



Victorian Budget 2020/21

Putting People First

Gender Equality
Budget Statement



Message from the Minister



Women have borne the brunt of this pandemic, highlighting inequalities that existed long before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Not only are women more likely to have lost their jobs, they are more likely to have taken on the bulk of unpaid work and care at home.

Women are also more likely to be employed in part-time and casual work, putting them at greater risk. Women have been on the frontline of the pandemic, in our hospitals, in supermarkets, in aged care and in schools.

As we begin to recover, we have an opportunity – a responsibility – to redress embedded inequalities that have existed for too long, and create a fairer future.

We also want to ensure that our policies are inclusive and acknowledge the experiences of all Victorian women, including Aboriginal women, culturally diverse women, LGBTIQ+ women, women with disability, young women, and older women.

These issues – security, stability and safety – are central to the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, with key investments including:

- \$631 million for Free TAFE and subsidised training places, plus an additional \$155 million to provide access to those most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on getting more women back into the workforce
- \$619 million for the Jobs for Victoria initiative to help hundreds of thousands of Victorians looking for work, including \$150 million to support 6 900 women into job placements, of which \$50 million is for women over 45
- \$238 million for wide-ranging family violence prevention and response measures, to continue our support for women and their children

- \$170 million to support women's workforce participation, by providing free kindergarten in eligible services in 2021
- \$82 million to increase the availability of outside school hours care, giving parents – particularly mums – more flexibility when it comes to work, study and care
- \$33 million to expand opportunities for apprentices and trainees through a flagship Big Build training pathway, with a particular focus on supporting more women into the construction sector
- \$30 million for a range of gender equality initiatives, including implementation of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- \$17 million to help women find new opportunities in sectors such as transport, construction and startup innovation

And recognising the number of women in casual work, the Government will deliver the Secure Work pilot, helping to address the frailties of insecure work.

These investments build on our Government's five years of work to achieve greater equality for Victorian women.

This pandemic has only strengthened that resolve.

A fairer future for Victoria relies on a more equal future for Victorian women.

Gabrielle Williams

Minister for Women
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Strengthening women's economic security

The pandemic has exacerbated the already entrenched inequality experienced by women.

More women have lost jobs, and the workforce participation gap is widening with long-term consequences for women's economic security.

At the same time, women are also performing more unpaid care work.

And the cost and accessibility of childcare and out of school hours care continue to be major barriers to more women entering the workforce.

We know that assisting more women into work will be at the heart of driving Victoria's economic recovery.

Even more, we understand that a job is more than just a pay cheque – it's also security and stability and the foundation on which women can build their lives.

It's why this Budget supports women's economic security, starting with additional support to help more women to reskill and upskill, and find new employment opportunities, including:

- \$631 million for Free TAFE and subsidised training places, and an additional \$155 million to support women and other Victorians disproportionately affected by the pandemic to access subsidised and Free TAFE training to reskill and find work
- \$33 million to expand opportunities for apprentices and trainees through a flagship Big Build training pathway, with a particular focus on supporting more women into the construction sector
- \$6 million to expand the pilot of higher apprenticeships and traineeships in the social services sector. This will create opportunities for 400 existing workers to continue their employment, while also validating their on the job work experience by gaining a qualification, such as the Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management
- \$5 million to develop a new Secure Work Pilot Scheme, recognising the frailties of insecure work – and that many of the workers most at risk are women. The proposed Scheme will provide five days of sick and carers pay at the national minimum wage for casual or insecure workers in priority industries. Subject to future government funding, a two-year pilot will be rolled out by no later than 2022



Recognising that caring for children can also pose a significant barrier to entering or re-entering the workforce, this Budget helps make that juggle a little easier for families, including:

- \$302 million to support the progressive rollout of universal three-year-old kindergarten, saving families money and making it easier for working parents
- \$170 million for free kindergarten programs in 2021, further supporting families and making it easier for women to take up employment opportunities
- \$82 million to increase the availability of outside school hours care (OSHC), which will help establish up to 400 new OSHC services in government schools, giving families more flexibility when it comes to work, training and care

Women-dominated industries have been more severely impacted by the pandemic. Not only are women disproportionately delivering frontline essential services, including in health and education, they are also over-represented in industries most impacted during the pandemic, including retail, hospitality and the arts.



To support more women returning to work, the Government is investing in these industries, while also creating new opportunities in industries with lower levels of women's participation. This includes:

- \$619 million for the Jobs for Victoria initiative, which will support more Victorians back into work, delivering tailored and targeted assistance. \$250 million will support businesses to hire more than 10 000 Victorians by providing wage subsidies for six-month work placements. At least \$150 million of this funding will go towards getting women back in work, of which \$50 million is for women over 45
- \$369 million for the Hospitality Support Program, supporting the Victorian hospitality industry to recover and employ more Victorians
- \$250 million to employ 4 100 tutors – with an estimated 80 per cent of roles filled by women
- \$220 million to protect Victoria's experience and creative economies, and help makers and creators get back on their feet
- \$15 million to create jobs in education through innovative and accelerated pathways to teaching
- \$6.3 million to support, train and employ women building surveyors within local councils

- \$5 million for the Women in Construction program, which will provide funding to deliver the actions outlined in the Women in Construction Strategy and implement the Building Equality Policy by creating employment opportunities for women on major government construction projects
- \$2.4 million for the Women in Transport program, which will provide training and employment opportunities to women in the transport sector, including supporting jobs for 300 women to become heavy vehicle drivers

The Andrews Labor Government also recognises that women-led businesses are an essential and growing part of Victoria's economy – and we are facilitating opportunities for women's entrepreneurship and innovation through a range of investments, including:

- \$12 million to support small and medium-sized Victorian businesses to digitise, innovate and grow
- \$10 million for the Women's founders Angel Sidecar Fund, which will provide investment support for innovative early stage startups founded by women. The fund will increase access to finance for women founders, helping to grow early stage startups, and increasing the participation rate of women in Victoria's startup economy and creating new jobs

Including all Victorians is critical to our State's economic recovery – modelling from KPMG shows that halving the gap between men and women's workforce participation rates would increase Australia's annual GDP by \$60 billion in 20 years' time.

Advancing gender equality

When the Andrews Labor Government launched Safe and Strong in 2016, Victoria's first whole-of-government gender equality strategy, we wanted to make our State safer and stronger for Victorian women.

That commitment has become more vital, with the advancement of gender equality, improving economic security, and the prevention of family violence front and centre in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*.

This includes a \$17 million investment to support women and organisations at the heart of this effort, including funding for women's participation, leadership, and recognition in the community, and additional funding for the iconic Queen Victoria Women's Centre to continue supporting and empowering Victorian women from all walks of life.

In an Australian first, Victoria enacted the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in February this year, which will require over 300 public sector organisations, universities and local councils to consider and promote gender equality in the workplace and broader community.

We appointed Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner in September 2020, and have provided \$13 million in this Budget to support implementation of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. This will help address a range of issues including the gender pay gap, under-representation of women in leadership roles, lack of workplace flexibility and sexual harassment.

The Government is committed to Victoria being a national and world leader in both the advancement of gender equality and the prevention of family violence and violence against women.

The work we do today will benefit generations of Victorians to come.

Preventing and responding to family violence

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to preventing violence against women, implementing all 227 recommendations made by the 2015 Royal Commission into Family Violence.

But we still have a long way to go. And this year has further underlined our challenges.

Between March to May 2020, 59 per cent of family violence service practitioners reported an increase in the frequency of violence against women, 50 per cent reported an increase in the severity, and 86 per cent reported an increase in the complexity of cases.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted the complexities of addressing all forms of violence against women in our society. It's also strengthened our resolve to make sure all women and children can live without the fear of violence. This Budget delivers:

- \$38 million to continue the Respectful Relationships program in schools and early childhood centres to promote respect, positive attitudes and behaviours
- \$18 million for family violence refuge responses, which will enhance case management and other operational costs associated with two new and 13 redeveloped core and cluster refuges
- \$9.7 million to prevent and respond to family violence earlier, including in our culturally diverse communities
- \$1.9 million for a specialist family violence integrated court response, which will expand the successful family violence remote hearing service pilot to 10 locations across Victoria, enabling victim survivors and witnesses to provide testimony remotely and safely

- \$1.6 million for family violence reform oversight, which will provide funding to continue the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor. This function monitors, reviews and reports on the progress of implementing recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence

Supporting women's health and wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of Victorians is at the centre of the Government's response to the pandemic.

We know that adequate housing is a key component of health promotion.

That's why the Andrews Labor Government will deliver Victoria's Big Housing Build, investing \$6 billion to construct more than 12 000 new social and affordable homes, and make housing more accessible and affordable for Victorians.

In addition to creating new jobs for women, investment in new social housing will give thousands of Victorians the security and stability of a home, including victim survivors of family violence, single women, lone parents and older women.

We also know that women's mental health has been disproportionately impacted this year. The number of women presenting to emergency departments for mental health has been consistently higher than the number of men since early 2020, with the Alfred Hospital's women's mental health clinic reporting record numbers of referrals.

As we begin our recovery, the Government is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of Victorian women through a range of initiatives in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, including:

- \$2 billion to build new hospitals and upgrade existing ones. This includes \$7.6 million to expand maternity accommodation in Wangaratta for local mums, and \$3.6 million to plan and design a new Women's and Children's Hospital: University Hospital Geelong
- \$605 million to start to implement the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's interim report findings and recommendations, delivering additional mental health beds, tailored one-on-one support and enabling more Victorians with lived experience of mental illness to use their personal expertise to support and empower others
- \$21 million to support new Victorian families accessing maternal and child health services, including the continuation of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program in rural and regional areas
- \$10 million for the Female Friendly Facilities Fund to assist local clubs and organisations to enable more women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation, as a part of the Local sport and active recreation infrastructure initiative



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Budget Paper No. 1 – Treasurer’s Speech
Budget Paper No. 2 – Strategy and Outlook
Budget Paper No. 3 – Service Delivery
Budget Paper No. 4 – Statement of Finances
(incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No. 1)

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