



**The Hon Jacinta Allan MP**  
Premier of Victoria

Tuesday, 7 May 2024

## A BUDGET THAT'S HELPING FAMILIES

In Australia and around the world, the cost of groceries, transport and household bills have skyrocketed, and it's hurting Victorian families.

That's why the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* is firmly focused on helping families.

By continuing our investments in education, healthcare, road and rail, we're investing in the things that matter to Victorian families.

That includes our \$400 School Saving Bonus for every government school student, and those doing it tough at non-government schools – giving families one less thing to worry about.

We're providing other cost-of-living relief, like the free Glasses for Kids program – which we're tripling – and delivering more Get Active Kids vouchers.

This comes on top of our cost-of-living support for families across Victoria – with almost \$5 million in food relief across the state, including support for food hubs in regional Victoria and in high-rise social housing settings.

We promised we'd build 100 schools by 2026, and that's exactly what this Budget delivers. With funding for the final 16 schools and more upgrades to classrooms, we're making sure every family has a great local school.

Since we came to government, we have 5,000 more doctors, over 13,000 more nurses, and almost 8,000 more ancillary support officers in Victorian hospitals.

Now, we're delivering the biggest multi-year investment in our healthcare system ever – with \$11 billion to give hospitals certainty about their funding future and give families confidence they can get the care they need, when they need it.

We'll build and improve our hospitals too – including a new emergency department for the Northern Hospital, with a dedicated paediatrics zone, a mental health, alcohol and other drugs hub and extra inpatient beds.

We'll also deliver a new emergency department for the Austin Hospital and expand the Monash Medical Centre, with bigger maternity care facilities, new operating suites and a new intensive care unit.

This support doesn't stop at the acute hospital level – we're continuing to invest in vital health services for every Victorian, making sure no one is left behind.

From ensuring Victorians with disability have the say they deserve over their care, to extra health services for young First Nations Victorians, reaching more refugee and asylum seeker families and better, more tailored services for LGBTIQ+ Victorians – we're making sure everyone can access the health services they need.

We promised Victorians we'd build our mental health system from the ground up – and that's exactly what we've done, with more than \$6 billion to deliver on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This Budget delivers \$109 million in new initiatives for better mental healthcare for Victorians.

We've spent the last decade building some of the state's biggest road and rail projects – now it's time to bring some of those projects to life, like the Metro Tunnel and West Gate Tunnel.

This year's Budget will get us ready for Day One of the Metro Tunnel in 2025 – recruiting and training drivers, timetabling and completing final testing – and delivers new camera technology that will enforce truck bans on local roads in Melbourne's inner west when the West Gate Tunnel also opens next year.

We'll open these Big Build projects while we keep delivering the upgrades and improvements across the state that local communities and families need.

Work is continuing at pace on removing level crossings, upgrading every regional rail line and delivering better bus, train and tram services for families across the state. These works are not only cutting travel times and improving safety, they're also creating thousands of jobs.

Alongside our Big Build, we'll also continue our work to get every Victorian into a home. Our \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build already has more than 9,000 homes under construction or complete – to give more families a leg up into the housing market. This Budget will extend the Victorian Homebuyer Fund for a final year with an extra \$700 million.

We're also providing \$197 million for accommodation and support for Victorians experiencing homelessness, while \$19 million will improve response times for repairs and maintenance for residents in public housing.

Rising energy bills are a big pressure on family budgets – it's why we brought back the State Electricity Commission and we're now taking action to help families with these rising costs.

Funding of \$37.7 million will deliver an extra 35,000 energy-efficient hot water rebates, saving families up to \$1,000 on the installation of electric heat pumps and solar hot water systems, and an average of \$400 on their power bills every year.

We'll also invest \$5.9 million to improve the Victorian Energy Upgrades program to help Victorians switch to energy-efficient products and reduce emissions, and \$3.4 million to support vulnerable Victorians who are struggling to pay their energy bills through the Energy Assistance Program.

As we deliver the things that matter most to families, we also need to be disciplined and sensible in responding to the challenges ahead: inflation and workforce constraints.

Our economy is projected to be the fastest-growing in Australia – and with more than 560,000 new jobs created since September 2020, there are now more Victorians in jobs than ever before with unemployment near its lowest rate in 50 years.

It's a good problem to have – knowing that each month, thousands more Victorians find secure, fulfilling work.

But it also means that, in some priority sectors, we need more workers. It's why we need to make sensible and modest adjustments to the pace of some of our biggest projects and reforms to give Victoria's workforce time to build up and skill up, and allow global supply chains to catch up.

Importantly, this will also free up tradies for residential construction, supporting our agenda to build more homes for Victorians.

It's why with this Budget, we'll keep building the pipeline of future workers we need – continuing our nation-leading investments in training, including Free TAFE which has already helped skill more than 170,000 Victorians.

We're also supporting recruitment and training for 17,000 nurses – and we've invested \$32 million to encourage doctors to specialise in general practice, and almost \$370 million to bolster the early childhood workforce, with scholarships, traineeships and overseas recruitment.

This Budget builds on this record investment, with a further \$394 million to boost access to vocational training and more than 80 courses now available as part of Free TAFE.

As a regional Premier – and a regional Victorian – I know our country communities deserve the best schools, world-class care and secure jobs, close to home.

As a government, we've made big investments to back regional communities and create thousands of jobs – and this Budget is no different, investing in the projects and services that matter to regional families.

From better regional hospitals and schools to more frequent train and bus services, and support for the local sporting clubs that are the beating heart of country communities, regional Victorians know the Labor Government has their back.

We know that many parts of regional Victoria have been ravaged by floods, fire and storms this year – with VICSES responding to more than 10,000 calls for help this summer alone. Devastating natural disasters have become common, and our reliance on hardworking first responders will only continue to grow.

With this Budget, we're supporting communities affected by catastrophic weather events, with \$302 million to help rebuild schools, roads, and other community infrastructure, as well as temporary accommodation, relief payments and mental health support for residents who are recovering.

We'll also invest more than \$50 million in our future emergency management response, and \$105 million to bolster our state's capability to prevent, prepare and respond to fire.

Women and children deserve to be safe – in their homes, in their workplaces and on our streets.

While we delivered every recommendation of Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence alongside a nation-leading investment of almost \$4 billion, our work to build on these strong foundations will continue – with support to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account.

This Budget invests more than \$211 million to help keep women and children safe and support victim-survivors – including making sure our Respectful Relationships program continues to prevent family violence before it starts.

But we won't stop there. We'll have more to say in the coming weeks about further measures to prevent the scourge of family violence, address toxic masculinity and help make sure women are safe.

From cost-of-living help, to schools and healthcare, road and rail – this Budget is all about helping families.

#### **Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan**

*"This is my first Budget as Premier, and I'm proud to say it's a Budget firmly focused on helping families."*

*"We know inflation is hurting – that's why this Budget is all about making life that little bit easier for families, including help to cover the costs of sending kids to school."*

*"It's also a Budget that makes the sensible and disciplined decisions to respond to the challenges ahead and secure a strong future for our state."*

*"Our Labor Government is continuing its record of investing in health, education, transport and homes – while also making sure our state is stronger, fairer and safer for all Victorians."*

**Media contact:** Lily King 0499 791 387 | [lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au)