

Victorian Budget 2023/24



The Hon Colin Brooks
Minister for Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

The Hon Danny Pearson MP
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Government Services

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SUPPORTING VICTORIA'S THRIVING MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing its support for multicultural Victorians and cementing the state's reputation as the multicultural capital of Australia through the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*.

The Budget invests around \$120 million in Victoria's multicultural communities with funding for festivals, infrastructure, education and support programs. We're also combating racism, which has no place in Victoria.

We've allocated \$50 million over four years to the Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund to help community organisations build, renovate or upgrade community infrastructure. This investment includes funding for Indian and Chinese community centres in Melbourne's suburbs.

An investment of \$12 million over four years will support the Multicultural Festivals and Events Program to back multicultural and multifaith community organisations to hold cultural events for their local communities.

To support education in our multicultural communities, we're spending \$30 million to build and upgrade Islamic schools across Victoria and we'll also open 10 new bilingual kinders so our young multicultural Victorians can have the best possible start to their education.

We're making sure every young Victorian can experience story time in their mother tongue – delivering \$6.2 million for multicultural story times across Victoria to strengthen our kids' connection to their heritage and culture.

This money will enable councils and community groups to set up reading sessions at up to 60 locations in places like libraries, community centres and language schools for kids up to five years old.

In addition to education support, the Budget contains \$3.5 million to establish three beacon schools to teach Hindi and Punjabi up to the VCE level. To ensure there are enough language teachers we've allocated \$150,000 to deliver scholarships worth \$15,000 each to support Victorians who want to train and teach Hindi and Punjabi in our schools.

Within the Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund we're investing \$10 million to upgrade and revitalise business and cultural hubs in some of Victoria's largest and most important multicultural precincts including Box Hill, Chinatown, Dandenong, Oakleigh, Elsternwick, Footscray, Richmond and more.

To support 10 peak multicultural traders' associations ensure their members have access to the services they need, the Budget will invest \$2 million. They include the Australian Lebanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Asian Business Association of Whitehorse, Melbourne Chinatown Association, Oakleigh Village Traders Association, Victoria Street Business Association, Springvale Asian Business Association and St Albans Business Group.

Media contact: Patrick Molan 0418 173 201 | patrick.molan@minstaff.vic.gov.au

There's also an additional \$5 million to deliver \$10,000 scholarships to 500 multicultural Victorians to support them and multicultural businesses while they train to fill jobs needed in our growing suburbs.

Museums and galleries help celebrate our rich multicultural history, so we're investing \$2 million in the Multicultural Museums Program to support the Hellenic Museum, Chinese Museum, Jewish Museum and Museo Italiano while also providing an extra \$500,000 for multicultural communities to explore possible new museums.

Victoria's diverse communities rely heavily on Victoria's proud multicultural media outlets – this Budget will help those outlets keep their communities informed, with \$1.5 million worth of grants, as well as increasing advertising in culturally and linguistically diverse communities to 15 per cent of total advertising spend.

We're also supporting Victoria's African communities with \$3 million over four years as part of the Victorian African Communities Action Plan. That will go into employment support services, alcohol and drugs outreach and assisting the Victorian African Communities Committee with remuneration and recruitment.

There is no place for vilification in Victoria, so we're investing \$6 million in anti-vilification campaigns to make sure Victorians can freely practice their faith and embrace their culture free from the racism and hatred of a minority.

We promised to strengthen the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 to make it easier to prosecute any individual who incites hatred or bigotry based on someone's faith or race – and that's exactly what we're doing.

We're also establishing a new Multicultural and Multifaith Law Reform Consultative Committee to ensure the voices of diverse communities are heard and considered in the development of Victorian laws.

We're continuing to support the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) as the peak body for our state's migrant and refugee communities. A \$3.5 million investment will help the ECCV to continue advocating for multicultural communities, informing industry practice and advising governments on a range of multicultural issues.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* also includes more than \$40 million to continue existing funding, programs and initiatives such as the Le Mana Pasifika project, drug and alcohol outreach programs, community support groups, the Early Childhood Language Program.

We've allocated almost \$6 million to continue programs supporting refugees and asylum seekers. This includes the delivery of culturally appropriate health care and education for newly arrived and at-risk refugees. We're also continuing support for people seeking asylum who are ineligible for basic safety-net supports.

Combined with existing programs and initiatives, our ongoing investment in our vibrant multicultural communities ensures Victoria continues to be a safe, proud and diverse state for people from all over the world.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks

"Victoria is already Australia's multicultural capital, and this Budget makes sure our multicultural communities can celebrate their cultures and traditions with equal rights, protections and opportunities."

"Having safe and secure places to celebrate and share cultural history and traditions ensures Victoria's multicultural communities can continue to build connections, share traditions and celebrate diversity."

Quotes attributable to Assistant Treasurer Danny Pearson

“This Budget is not just about supporting multicultural Victorians themselves, but about supporting multicultural schools, kinders, community centres, places of worship and the infrastructure that keeps our communities connected.”

“Victoria’s diverse multicultural communities contribute so much to our state and we’re proud to support them through the Victorian Budget 2023/24.”