

Helping Families

Victorian Budget 2024/25



The Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn

Minister for Children
Minister for Disability

The Hon. Natalie Suleyman

Minister for Veterans
Minister for Youth

The Hon. Ros Spence

Minister for Carers and Volunteers

The Hon. Vicki Ward

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Women

The Hon. Harriet Shing

Minister for Housing
Minister for Equality

Ingrid Stitt

Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Tuesday, 7 May 2024

HELPING VULNERABLE VICTORIANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Allan Labor Government is helping families and communities across Victoria – giving more people the dignity of a home, delivering much-needed cost-of-living relief and continuing our nation-leading investments in family violence, LGBTIQ+ and multicultural communities, and our historic truth-telling process with First Peoples.

The *Victorian Budget 2024/25* invests more than \$1 billion to help families and individuals – with more support for child protection services, young people, Victorians living with disability and our vibrant multicultural communities.

Our record \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build and \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund are already providing more Victorians with a place to call home. In the four years since the announcement of the Big Housing Build, more than 9,200 new homes have been completed or underway. But there is more work to do.

This Budget will invest nearly \$197 million over four years into our frontline homelessness services to help more people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with over \$115 million available in grant funding for services that break the cycle of long-term homelessness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. This Budget allocates more than \$15 million to give more First Nations Victorians access to safe and secure housing, and the support they need.

To support ongoing maintenance works across public housing, an extra \$19 million will make sure more tenants' requests for help can be resolved quickly and efficiently.

With the cost of living continuing to rise, we're also delivering an extra \$5 million to support organisations to provide food relief, including \$2.5 million to support neighbourhood houses, and continuing the work of the state's six regional food hubs.

Women and children deserve to be safe – in their homes, in their workplaces and on our streets.

The Labor Government has implemented all 227 recommendations of Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence alongside a nation-leading investment of close to \$4 billion – but our work to build on these strong foundations will continue.

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This Budget invests \$211 million for women's safety, to hold perpetrators to account and help victim-survivors, with \$30 million to support refugees and emergency accommodation for families escaping violence.

An additional \$38 million will deliver specialist support, including case management for women and children, while \$6.8 million will provide financial counselling services to help victim-survivors. This Budget also continues our investment in Respectful Relationships in schools – helping young people form healthy relationships.

A further \$9.2 million will also go towards the growth and capability of the family violence workforce in assessing and managing family violence risk and wellbeing issues for children and young people.

The Government will have more to say in the coming weeks about further measures to prevent the scourge of family violence, address toxic masculinity, and help make sure women are safe – building on this Budget's investments.

In February, the Victorian Parliament delivered a historic apology to victims of historical physical and emotional abuse and neglect in institutional care before 1990. This Budget will invest \$165 million for a redress scheme for these Victorians – recognising the ongoing impact of their experiences.

Making sure we continue to protect our most at-risk children and young people, this Budget builds on our investments in child protection and family services with a \$374 million investment.

We're investing nearly \$198 million in early intervention and family reunification to keep families together and children safe, through our Strong Families, Safe Children initiative, and we'll continue backing our foster and kinship carers through the Care Support Help Desk.

Diversity is one of our state's greatest strengths – and we must protect our strong, vibrant multiculturalism. Our newly arrived migrant and refugee communities are some of our most vulnerable – so we're investing more than \$4 million in targeted support, so they feel welcome and connected as they build their lives here in Victoria.

More than \$5 million will support the delivery of the Victorian African Communities Action Plan – developed by our African communities to give every African Victorian the opportunities they need to thrive at home, at school and at work.

We've fought hard to protect the rights of Victorians with disability – and this Budget invests almost \$24 million to continue delivering critical support for people with disability.

We've also allocated more than \$39 million in funding to support the new Social Services Regulator and continue the oversight and regulation of the disability sector.

We'll continue to back Victoria's nation-leading truth-telling process, with \$6.8 million to support the Yoorrook Justice Commission and Government's engagement with the process, which will guide us on our path to Treaty.

An investment of \$42 million will continue to protect and preserve Victoria's cultural heritage, backing the self-determination of the Aboriginal Heritage Council and the state's Registered Aboriginal Parties, and ensuring more Victorians can learn about the history and heritage of our state.

The Budget invests more than \$5 million in youth programs, giving young people who need it access to wraparound support – and continues a successful partnership with the Koorie Youth Council, making sure the voices and priorities of Aboriginal young people are heard across government.

We're continuing our work to re-engage and empower young Victorians – including support for the Living Learning program. Delivered at Melbourne City Mission's Hester Hornbrook Academy, this program supports young people who are disengaged from education, employment and training, and who live with a mental health condition.

Victoria's veterans have given so much to our state. That's why we're continuing to support veteran community organisations, with \$2 million to support building and facility improvements for not-for-profit organisations delivering services to veterans, their families and communities through the Veteran Capital Works Grant Program.

We'll continue supporting and acknowledging the contribution of women right across the state – and backing them to grow in leadership positions – with \$1.8 million to continue women's leadership programs, including targeted programs for First Nations women and women of colour, and the Victorian Women's Honour Roll.

In Victoria, the Labor Government has made it clear that equality is not negotiable and that LGBTIQ+ people deserve to live safely, free from discrimination and with dignity and visibility.

That is why we're delivering programs like the Pride in Ageing pilot in partnership with Switchboard, and the specialist homelessness services for LGBTIQ+ people delivered by Pride in Place.

We'll also continue to celebrate our diverse rainbow communities right across the state, through events like Midsumma and Melbourne's Pride Street Party, to events in our rural and regional areas.

We'll continue supporting young people and their families through QHub centres in Geelong and Ballarat, as we increase the number of Rainbow Tick accredited community and mental health providers. We'll continue to deliver *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-2032*, to deliver fairer outcomes for LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

We're working closely with our community services sector to build the workforce that delivers critical services to Victorians who need them most.

To give these organisations the certainty they need to create secure jobs, we've promised a floating indexation rate with an agreed formula – based on Fair Work Australia obligations and CPI – to determine all future funding increases.

This is a Budget that invests in the homes, safety and support Victorians deserve – because this is a Budget that's helping families.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Children and Disability Lizzie Blandthorn

"Nothing is more important than giving children the best possible start in life – we've invested heavily in supporting and improving the child protection system, and this Budget will continue our work to fight for Victorian families."

"Victorians with disability know that we have got their back – we'll keep fighting for the right support, delivered with proper oversight."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples and Women Natalie Hutchins

"Our work on gender equality leads the nation, and this Budget continues to empower Victorian women through leadership and development opportunities, as well as promoting the achievements of women across the state."

"We continue to back the historic truth-telling process with First Peoples – because a shared understanding of the truth will guide us on our path to Treaty."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing and Equality Harriet Shing

“We are determined to make sure that more Victorians have safe, accessible, and energy-efficient homes that meet their needs – from the middle of Melbourne to every corner of the state.”

“In Victoria, equality is not negotiable. LGBTIQ+ people deserve to live safely and visibly, with access to whole of life care, dignity, and support.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward

“We’re proud of our nation-leading reforms and we will continue working to keep women and children safe. We know that there is so much more to do. We want a Victoria that is free from family violence.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ingrid Stitt

“We are investing in the wellbeing of multicultural and multifaith communities – because everyone should feel secure, welcomed and celebrated here in Victoria.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Youth and Veterans Natalie Suleyman

“It’s more important than ever that our young people are closely connected to their communities – that’s why we’re backing them with the support to build bright futures.”

“The Veterans Capital Works Grant Program funds much-needed facility upgrades and maintenance for ex-service organisations. These projects support our veterans and the broader community who use these spaces.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence

“At a time when cost-of-living issues are top of mind for Victorians, we’re making sure our food relief organisations can support families when they need it and where they need it.”