

Victorian Budget 2023/24



The Hon Jaclyn Symes MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Emergency Services

The Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Crime Prevention

The Hon Enver Erdogan MP
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice
Minister for Victim Support

The Hon Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor
Regulation

Tuesday, 23 May 2023

DOING WHAT MATTERS TO KEEP VICTORIANS SAFE

The Andrews Labor Government is doing what matters to keep Victorians safe, reduce offending across the state and provide ongoing flood recovery support to those who need it most.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* will invest \$620 million across the justice system and our emergency services, including youth diversion programs and support for communities that are over-represented in the criminal justice system, and addressing gambling-related harm.

Separately, the Budget invests \$677 million in ongoing flood recovery, building on the \$1.8 billion committed last year to help communities get their lives back on track.

Recovery from natural disasters doesn't happen overnight and more than six months on from the devastating October floods, we're continuing to stand with affected Victorians.

More than \$23 million is allocated to rebuild the Rochester and Heathcote VICSES Emergency Hubs. We promised the Rochester community we'd rebuild their police station that was badly damaged by floodwater, and we'll provide \$1.3 million for a permanent home for officers and to undertake flood mitigation works on the site.

We'll keep investing in the emergency services Victorians rely on, with funding for the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) to procure a new Computer Aided Dispatch System and \$2 million to support the Triple Zero reform program – so Victorians know that they'll get the help they need, quickly and reliably.

Our selfless VICSES volunteers go above and beyond to protect communities and save lives every day. We're making sure they have the resources they need, with \$15.1 million for critical fleet investments including more than 35 new heavy rescue trucks.

We'll invest \$34.2 million to redevelop local emergency services facilities, including CFA stations and SES and Life Saving Victoria headquarters, as well as a new marine rescue vessel – keeping the election promise we made to give our lifesaving volunteers the spaces they deserve.

We're making sure Victorians can access justice no matter where they live, with \$70.7 million for the Bendigo Law Courts, Drug Court pilots in Shepparton and Ballarat and a Drug and Alcohol Treatment program in the County Court, and better case management systems and remote hearing services.

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This investment will continue the Court Integrated Services Program, linking defendants to support services like drug and alcohol treatment, crisis accommodation and mental health services – and will make sure the Office of Public Prosecutions, Victoria Legal Aid, Corrections Victoria and Victoria Police can support these initiatives.

Community legal centres and services do exceptional work making sure every Victorian can access important legal and justice services, no matter their situation.

This Budget invests \$7.1 million to expand the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service's regional hub model, so it can provide its culturally safe legal services at five new locations across Victoria.

A further \$13.9 million will invest in legal assistance and advocacy programs like the Office of the Public Advocate's Independent Third Person program and early intervention programs delivered by community legal centres.

Victim-survivors of family violence will be better supported to seek the justice they deserve, with \$22.8 million to provide Specialist Family Violence Legal Assistance in Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Latrobe, Melbourne, Ringwood, Sunshine, Werribee and Geelong.

Every life lost on Victorian roads is one too many. We're making sure Victoria Police can continue its expanded roadside drug testing program with \$25.9 million to test 150,000 motorists each year – reducing the number of drivers under the influence of drugs on Victorian roads and making sure more Victorians get home safely to their loved ones.

Our police do critical, life-saving work each and every day – and some cases can really take a toll on their mental health. An investment of \$4 million will expand the BlueHub mental health project, giving police experiencing mental health injuries the tailored support they deserve.

When we invest to improve outcomes for people in custody, they're much less likely to reoffend. An investment of \$144.2 million will reduce recidivism, help people reintegrate into the community after their release and improve the health of Victorians in custody.

The investment will ensure women in custody remain connected to their families and children, support the women's justice diversion program to provide housing to those on remand and short sentences, and continue the KickStart program providing alcohol and other drug treatment to those on community correction orders.

Importantly, we'll also transition primary health services in Victoria's two women's prisons to a public provider, with Western Health to run healthcare services at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Dhelkaya (Castlemaine) Health at Tarrengower Prison.

Transitioning to public providers will make sure women's complex health conditions can be better managed, with better access to medical officers, improved Aboriginal cultural safety, and integrated care planning – which will focus on keeping women connected to healthcare after they've left custody.

The custody package will help more vulnerable young people at risk of prolonged contact with the criminal justice system, supporting the Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program and expanding the Embedded Youth Outreach Program to Brimbank-Melton and Greater Shepparton.

Funding of \$53.9 million will help our youth justice system keep the community safe and help young Victorians rebuild their lives – investing in staff training and development, supporting Aboriginal young people in custody and addressing over-representation in the youth justice system.

We'll invest \$17.2 million to continue the Youth Crime Prevention Program – which provides intensive support to divert young people at risk of contact with the criminal justice system – and continue programs to counter violent extremism in Victorian communities across Victoria.

Last year, we started a radical transformation to make it easier for victims of crime to access financial assistance, giving them the support they deserve to recover from acts of violence and enshrining it into law.

This Budget continues that work, with a further \$17.4 million to implement important recommendations from the Victorian Law Reform Commission and establish a simpler, victim-centred compensation system.

We're strengthening our gambling regulator, implementing critical recommendations from the Crown Royal Commission and protecting Victorians from gambling harm.

An investment of \$110 million will reinforce this important work, providing treatment services like the Gambler's Help program, raising public awareness of gambling-related harm, continuing world-leading research into gambling harm and backing the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission to hold the gambling industry to account.

Quote attributable to Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"Recovery is different in every community and takes time. We promised to support communities for the long haul and this Budget continues to back the important work being driven by locals."

Quote attributable to Minister for Police and Crime Prevention Anthony Carbines

"Police officers manage incredibly difficult situations every day and it can have lasting effects on their mental health and wellbeing – we'll keep supporting our police with specialised services when they need it most."

Quote attributable to Minister for Corrections, Youth Justice and Victim Support Enver Erdogan

"Our priority is keeping Victorians safe and supporting people when they need it most. By investing in intervention, diversion and reintegration support, we're creating a safer community for everyone."

Quote attributable to Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne

"Our reforms have delivered stronger oversight of the gambling industry in Victoria with a regulator unafraid to hold venues to account – and we're doing more important work to reduce gambling-related harm."