

Victorian Budget 2023/24



The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for the State Electricity Commission

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Environment

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Agriculture

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Water

Tuesday, 23 May 2023

DOING WHAT MATTERS: BRINGING BACK THE SEC

The Andrews Labor Government is doing what matters by bringing back the State Electricity Commission (SEC), driving down power bills and creating thousands of jobs in renewable, government-owned energy.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* kickstarts investment in the SEC to drive jobs in renewable energy, while also investing to protect Victoria's natural environment and help Victorian families with cost of living relief.

An initial \$1 billion investment in the SEC will help deliver 4.5 gigawatts of power – the equivalent replacement capacity of Loy Yang A – through renewable energy projects.

Bringing back the SEC won't just mean more renewable energy, lower power bills and reduced carbon emissions – it will also help create 59,000 jobs.

Since Victoria's energy was privatised, we've experienced a chronic shortage of workers in trades. Our SEC will help find and train the next generation of tradespeople: maintenance workers, lineys, electricians – but also welders, painters and mechanics. Highly-qualified, highly-paid workers – working not for big business profit, but for people.

We'll invest \$12 million to develop new VET qualifications, fund a business case for the SEC Centre of Training Excellence and deliver on the Victorian Energy Jobs Plan to map out the jobs needed and prepare the workforce to get those jobs done.

We'll also invest \$10 million in a Hydrogen Energy Worker Training Centre, \$6 million for a Wind Worker Training Centre and \$20 million to keep working towards Victoria's world-leading emission reduction targets of 75-80 per cent by 2035.

We're making sure the safety of electrical workers, households and the community will be protected as part of a \$15.3 million package to ensure energy safety legislation keeps pace with rapidly evolving technology, and \$20.6 million to support VicGrid's planning and community consultation for Victoria's transmission network.

Households across Victoria are facing real cost of living pressures. While we work to drive energy bills down in the long term, we're giving family budgets the relief they need right now, with \$400 million to roll out another round of the popular \$250 Power Saving Bonus to every Victorian household.

We're investing \$58.2 million to install 100 new neighbourhood batteries at targeted locations across Victoria – tripling the number of homes with access to a battery and providing crucial extra storage capacity for local communities – as well as interest-free loans for household batteries.

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Communities across the state know best which energy solutions will meet local needs – so we’re investing \$130,000 in local renewable energy technology for the communities of Benambra and Healesville.

We’ll ramp up our planning for Victoria’s offshore wind generation with \$27 million to progress development on the Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal at the Port of Hastings, and we’ll invest \$5.1 million to keep progressing the Gas Substitution Roadmap to drive electrification and reduce our reliance on fossil gas.

Support for the state’s resources sector will underpin the Labor Government’s Big Build and renewable energy agenda – with \$23.2 million to streamline and reform approval processes, fast-tracking the responsible development of minerals and quarried resources we need to keep Victoria moving.

We’re making sure cost of living pressures don’t stop Victorians from getting out and enjoying our natural environment – investing \$3.9 million for half-price camping fees at bookable campgrounds, and \$10.2 million to keep it free for kids to visit Victoria’s world-class zoos on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

We’re giving communities across Victoria access to better parks, playgrounds and dog parks through a \$21.5 million investment in the *Open Space for Everyone* fund, as well as \$11 million to protect and enhance Serendip Sanctuary and the You Yangs (Wurdi Youang).

We’ll make Victoria’s iconic coastline safer, healthier and more resilient, with \$13.7 million for the VicCoasts coastal protection program, and almost \$4 million to support the ongoing management of parks and reserves along the Great Ocean Road – a key driver of tourism in the state’s south-west.

A \$7.2 million investment in Victoria’s precious native wildlife will see the creation of a new Wildlife Hospital in south-western Victoria, support the Wildlife Emergency Support Network and Wildlife Victoria’s Wildlife Hotline, and expand Zoos Victoria’s Wildlife Outreach program to help regional veterinarians treat sick and injured wildlife.

We’ll support the critical work of our charitable recycling sector by providing permanent relief from the waste levy so operators can help Victorians in need and raise important funds for charity without having to pay for their waste and recycling.

We’ll keep teaching young Victorians how to combat pollution and waste, backing the ResourceSmart Schools program with \$2.9 million, and we’ll support the critical work of the Environment Protection Authority with \$46.9 million.

We’re also ensuring that our public land is better protected from the threat of bushfire through a \$36.5 million investment to bolster our forest firefighting workforce, including delivering on our election commitment to make 50 ongoing roles for Forest Fire Operations Officers.

Investing in biosecurity means protecting Victoria’s agriculture sector from the serious threats posed by emergency animal diseases, including foot-and-mouth disease. We’ll invest \$17.5 million in skills training and equipment to prepare for a rapid response to any emergency animal disease detection.

Victoria’s renowned producers will benefit from \$31.2 million, including \$3 million for farm safety programs, \$10 million for the Distillery Door program, \$5 million for the Wine to the World program and \$5 million in hospitality scholarships – ensuring the right skilled workers to fill our booming hospitality sector.

We’ll also invest \$9.5 million to help us deliver new Animal Care and Protection laws, and to support Victoria’s beloved animal welfare organisations to keep advocating for our furry friends.

We're establishing a \$10 million Green Links fund, protecting Melbourne's urban waterways and helping communities revegetate them so our wildlife can thrive and Victorians can enjoy getting out to their local creek or river, while \$12.4 million will go towards opening up new opportunities for people to enjoy recreation at Tarago Reservoir.

A further \$1.2 million will continue the benefits achieved through the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy including the Community Rebate Program and the community housing retrofit program – and continue our partnerships with Traditional Owner groups on long-term water management strategy.

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources, Climate Action and the State Electricity Commission Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're doing what matters for Victorians: bringing back the SEC to kickstart renewable energy investment, drive down power bills, tackle climate change and create thousands of jobs."

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt

"We know cost of living pressures are the reality for many families, so we're making sure they don't miss out on exploring the natural environment Victoria has to offer – with half-price camping in National Parks, free entry for kids to our zoos and better parks and playgrounds across the state."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"We're backing our world-class agriculture industry and the Victorians who rely on it, helping farmers access new markets at home and overseas and future-proofing the sector against pests and diseases."

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"We're continuing our work to improve the health of our urban creeks, rivers and waterways as well as helping vulnerable Victorians to improve their water efficiency – saving them money on bills and securing our precious drinking water supply."