

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for the Coordination of Treasury and Finance – COVID-19

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Industrial Relations



Thursday, 16 April 2020

NEW FUNDING TO FIGHT CORONAVIRUS, SUPPORT JOBS AND SET UP THE RECOVERY

The Victorian Government will put aside an additional \$24.5 billion in emergency funding to fight coronavirus, support jobs, and set Victoria up to recover from the pandemic over the next two years.

These funds will be sought – alongside the ordinary funding to keep paying wages for our vital healthcare workers and other public sector staff – in the supply bills to be introduced when the Parliament meets for an emergency sitting next Thursday.

The fall in unemployment in today's figures – from 5.3 to 5.2 per cent – is the last decrease in unemployment we will see for some time. We expect the unemployment rate to get higher next month, and higher again the month after that.

That's why having access to this additional funding is so important – to help ensure Victoria has the capacity to respond swiftly and significantly to save lives, support workers and their families, and rebuild the economy. This approach is consistent with other jurisdictions.

We are able to take these steps at this time because of the strong economic management by the Government.

The general appropriations Bill that will be introduced next Thursday includes \$10 billion in 2019-20 and \$14.5 billion in 2020-21 to deal with the current pandemic and the recovery from it. The Bill also includes general government funding, indexed at 2.5 per cent, and the annual capital appropriation.

The emergency funding is on top of a range of measures the Government has already announced to slow the spread of the virus and help workers and businesses get to the other side of this crisis.

This including the Government's \$1.9 billion investment to prepare the health system, the \$1.7 billion economic survival and jobs package, and \$500 million to support residential and commercial tenants.

The Government will also introduce the usual Parliament Appropriations Bill next week, to ensure the continuation of funding for the operations of parliament, as well as oversight bodies including IBAC.

All spending will be fully accounted for in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Management Act* and the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) will provide oversight of the Government's decisions through its review into the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria.

As previously announced and in line with the Commonwealth and all other states and territories, the Victorian Government has deferred its Budget until later in the year.

Quotes attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

"We know it's going to get harder before it gets easier, but we will get through this and we'll get through it together."

"Following years of strong economic management, Victoria has the capacity to respond to this pandemic to protect Victoria's health system, save lives and support workers, businesses, and their families."

"We're working closely with all parties to ensure that the appropriation Bills are passed quickly to provide the certainty and support that Victorians expect during this unprecedented time."

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