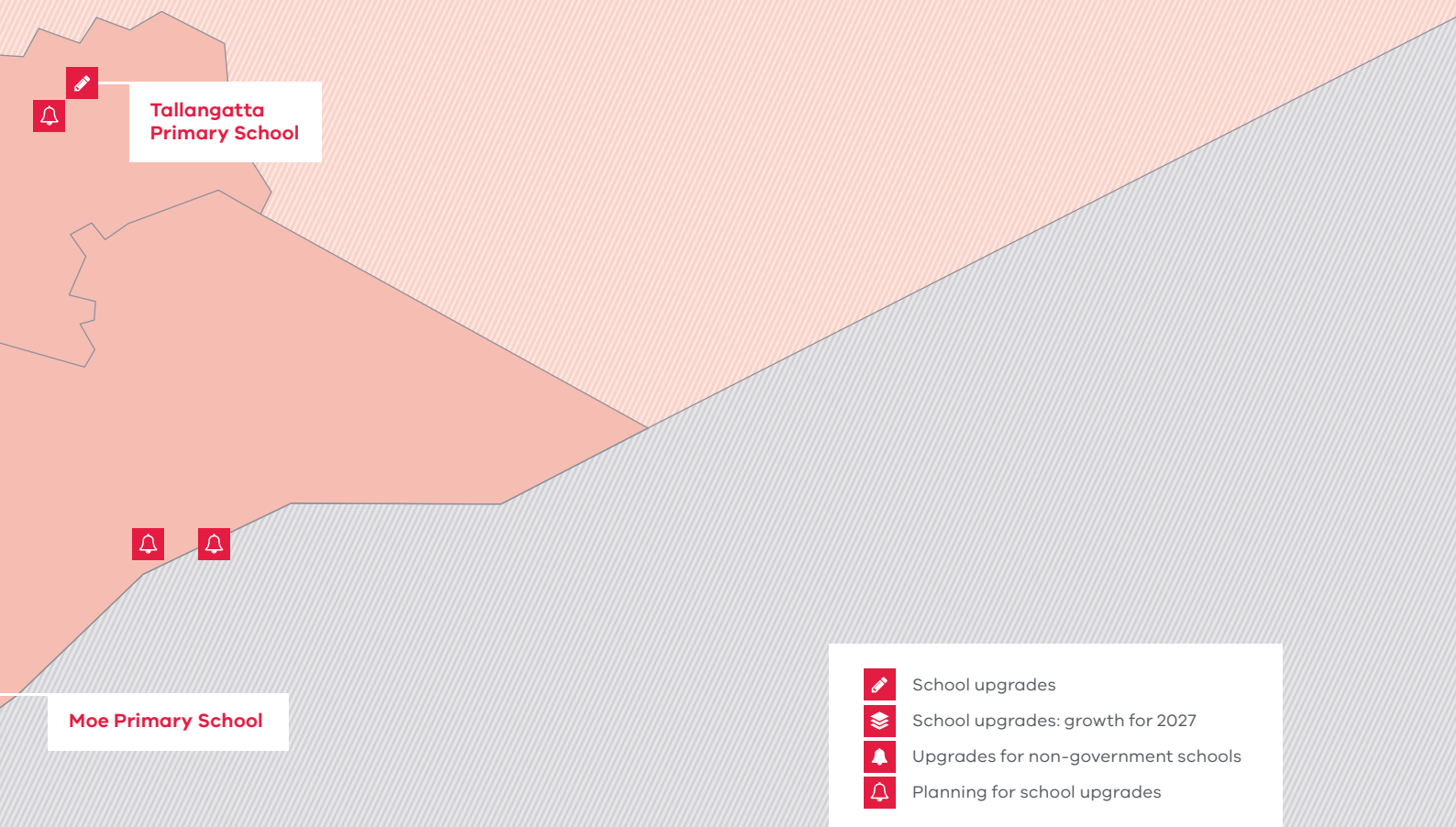
## REGIONAL SCHOOL UPGRADES

- » Ararat Secondary College
- » Geelong East Primary School
- » Gisborne Secondary College
- » Moe Primary School
- » Mount Duneed Regional Primary School
- » Murrayville Community College
- » Tallangatta Primary School
- » Wallington Primary School
- » Wandong Primary School
- » Western Heights College
- » Wonthaggi Primary School
- » Woodmans Hill Secondary College

## UPGRADES FOR LOW-FEE INDEPENDENT AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### Upgrades:

- » Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School (Warrnambool)
- » Sacred Heart Primary School (Mildura)
- » St Bernard's Primary School (Bacchus Marsh)
- » St Brigid's College (Horsham)
- » St Francis Xavier Primary School (Corio)







# Getting Victorians home sooner and safer

We are building the roads, rail, trams and trains our state needs now, and for the future. Since 2014, the Andrews Labor Government has committed \$112 billion in planning, building, running and upgrading Victoria's transport network.

We've been getting on with the Big Build: the Metro Tunnel, the Level Crossing Removal Program, the Suburban Rail Loop, the West Gate Tunnel and the North East Link and many others. These projects are transforming the way Victorians travel, and creating thousands of jobs.

This Budget provides another \$7.3 billion to keep delivering transport projects and give Victorians the great transport network they deserve.

Our investments will not only slash travel times and improve safety, they will also support growth in our economy. Our Big Build projects support 20 000 jobs directly, and provide career paths for apprentices, cadets and trainees – giving Victorians the confidence that if they learn a trade, there will be a job for them on one of our major projects.

## Removing 110 level crossings by 2030

We're removing 110 dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne by 2030, the largest project of its kind in Victoria's history.

A total of 68 level crossings have been removed so far. By the end of the current program, the Lilydale, Sunbury, Cranbourne, Pakenham, Frankston and Werribee lines will be level crossing free, changing the way people live, work and travel.

And we've also built 40 new and upgraded stations, created over 50 kilometres of walking and cycling paths, and unlocked 20 MCGs of open space – all ahead of schedule.

At peak construction, there have been around 6 000 people working on projects, with more than 79 million work hours completed.

Our Big Build projects support 20 000 jobs directly, and provide career paths for apprentices, cadets and trainees

We are delivering our election commitment to remove 110 level crossings by 2030, including an additional 25 level crossings:

- » Hudsons Road, Spotswood
- » Maddox Road, Newport
- » Maidstone Street, Altona
- » Ruthven Street, Macleod
- » Old Calder Highway, Diggers Rest
- » Watsons Road, Diggers Rest
- » Wickham Road, Highett
- » Highett Road, Highett
- » McDonald Street, Mordialloc
- » Station Street, Aspendale
- » Groves Street, Aspendale
- » Armstrongs Road, Seaford
- » Station Street, Seaford
- » Albert Street, Brunswick
- » Albion Street, Brunswick
- » Brunswick Road, Brunswick
- » Dawson Street, Brunswick
- » Hope Street, Brunswick
- » Union Street, Brunswick
- » Victoria Street, Brunswick
- » Park Street, Parkville
- » Coburns Road, Melton South
- » Exford Road, Melton South
- » Ferris Road, Melton South
- » Hopkins Road, Truganina.

## Safer roads and improved travel times

Well-maintained roads are safer roads. This Budget continues our work to build a safer road network, with \$2.8 billion for a program of road maintenance and renewal and flood recovery works across the metropolitan and regional road network. This package includes routine maintenance, road resurfacing and rehabilitation, and bridge and drainage repairs to support the productivity of our road network.

We'll provide \$694 million for a road blitz, upgrading key roads and intersections across our state including in Altona Meadows, Wyndham Vale and Bacchus Marsh – reducing travel times and improving safety in major growth areas.

Other initiatives in this Budget include:

- » \$62 million to deliver local road upgrades to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists
- » \$32 million for West Gate Bridge maintenance works to improve safety, and support the movement of freight
- » \$16 million for the School Crossing Supervisor Program to help get kids to school safely
- » \$15 million to modernise trucks to improve air quality in the inner western suburbs
- » \$5 million to seal gravel and dirt roads in Inner West communities.

## Upgrading the Melton line

Melbourne's west is booming – almost 300 000 people have moved to the western suburbs in the past decade. Families in the west deserve a high-quality public transport network that will allow them to leave the car at home, saving on petrol and parking. That is why we are investing \$650 million to upgrade the Melton line, allowing bigger and better trains to run and increasing train capacity by up to 50 per cent.

This investment is in addition to the Government's plans for the Melton Station rebuild and four level crossing removals committed as part of the 25 more level crossings by 2030.



## Better metro trams and trains

We're making it faster and easier to get around Melbourne on public transport, and keep Victoria moving. We're building the Metro Tunnel to untangle the City Loop and delivering more trams and trains.

Tracks have been laid in the Metro Tunnel and station fit out is underway. The Budget delivers \$339 million to prepare the Metro Tunnel for opening, including enabling works and facilities to support Metro Tunnel network integration and operations.

The Budget also delivers \$60 million for works to run Next Generation Trams in Melbourne's west on routes 57, 59 and 82 by 2025. This package includes:

- » Essendon depot stabling enabling works and track crossover relocation at Raleigh Road, Maribyrnong
- » Various critical safety works and upgrades to key tram stops
- » Works to the Melbourne Showgrounds terminus and an upgrade to the tram terminus at Moonee Ponds to enable deployment of Next Generation Trams on Route 82 and futureproof for additional siding capacity.

The Budget also makes further investments to keep Victoria moving, including:

- » \$353 million to expand the Kananook train maintenance stabling facility, delivering more maintenance capacity. This supports network resilience and the return of the Frankston Line trains into the City Loop upon opening of the Metro Tunnel
- » \$60 million to upgrade Boronia Station supporting its accessibility to locals and creating more open space for locals.



## More regional travel, more often, for less

Our regional rail network is the backbone of our state, connecting communities to work, study and spend time with each other.

So we've made regional fares cheaper with \$190 million towards capping regional fares at metro prices.

The Budget is also investing \$601 million to build another 23 new Victorian-made VLocity trains, strengthening and boosting the reliability of our regional network and directly supporting up to 100 local jobs.

Building more trains also means we can run more services, more often. The Budget also invests \$219 million for service uplifts across our rail network, including extra weekend services on major regional train lines.

To improve reliability of the regional network, the *2023/24 Budget* will also deliver:

- » \$322 million to increase the capacity of the South Dynon maintenance facility as we expand the VLocity fleet
- » \$111 million to support regional rail network operations, reliability and punctuality, including operating and maintenance costs for regional network assets and an increase to rolling stock maintenance capacity to support the growing regional train fleet.

## Keeping Victoria moving

As our communities grow, the services people rely on need to grow, too – including our local buses. We are delivering more local bus services as part of a \$36 million investment to deliver Victoria's Bus Plan. This includes the extension of Route 433 in Maddingley, continued services in the communities of Casey and Wyndham, and the commencement of transition to Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs) in new Metropolitan Bus Service Contracts from 2025.

We'll also strengthen Victoria's public transport with \$11 million to support increased demand for the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) and continuation of the current MPTP lifting fee paid to drivers for wheelchair accessible vehicle trips.

We'll keep investing to safely transport goods and materials to support Victoria and its future infrastructure needs:

- » \$47 million to undertake critical maintenance works and rebuild local piers and jetties across our state. This will improve safety for users and support Victoria's maritime sector and visiting seafarers
- » \$3.5 million to maintain the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme, encouraging the transfer of freight from road to rail and getting trucks off our roads.

# A fairer Victoria

The Andrews Labor Government is providing the support and opportunity that Victorians need to succeed.

We're investing in a more equal state for every single Victorian – regardless of who you are, where you're from, or what you believe.

This Budget invests to promote equality, tackle disadvantage, and improve fairness across Victoria.

Whether it's helping families with the rising cost of living, keeping women and children safe from harm, progressing Treaty with Aboriginal Victorians or supporting our LGBTIQ+ community, we're doing what matters: building a fairer Victoria.

## Cost of living relief for families

Across the world, countries are grappling with high inflation and interest rate hikes – and Australia is no different.

The cost of living keeps rising, and Australians are paying the price. We know Victorians are paying more at the bowser and the supermarket, to get where they need to go, and for their electricity bills.

That's why we've been getting on with delivering programs that help to drive down the cost of living for families across the state. We've made kinder free, delivered three rounds of the Power Saving Bonus, encouraged take-up of the Solar Homes Program, delivered free Ls and Ps, set rate caps for all Victorian councils, and introduced the Victorian Default Offer.

In this Budget we're going even further by funding more initiatives that focus on providing relief in energy, transport and everyday living expenses:

- » \$400 million for another round of the hugely popular Power Saving Bonus, providing another \$250 to households that use the Victorian Energy Compare website to search for the cheapest electricity deal
- » \$190 million for fairer public transport fares for regional Victorians – capping regional public transport fares at the metro rate to make it easier for families and commuters in regional Victoria to leave the car at home and get around by train and bus
- » \$141 million to install air conditioners across more than 40 high-rise public housing towers, keeping homes cool for thousands of Victorians
- » \$90 million to digitise essential government services, streamlining the way people interact with government to make sure Victorians can get the information and support they need faster. These services, delivered by Services Victoria, will make it easier to do business in Victoria
- » \$50 million to help more Victorian families to access public fertility care, with up to 3 375 treatment cycles funded each year
- » \$42 million to install 100 neighbourhood batteries across the state at targeted locations to drive down power bills even more – increasing the number of homes with access to a battery and providing crucial extra storage capacity for local communities.





Other cost of living initiatives in this Budget include:

- » \$42 million to recognise the service of Victorian veterans and their families and help them with the cost of living. This includes introducing the Victorian Veterans Card, which will entitle veterans to a \$100 discount on the registration of one vehicle, free public transport on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, free trailer and caravan registration and free fishing and boating licences
- » \$23 million to provide free period products in public places across the state. We'll install up to 1 500 free pad and tampon machines at up to 700 public sites including courts, TAFEs, public libraries, train stations and major cultural institutions like the State Library of Victoria and the Melbourne Museum, so women can access period products where and when they need them
- » \$17 million over four years to continue our Baby Bundle program – supporting new mums and dads across Victoria as they transition into parenthood and help them give their babies the very best start in life
- » \$17 million to expand the Smile Squad free dental program to low-fee Independent and Catholic schools from 2026 – saving parents time and money on trips to the dentist
- » \$16 million for Solar Victoria to provide interest-free loans to eligible households to install solar battery storage systems in their home
- » \$16 million to keep providing pads and tampons in every government school free of charge. We'll also develop resources and education materials and deliver pelvic pain education programs to 100 government schools per year
- » \$10 million to deliver free car rego for our hardworking trade apprentices. Eligible bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, electricians, plumbers and other apprentices who rely on their vehicle for work will benefit from the saving – worth up to \$865 every year.



## Equality for all Victorians

In Victoria, equality is not negotiable.

Regardless of who you are, who you love, or who you want to be, everyone deserves to be treated with respect and decency in our state.

This Budget builds on our work to date to create a more inclusive state – where Victorians can be themselves and celebrate their diversity, including:

- » \$9.7 million to expand the Rainbow Tick program, including affirmative care training. This will increase the number of community and mental health providers that are Rainbow Tick accredited, so they can better support LGBTIQ+ Victorians with specialist care and advice from workers and professionals who understand their community and their needs
- » \$8 million for the LGBTIQ+ Community Grants Program, which helps community organisations celebrate and connect LGBTIQ+ communities
- » \$4.5 million to pilot the *Pride in Ageing* program to better support older LGBTIQ+ Victorians and strengthen their connections to community.

Victoria has also led the nation in our work to make the state a fairer and more equal place for women and girls – and to build a better future for them.

This Budget invests around \$2.7 billion in initiatives that directly address women's needs and work toward improving outcomes for women.

In 2021, we became the first state to introduce gender responsive budgeting, so we're no longer limited to investing in 'women's issues'. Now, every year, we analyse and consider the impact of investment decisions on women at every stage of the budget process.

## Valuing our diversity

In Victoria, we're not just proud of our diversity – we know it's one of our strengths.

Communities from all around the globe call our state home, and that's something we're extremely proud of.

Because the people who come from abroad to make Victoria their home always bring new perspectives and enhance the way we grow as a community.

That's why our Government has always backed multicultural communities, and why we always will.

This Budget invests in Victoria's multicultural communities – and the people who call our state home:

- » \$40 million to continue the Multicultural Infrastructure Fund to upgrade, renovate and build multicultural and multifaith community facilities
- » \$17 million to upgrade and revitalise business and cultural hubs in Victoria's multicultural precincts, provide grants to multicultural trader associations and for scholarships to help train staff to fill jobs in these precincts
- » \$12 million to help our multicultural and multifaith communities celebrate the festivals and events that offer important connections
- » \$9.8 million for multicultural support programs including the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, to help the voices of our multicultural and multifaith communities be heard
- » \$6 million to fund anti-vilification campaigns to counter discrimination and prejudice
- » \$6 million to strengthen and extend language provision in Community Language Schools and select government schools, including by establishing three new beacon schools offering Hindi and Punjabi language subjects.

## Supporting vulnerable children and families

We know how important family is. And we know that, wherever possible, the best place for children is with their families.

Building on our \$3.1 billion investment since the *2019/20 Budget*, this year, we'll provide an additional \$895 million to protect our children and help keep vulnerable families together, including:

- » \$548 million to meet demand for residential care placements for children and young people, the biggest single investment in care services in a decade. This includes targeted care packages to help children and young people to live in suitable care arrangements and to prevent entry into residential care. This funding will also provide more therapeutic supports in residential care homes and address child sexual exploitation
- » \$140 million to reduce Aboriginal overrepresentation in child protection and family services through culturally appropriate care, led by the Aboriginal community. This funding will also expand the trial of an Aboriginal-led investigation team for child protection reports
- » \$11 million to continue trials to embed family services in universal settings such as schools, early years services and community health hubs so that vulnerable families can access support where and when they need it.

Not only will these investments improve the lives of children and families around Victoria, they'll also support over 600 jobs across our state.



## Keeping women and children safe

Keeping women and children safe has been our priority from the very beginning.

It's the reason we established the Royal Commission into Family Violence. It's why we've implemented every one of its 227 recommendations. And it's why we've invested more than \$3.7 billion over the past eight years to keep women and children safe.

But there's more to do – and we'll keep doing what matters.

This year's Budget will invest a further \$117 million to continue to support victim survivors of family violence and hold perpetrators to account, including in Aboriginal-led services, by delivering perpetrator intervention programs, keeping victim survivors safe in their homes, increasing sexual assault support services and providing specialist family violence legal assistance at court.

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victim survivors of  
family violence

## Better spaces for stronger communities

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in the projects and priorities that will further strengthen our communities. That includes the local sports clubs that bind us together, the open spaces that matter to local families and the services that lend a helping hand when Victorians need it most.

This Budget we're doing what matters for local communities. We're investing \$269 million to deliver on our commitment of better parks, playgrounds and community recreational facilities, including:

- » \$201 million to deliver new and upgraded community sport and active recreation infrastructure, including continuing the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund and the Country Football and Netball Program so more Victorians can participate
- » \$13 million to build six new dog parks and upgrade up to 22 existing ones
- » \$7.4 million to upgrade parks, open spaces and facilities at 11 locations so people can better enjoy the great outdoors.

We'll also invest \$7.5 million in the projects and organisations that support our local communities when they need it most. This includes funding for food relief through FareShare, support for organisations that foster and increase volunteering, additional social infrastructure and assistance to community and philanthropic organisations.

Other community initiatives include:

- » \$19 million for the Our Place model and place-based education plans to respond to the needs of local students in the Shepparton, Doveton and Frankston North areas and improve access to services for parents and families
- » \$10 million to keep entry to Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary, Werribee Open Range Zoo, and Kyabram Fauna Park free for children under 16 years of age on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays.

## Supporting Treaty and self-determination

The foundation for a fairer Victoria starts with a fairer future for our First Peoples.

And if we are to achieve genuine equality for Aboriginal people, action must be led by Aboriginal people.

As we prepare to embark on the next phase of Victoria's Treaty process, we'll invest to support Aboriginal self-determination, Treaty and truth-telling.

Through this Budget, \$82 million will be provided to support the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria to prepare for and enter the historic Treaty negotiations.

This is a part of the \$475 million investment we are making in our First Peoples through this Budget, which builds on the \$1.5 billion we've invested to support Victoria's Aboriginal community.

Other initiatives in this package include:

- » \$35 million to support 25 self-determining Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to strengthen workforce capacity to deliver more episodes of care to Aboriginal Victorians and meet Victoria's commitment under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- » \$17 million to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians – implementing a regional hub model for Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services, enhancing Victoria Police's Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program in collaboration with Victorian Aboriginal communities, and investing in Aboriginal Community Justice Panels
- » \$14 million to attract new and returning First Peoples into teaching degrees and government school teaching roles
- » \$10 million to continue the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program to help advance employment and social and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians
- » \$6.4 million to continue to support Traditional Owner corporations when negotiating a Recognition and Settlement Agreement package, ensuring Traditional Owner groups are able to negotiate on equal footing
- » \$3.9 million to continue the First Nations Legal and Research Services, which supports Traditional Owners to prepare for Treaty negotiations and achieve formal recognition
- » \$3.9 million for an Aboriginal-led Early Parenting Centre that's completely dedicated to Aboriginal families and children
- » \$2.6 million to strengthen the Aboriginal Heritage Officer and the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Rangers programs, protecting and managing Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria
- » \$1.4 million to deliver Aboriginal cultural events and awards, celebrating and remembering Victoria's Aboriginal culture and history.







## Protecting our environment

Victoria's natural environment is precious. From our green wedge in the suburbs to our pristine waterways – our environment is a major tourism drawcard and is home to our beautiful, local wildlife.

The Andrews Labor Government isn't just talking about protecting the environment, we're getting on with it.

We've already invested \$2.4 billion to protect our environment. That funding comes on top of ambitious climate action targets, with Victoria powering on towards 95 per cent renewable energy by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2045.

With this Budget, we're investing:

- » \$84 million to keep backing land conservation programs, including the Conservation Regulator, Southern Otway Landcare Network, Parklands Albury Wodonga, Kiewa Catchment Landcare Groups, remediating the Lemon Springs illegal waste site, maintaining a stronger EPA, and addressing critical risks to marine and coastal assets
- » \$10 million to establish a Green Links fund to support revegetation along our creeks, rivers, and waterways
- » \$9.3 million to support not-for-profit and community veterinary clinics, pet shelters, animal rescue and rehoming organisations, and to modernise our animal welfare laws
- » \$9.2 million for wildlife protection programs including a new wildlife hospital, emergency support, hospital services, extending the Zoos Victoria Wildlife Outreach program, and protecting the Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum.

## Help in an emergency

Devastating bushfires, floods and natural disasters have underscored how important it is that our state is prepared, connected and resourced to respond in an emergency.

This Budget ensures Victorians can rely on our emergency service operators and workforce to look after us in times of need:

- » \$40 million to transition 50 Forest Fire Management Victoria firefighters into full-time roles, continue 54 short-term firefighter roles in 2023-24, as well as funding to maintain strategic fuel breaks so that we can better prepare for and respond to fire emergencies
- » \$34 million for upgrades to emergency services facilities including CFA stations, VICSES facilities, Life Saving Victoria facilities and marine rescue resources
- » \$13 million to continue critical lifesaving services, including support for volunteer and paid lifeguards, rescue jet ski operations and developing and maintaining the Safer Pools Code of Practice to keep Victorians safe in the water
- » \$2 million to further support reform of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA), and additional investment for a new computer system to support emergency services Triple Zero call-taking and dispatch functions, so Victorians can get connected to the urgent help they need in an emergency.

## More homes for Victorians

Every Victorian should have a place to call home.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$1.6 billion in the Victorian Homebuyer Fund (VHF), a shared equity scheme to help 10 000 Victorians into homeownership. Since its launch, VHF has helped almost 3 500 Victorians buy a home, with a further 1 500 approved to start house-hunting.

More than two-thirds of participants are first home buyers and half are women. The VHF has also partnered with Aboriginal Housing Victoria to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

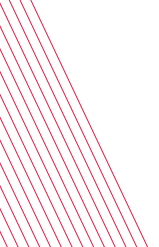
We're getting on with our \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build, to deliver over 12 000 new homes for Victorians, including a target of \$1.25 billion to be spent across regional areas.

In this Budget we're investing:

- » \$68 million to deliver a Housing First response including housing and support services for those rough sleeping and experiencing homelessness, to help get their lives on track
- » \$33 million to support around 225 young people with complex needs leaving residential care and other settings. Young people will be supported towards independence with multidisciplinary support and access to housing
- » \$9.1 million for the Pathways to Home program to help people with disability make the transition out of hospital beds and into home-like settings equipped to meet their needs. This will free up hospital beds to treat additional patients.

This Budget includes \$100 million for two initiatives focused on avoiding homelessness, with early intervention expected to generate more than \$180 million in economic and fiscal benefits over the next decade.

We're also expanding tax concessions to support families to provide homes to relatives with severe disability and we're making land transfer duty exemptions fairer for pensioners and concession card holders.



# Supporting rural and regional Victoria

Regional Victoria is growing. As regional communities grow, we're investing to make sure the services Victorians rely on keep pace.

Since 2014, we've invested \$36 billion in our regions, building the public transport infrastructure, TAFEs, schools and community spaces and hospitals regional Victorians need.

With this Budget, we'll keep doing what matters for regional Victorians with an over \$5 billion investment.

And with this Budget, we're delivering every regional commitment we made at the last election, all while repaying the COVID debt.

Since 2014, we've created more than 175 000 jobs across regional Victoria. Regional Victoria currently has an unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent as at March 2023 – with more regional Victorians in jobs than ever before.

While unemployment in regional Victoria is very low, global challenges of high inflation and rising interest rates have put pressure on family budgets.

That's why this Budget provides direct cost of living relief to regional Victorians, making it cheaper for them to get around on public transport and driving down the costs of energy bills.

We're investing \$42 million in neighbourhood batteries – providing crucial extra storage capacity for local communities, even if they don't have solar panels.

We've capped regional public transport fares at metro prices – making it cheaper for regional Victorians to use public transport for work, to access education and healthcare, and to travel around our state. And we'll invest \$2.8 billion over 10 years on a package of maintenance and flood recovery works for roads across Victoria, including around \$1.8 billion for works in regional Victoria.

We are transforming the way people and freight move around our state, with a number of initiatives to help people get home sooner and safer.

These upgrades mean regional Victorians spend less time in the car or on the train, and more time at home with the people they love.

We're building and upgrading schools across the state, because every child deserves a great local school – no matter where they live.

And we're making the investments our healthcare system needs, supporting health workers, so they can keep delivering the very best care to regional Victorians.



## Taking care of those we love

Every Victorian should be able to get the healthcare they need, when they need it, close to home.

That's why this Budget gives a boost to healthcare across our regions, including:

- » \$162 million for better aged care services across regional Victoria, to build new public aged care services in Cohuna, Maffra and Numurkah
- » \$51 million to continue operating local public health units across regional Victoria, to deliver public health prevention, protection, regulation and emergency response activities
- » \$44 million to deliver new PET scanners, including at regional hospitals in Ballarat, Shepparton, Warrnambool and Wangaratta, improving our capacity to assess cancers, neurological and cardiovascular diseases for all Victorians
- » \$30 million for a new ambulance station for Armstrong Creek supporting reduced ambulance response times across Greater Geelong and the surrounding regions.

For many regional Victorians, finding mental health support often means leaving home.

And if you live far from a major regional town or centre, the closest place to access specialist care and support could be an hour's drive away. This Budget continues our work to build our mental health system from the ground up, with:

- » \$157 million for critical bed-based mental health services across our state including more Hospital in the Home beds for Barwon Health, improving in-home mental health care for acutely unwell residents across the Geelong region
- » \$590 000 to continue delivering social and emotional wellbeing initiatives in regional Victoria, including a suicide prevention program for Aboriginal young people in the Geelong region
- » A new Mental Health and Wellbeing local service in Leongatha, improving access to mental health services in Gippsland.

## Great local schools for regional Victorians

Kids in regional Victoria deserve a great local school and every opportunity no matter where they live.

That's why we're building new schools and upgrading others right across Victoria, including a \$67 million investment to upgrade 12 regional schools including in Geelong, Gisborne, Wonthaggi and Ararat as part of this Budget.

We'll also invest:

- » \$32 million to attract and retain more teachers across regional Victoria, including allowances for pre-service teachers to undertake placements at regional and remote schools
- » \$26 million to build and operate new tech schools in Warrnambool and Wangaratta
- » \$4.7 million to expand equity and excellence for rural and regional students raising their aspirations of post-school pathways, developing regional networks of schools to share resources with each other and improve student outreach
- » \$4 million to continue the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project, which provides services and support to improve social and educational outcomes for children in Shepparton.







## Regional parks and recreation areas

Every family deserves the chance to get out and kick a ball, go for a run, walk the dog or enjoy our great local parks. And as regional Victorians spend more time outdoors with the people they love, this Budget invests in creating and improving local community spaces.

We are funding new and upgraded community sport and recreation projects across regional Victoria, including:

- » \$32 million for the Go Fishing Victoria program, maintaining fish stocks and expanding fish hatcheries at Arcadia and Snobs Creek. We will support recreational fishing by investing in local clubs, kids' angler programs and other initiatives
- » \$21 million to rebuild St Leonards Pier improving fishing and boating infrastructure on the Bellarine peninsula
- » \$16 million for recreational boating infrastructure improvements to increase recreational opportunities for Victorians and visitors
- » \$11 million to upgrade visitor facilities and infrastructure at the You Yangs (Wurdi Youang) and Serendip Sanctuary precinct to enhance and protect the natural and cultural precinct
- » \$8.7 million for Community Sport and Recreation Participation Programs. Many programs are in regional areas and will provide further opportunities for priority groups, support grassroots clubs and build sector capacity
- » \$8 million to open up the Tarago Reservoir for On Water Recreation by providing water treatment capacity upgrades at the Tarago, Neerim South and Warragul treatment plants
- » \$3.9 million to halve camping fees at parks across the state, encouraging more Victorians to get out and explore everything regional Victoria has to offer
- » \$2.5 million for the Country Football and Netball Program to develop community sport and recreation infrastructure. This will increase participation opportunities and improve accessibility for the community.

## Powering our regions

Regional Victorians know that renewable energy means more jobs, and lower power bills.

The neighbourhood batteries we install across regional Victoria will store cheaper electricity during the day and feed it back into the grid at night – slashing power bills. We'll work with community organisations, local councils and distribution companies to identify the best locations for them.

Workers across regional Victoria remember the SEC, and the good local jobs it created. As we work to bring back the SEC, we'll make sure regional Victoria plays an integral role in our clean energy future.

We'll provide \$50 million to establish a TAFE Clean Energy Fund, through the \$170 million Building Better TAFE Fund, supporting Gippsland TAFE, South West TAFE and Federation TAFE with a range of initiatives to train Victorians for the energy jobs of the future.



## Victoria's flood recovery

The Government provided immediate support to flood-affected communities last year, with an immediate state coordinated clean up allowing crews to move quickly into the worst affected areas to undertake hazard assessment and demolition of any severely damaged structures.

We established regional recovery hubs with access to vital services for people, and provided grants and a range of recovery support services to businesses, not-for-profit organisations and the community.

Support was also provided for schools and TAFEs to ensure continuation of education services. This included funding to repair damaged facilities, for additional staffing and to deliver remote learning.

We are going further in this Budget investing \$677 million to meet the emergency response and recovery needs of flood affected communities, including:

- » Early intervention and psychological services to support the mental health of communities impacted by floods and disasters
- » Support to councils for flood recovery programs and to undertake secondary impact assessments
- » Continuing the communications program on flood recovery, and covering emergency services response costs
- » Repairs to the flood impacted VICSES Emergency Hubs at Rochester and Heathcote
- » Replacement of the flood impacted Rochester Police Station
- » Additional flood recovery support programs that are yet to be agreed with the Commonwealth on eligibility for cost sharing arrangements.







## Further boosting regional jobs and economies

Big sporting events bring Victorians together, drive local jobs, and boost our state's economy. And there's no better place to hold the 2026 Commonwealth Games than Victoria – the home of Australian sport.

In last year's Budget, we kickstarted investment in the Games to deliver the jobs, housing and economic boost regional Victoria needs.

And with the 2026 Commonwealth Games, we'll be showcasing regional Victoria to the world – because it has so much to offer.

This Budget will keep helping regional economies thrive, supporting and creating local jobs across the state, with:

- » \$21 million to support a major redevelopment of the Bendigo Art Gallery for the community to access more free and collection-based exhibitions and displays, encouraging growth in tourism
- » \$7.3 million to deliver place-based economic and community development through the Latrobe Valley Authority, and continue the Ladder Step Up and Inclusive Employment Worker Transition programs
- » \$6 million to support the delivery of planning works and infrastructure in the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct.

Proud tiny towns across the state are part of what makes Victoria great. We'll back local projects and organisations to deliver better public places and spaces, providing the facilities local families and residents need and want in their communities. A new \$10 million Tiny Towns Fund will provide local grants from \$5 000 up to \$50 000 to help our tiny towns shine, available to communities of up to 5 000 people.

## Helping our farmers

Agriculture is one of the cornerstones of Victoria's economy. Our agricultural industry – worth \$17.5 billion in 2020/21 – helps support the 147 000 Victorian jobs in agriculture production and food manufacturing.

The [Andrews](#) Labor Government continues to grow, modernise and protect the sector through the transformative *10-year Agriculture Strategy*, which sets out a way forward to 2030.

To support farmers, this Budget invests \$49 million to enhance biosecurity protections and back our world-class producers to grow. These programs include grant programs for producers, scholarships for hospitality workers, a farm safety and well-being program and funding for pests and weed management.

This \$49 million of additional funding for farmers builds on \$1.2 billion invested since 2015/16 to support the agricultural industry.



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# Victorian Budget

2023/24

Overview

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