

Victorian Budget 2023/24



The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Minister for Child Protection and Family Services

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Women

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP
Minister for Veterans
Minister for Youth

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Equality

Tuesday, 23 May 2023

A FAIRER STATE FOR EVERY VICTORIAN

The Andrews Labor Government is doing what matters to build a fairer, more equal state for every Victorian.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invests in landmark Treaty and truth processes, alongside targeted support for child protection services, women, veterans, public housing residents, LGBTIQ+ communities and multicultural Victorians.

In the biggest single investment in care services in a decade, we'll put more than \$535 million towards giving children in residential care the support they need – with a safe and secure place to call home and specialised care for their social and emotional wellbeing.

On top of this investment, we're providing \$140 million to improve outcomes for First Nations children. Aboriginal people know the unique needs of their communities best and this funding will help Aboriginal-led organisations provide vital child protection services and support to keep families together.

As the first jurisdiction in Australia to embrace and action all elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty and Truth – the Labor Government has led the way in providing justice for Aboriginal people.

But the gaps in outcomes for First Nations Victorians still remain too wide, and there's more work to be done.

We're investing \$138 million over four years to support Treaty negotiations, commencing later this year. That includes \$82 million to support the independent First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria as the voice of First Peoples in the Treaty process.

We promised we'd end period poverty in Victoria, removing the stigma too often attached to periods, and making sure period products are available for women and girls whenever they need.

On top of stocking these products in all government schools, a nation-leading \$23 million initiative will soon provide free pads and tampons to women and girls in up to 700 public places across Victoria – saving women money at a time when the cost of living is high.

Building on the work we've done through Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence, we'll provide another \$77 million for the critical support victim-survivors deserve.

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This includes more than \$25 million for Aboriginal frontline family violence services, as well as \$32 million for family violence case management, accommodation support, sexual assault support services and men's behaviour change programs.

To ensure more vulnerable Victorians have a roof over their head, we'll invest \$134 million to provide access to critical housing and homelessness support across the state.

This includes \$3 million to assist youth homelessness support services such as Village 21, Holmesglen Education First Youth Foyer and Kids Under Cover, as well as \$4 million for five programs dedicated to women.

We'll also make sure residents in high-rise public housing towers are comfortable year-round, with a \$141 million investment to deliver air-conditioning to these buildings.

To honour the sacrifices veterans have made for Victoria, we're investing \$36.6 million to introduce the Veterans Card.

The first of its kind in Australia, the card is a way to thank veterans and their families for their sacrifice and service, helping them with cost of living pressures by offering discounts on fees like vehicle registration.

We're providing more support for Victoria's proud, diverse multicultural communities that contribute so much to our state with a \$77 million investment – keeping communities connected through a growing number of vibrant festivals, events and new and improved community spaces while also providing support for anti-racism campaigns.

In Victoria, equality is not negotiable. We're proud to support our LGBTIQ+ communities, with \$22 million to back vital equality programs like the LGBTIQ+ Grant Program, the Pride in Ageing pilot, and the Bendigo Queer Arts Festival. This investment will support the continuation of Victoria's first whole-of-government, 10-year LGBTIQ+ strategy, *Pride in our Future*.

The funding will also expand the Rainbow Tick program – a world-first quality framework to help health and human services organisations better tailor their support for the LGBTIQ+ communities they serve.

To support Victoria's youth, we're providing more than \$24 million to continue critical programs such as our Community Support Groups, La Mana Pasifika Program and Marram Nganyin Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program, which deliver culturally appropriate support to tackle disengagement and empower vulnerable young people.

This funding will also deliver a further six scout hall upgrades across Victoria, providing young people with facilities that support their development and create opportunities for them to lead in their communities.

Quote attributable to Minister for Child Protection and Family Services Lizzie Blandthorn

"We're doing what matters for Victorian families and children – strengthening our child protection system to keep families together and give more children a better start in life."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

"We've led the nation to deliver on the Uluru Statement from the Heart, but our work doesn't stop there – we're making sure our Treaty processes have the resources to deliver meaningful change by First Peoples, for First Peoples."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing and Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks

“Having a place to call home matters to every Victorian. That’s why we’re working to break the homelessness cycle and ensure our public housing residents can be comfortable in their homes, all while we progress our landmark \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.”

“We know our diversity is our strength – that’s why we’re making sure all Victorians can celebrate their communities and cultures with equal rights, protections and opportunities.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

“Across the Budget we’re supporting gender equality including increasing access to pads and tampons, especially for those unable to access period products due to poverty.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Ros Spence

“Keeping women and children safe from family violence has been our priority from the very beginning. But there’s always more work to do – and we’ll keep doing what matters to keep Victorians safe.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans and Youth Natalie Suleyman

“Our veterans have made enormous contributions to our community – the investment in the Veterans Card Victoria will support them with the cost of living and represents a token of our gratitude for their service and sacrifice.”

“Our investment in young people is an investment in our future – these programs will provide critical support to ensure young people are connected and engaged with their communities.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Harriet Shing

“It’s so important that our LGBTIQ+ communities are supported, safe, and visible, and we’re determined to continue our nation-leading work because equality is not negotiable in Victoria.”