



The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier

Tuesday 24 November 2020

PUTTING GEELONG PEOPLE FIRST

Unprecedented. Tough. Unrelenting. There's plenty of ways to put it – but 2020 has been a year like no other. As we begin our recovery, we need a Budget like no other too.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* delivers an unprecedented investment to help our state recover – and make sure no community and no Victorian is left behind.

It starts here in Geelong, where the Labor Government will slash rail commute times to Melbourne's CBD, build more social housing and better roads, invest in health, redevelop Kardinia Park and upgrade seven local schools.

At the heart of that effort is getting Victorians back into work. The Budget funds up to \$49 billion in the things that matter to Victorians – and our economic recovery. Central to this investment is our Jobs Plan, which sets an ambitious goal: creating 400,000 jobs by 2025 – half of them by 2022.

This includes Jobs for Victoria, a \$619 million investment that will help those most impacted by the pandemic: women, young people and Victorians without a formal qualification, but plenty of experience. This includes \$250 million to partner with employers to help subsidise the wages of up to 10,000 new workers.

At least \$150 million of that wage subsidy support will go towards employing women – and \$50 million of that for women over the age of 45, recognising the additional barriers they face, both before and during the pandemic. Further funding will provide one-on-one support for those workers who need it most – whether that's training advice, career counselling or even help to update their resume.

The Budget invests \$1.5 billion in new tax relief for Victorian businesses and families.

This builds on the Andrews Labor Government's existing support, with a total of more than \$3.5 billion in tax and fees relief to Victorian workers, businesses and households to help them through the pandemic and recovery.

It includes the New Jobs Tax Credit, which supports those small and medium businesses that rehire staff, restore hours or create new jobs.

Under the plan, these businesses will get a tax credit of ten cents for every dollar it increases taxable Victorian wages – giving businesses the confidence they need to open their doors, hire more staff and re-emerge from the pandemic.

In a bid to lure businesses to regional Victoria, a 50 per cent stamp duty concession on the purchase of commercial and industrial properties will be brought forward to January 2021 – encouraging more businesses to open, relocate or expand, and helping our hard-hit regional economies bounce back. This investment will save businesses a further \$39.6 million.

We want to make getting to work as easy and as time efficient as possible, so people spend less time commuting and more doing the things that matter.

A \$2 billion contribution from both the Victorian and Australian governments for Geelong Fast Rail will mean less time travelling and more time with loved ones, giving rail commuters a travel time of around 50 minutes to and from the Melbourne CBD.

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It's a smart investment for fast-growing Geelong – whose population is set to grow by almost 50 per cent in the next 30 years – while creating 2,800 local jobs in the process.

We're also boosting the track between South Geelong and Waurn Ponds stations, and Geelong and Warrnambool for the first time, meaning better and more reliable V/Locity train services.

Reaffirming Kardinia Park's status as the nation's premier regional stadium, an extra \$40 million will go towards its continued redevelopment to build a 14,000 capacity, two-tier northern stand, increasing capacity to more than 40,000.

That – plus a new regional cricketing hub to nurture the sport's future stars – means more visitors and bigger crowds at Kardinia Park, while an extra \$3.3 million will back the work of the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust.

We're helping more Geelong residents do the things they love and enjoy, with redevelopments for the Geelong Arts Centre, the Barwon Heads Surf Lifesaving Club as well as the Surf Coast Sport and Recreation Centre.

We also want to make sure we're investing in the future industries that will create jobs in our regional communities – now and for the long-term.

That includes a \$1.6 billion investment in clean energy to help drive Victoria's recovery. With six new Renewable Energy Zones, these dedicated hubs will power our state – from sunny Mildura to the windy east coast – while also supporting businesses, communities and jobs across regional Victoria.

This Budget will also help our state embrace new technology – and make it one of regional Victoria's strengths. The Labor Government will deliver the \$626 million Digital Future Now package, radically improving mobile coverage and broadband access, while supporting businesses to grow and create new jobs.

This includes \$300 million to eradicate Mobile Black Spots in populated areas of regional Victoria and \$250 million to co-fund business-grade broadband connectivity for regional communities through the Gigabit State program.

This investment will improve the availability of reliable high-speed fibre optic and wireless broadband services for regional businesses, while also supporting 2,000 jobs. The \$64 million Digital Skills and Jobs Program will also put regional Victorians looking for work at the centre of our digital future – with training, internships and opportunities for employment.

And to make sure Victorian families can experience the best our state has to offer – while also backing local economies and local jobs – the Budget invests \$465 million to attract more visitors to regional Victoria through the Victorian Tourism Recovery Package.

This includes more than \$44 million to build better visitor infrastructure along the Great Ocean Road, including a signature coastal walking trail along the coastline and hinterland from Fairhaven to Skenes Creek, with up to five new swing suspension bridges providing spectacular views of Victoria's rugged surf coast.

The Budget also includes \$272.4 million to upgrade the Great Ocean Road and its inland routes, as well as key roads which support the dairy industry in the South West Region.

Having put food on the table for Victorian families throughout the pandemic, a \$65 million investment will back Victoria's farmers, growers and producers, with our state's new agriculture strategy. This investment will deliver better infrastructure and new technology to help our farmers connect with new markets around the world. A further \$50 million will upgrade our agricultural colleges, including 30 new student bedrooms for Marcus Oldham College's Waurn Ponds campus, and supports TAFEs and other bodies to deliver best-practice education and training for the agriculture innovators of tomorrow.

But it's not just enough to recover. We want to recover fairer and stronger too. It's why we'll make fundamental reforms: ensuring an inclusive education for kids with disability, investing in free kinder, delivering new school tutors, a new Recovery Workforce and more healthcare delivered in the home.

It also means making sure workers aren't forced to choose between their health and feeding their families. This pandemic has made clear just how real that choice is for far too many regional Victorians in insecure work. That's why the Labor Government will develop a new Secure Work Pilot Scheme, providing up to five days of sick and carers pay at the national minimum wage for casual or insecure workers in priority industries.

Our \$6 billion Big Housing Build will also make sure more Victorians have the security and stability of a home, delivering 12,000 new social and affordable homes. A quarter of the investment will be dedicated to regional Victoria – and at least \$200 million guaranteed for Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast. This funding will also help more Victorians into work with up to 10,000 new jobs created on average every year for four years.

We'll continue our massive rebuild of our regional schools with a statewide building blitz, delivering two new regional school campuses, upgrades at 44 regional schools and improvements for ten specialist schools in regional Victoria.

It includes a new gym for Geelong South Primary, a new permanent building for Barwon Valley School and new classrooms for Clifton Springs Primary School, while Northern Bay P-12 College, Nelson Park, Bellaire Primary and Grovedale West will also get upgrades.

This year has reaffirmed – nothing matters more than your health and the health of the people you love. It's why this Budget delivers more than \$2 billion to build, expand and modernise hospitals and health services across our state, including land for the Torquay Community Hospital.

To look after those with end of life care needs, Anam Cara House will receive \$5 million for a new 20 bed private respite service at Deakin University's Waurn Ponds Campus, offering an alternative to hospital.

Another \$3.6 million will go towards planning and designing a new women and children's hospital at University Hospital Geelong, meaning we can meet the growing demand for maternity and paediatric services.

This Budget will also ensure Victorians have the mental health support they need as we get on with fixing a broken system, with nearly \$870 million. This investment includes new Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement (HOPE) locations in Warrnambool and Mildura – plus extra clinic capacity for existing sites in Albury Wodonga and Ballarat.

A \$4.4 million investment will create residential beds for those recovering from alcohol and drug dependencies in Corio, Wangaratta and Traralgon.

The Budget will also support Geelong's Good Money store, to support vulnerable people experience financial hardship by building their financial capacity and security.

In order to help fund these investments, Victoria will make use of record low interest rates – borrowing now to ensure our state can rebuild sooner and stronger.

Because as we recover, our success must be measured by the wealth of our economy and the wellbeing of our people. This is a Budget to rebuild, recover and make us stronger than before. This is a Budget that puts people first.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"A job is worth more than just a pay cheque. A job means security and stability – for you and the people you love. It's why the heart of this Budget is dedicated to creating new jobs and getting people in Geelong back into work."

"This pandemic reached every corner of our state. Our recovery needs to do the same."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"This is a Budget that puts people and communities first – it delivers better housing, better health and a better city for Geelong locals."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"Whether it is new social housing or school upgrades, we're helping Geelong residents not only get back on their feet – but recover better and stronger than before."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"A year like no other deserves a Budget like no other – every dollar is about backing people so they can live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives – and it delivers for the Bellarine and Geelong."

Quote attributable to Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

"From better commutes to work to stronger investments in our health services, this is a Budget that delivers for Geelong residents – backing them at home, at work and at play."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney

"It's never been clearer how much people and community matter to Victoria - that's why this Budget prioritises those things - building better schools, getting people back to work and ensuring we each have a life we deserve."