

Victorian Budget 2021/22

Creating Jobs, Caring for Victorians



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Acting Premier
Minister for Mental Health

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CREATING JOBS AND CARING FOR REGIONAL VICTORIANS

Last year was tough. Now, we are on the road to recovery.

But real recovery won't happen by chance. We need a long-term plan that ensures every dollar of investment is delivering a 'double benefit' – investing in the support people need, and the people we need to deliver it.

It's two sides of the same coin and it's this simple idea that's at the heart of the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*.

In total, this year's Budget will support around 38,000 new jobs each and every year over the next four years – with thousands of them in rural and regional Victoria.

That includes the Andrews Labor Government's once-in-a-generation \$3.8 billion reform to build a new mental health system from the ground up.

Right now, too many regional Victorians have to travel away from their families and communities for care. It's why this Budget will transform the way support is offered in regional Victoria – with more care in regional communities, more early intervention, more focus on wellbeing and prevention, and a new dedicated system for our kids.

That includes delivering the first 20 of between 50 and 60 new local services, providing a 'front door' for care embedded in communities – including our first fast-tracked sites in Benalla, Greater Geelong and the Latrobe Valley.

We are investing \$17.4 million in sub-regional follow-up care across the state – in Bairnsdale, Bass Coast, Central Gippsland, West Gippsland, Hamilton, Horsham, Echuca, Swan Hill, and Wangaratta.

The Budget invests \$141 million for five new Youth Prevention and Recovery Care Units, including in the Barwon South-West, Gippsland and Grampians regions. Bendigo's existing YPARC will also be upgraded.

Not only will we be building the mental health system Victoria needs – we'll also be supporting around 3,000 jobs. From nurses, to doctors, allied health and support staff, these new roles will make sure Victorians get the support they need, while also giving thousands more Victorians the security of a job.

This year's Budget includes \$1.2 billion to protect our children and help keep vulnerable families together. This investment will deliver 246 new child protection practitioners, more support for our carers and bring family services into schools, early childhood education and community health hubs to identify at-risk families early.

As well as improving the lives of Victorian children and families, this funding will also support around 1,000 jobs across our state.

This year's Budget delivers on our promise to introduce kinder for every three-year-old child. Having begun its roll-out in select regional communities first, \$167 million will see this support delivered across regional Victoria, reaching every local government area for the very first time.

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Offering at least five funded hours a week from next year, the program will be scaled up to deliver 15 hours a week for families by 2029 – while also supporting an extra 6,000 roles for early childhood teachers and educators, affording more Victorians a great career teaching our kids.

Since we came to government, our big infrastructure build has delivered the road, rail, schools and hospitals Victorians need – 177,000 jobs.

This year's Budget continues that work, with \$986 million to build 25 new X'Trapolis 2.0 trains, supporting 750 jobs. Major works will be done in Ballarat, supporting jobs in manufacturing and supply chains in the region – and across our state.

We'll keep investing in our kids' future with \$3.5 billion in education, including \$148.2 million to establish the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, furthering our teachers' professional development. This includes seven regional academies, located in Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Moe and Shepparton.

This Budget invests \$277 million to put student mental health, health and wellbeing at the centre of our school communities. That includes \$200 million for a new School Mental Health Fund – rolling out in regional Victoria first and enabling schools to introduce new support and programs, based on the needs of their kids.

The Mental Health in Primary Schools pilot will be expanded to 100 schools, putting a Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator in every participating primary school and supporting 100 jobs.

We're providing \$1.6 billion to continue our massive school building blitz, including upgrading 17 regional schools. Across our state, this investment is expected to support around 3,500 jobs – investing in local kids and backing local workers.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic, this Budget delivers \$7.1 billion to continue supporting our hospitals and healthcare system. This includes a further \$1.3 billion to continue our public health response to COVID-19.

An investment of \$1.2 billion from the Labor Government will continue our build and upgrade of local hospitals and health services, including delivering on our commitment to build and expand 10 community hospitals.

With regional locations in Phillip Island and Torquay, these community hospitals will give local families confidence the very best care is available close to home and support around 1,550 jobs at the peak of construction.

This Budget makes good on our promise to build new emergency department paediatric zones at University Hospital Geelong – giving local families a dedicated space and supporting around 300 local jobs. We're also upgrading Maryborough Hospital, including a new day surgery and birthing suites, supporting 330 jobs.

And because we want to make sure Victorians have the right skills to be ready for these jobs, we're investing \$384 million in our skills sector, including 12,200 extra subsidised training places in our TAFE and training system.

This includes \$86 million to establish the Victorian Skills Authority, a new anchor organisation that will drive reform of our skills sector and help support more Victorians find work.

The jobs supported in this Budget are more than numbers on a page, they mean tens of thousands of opportunities for Victorian workers. And with it, certainty and security for just as many Victorian families.

That means not only will our investments deliver the support and services our state needs, we'll be getting Victorians back to work to make it happen. With this Budget, we're creating jobs and caring for Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

“There’s a simple idea at the heart of this Budget, and it’s two sides of the same coin — creating jobs and caring for Victorians.”

“This Budget will completely transform the way mental health care is offered in regional communities. Just as importantly, it will also create new opportunities for regional workers.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

“Whether it’s better mental health support, upgraded schools or investing in our hospitals and health services, this Budget backs regional Victoria – and regional Victorians.”