



Victorian Budget 2021/22

Creating Jobs, Caring for Victorians

GENDER EQUALITY
BUDGET STATEMENT

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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 – State Capital Program
Budget Paper No. 5 – Statement of Finances
(incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No. 3)

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



As we continue our state's post-pandemic recovery, we need a long-term plan.

This means not only supporting Victorian women in the short-term, but actually investing in our future too.

That's why, with the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*, the Andrews Labor

Government continues to put women at the heart of our recovery – delivering targeted support that will make a real difference.

That includes making sure every dollar of investment is delivering a 'double benefit': making Victoria stronger, and getting more Victorians – particularly women – back into work.

Our investments will support thousands of new roles, giving more women the stability and security of a job.

We're also supporting women's health and wellbeing by rebuilding our mental health system from the ground up. This investment, in addition to targeted funding for women's health, will make sure every Victorian has care they can rely on.

This Budget further invests in our commitment to end family violence, not just by improving our response to it, but by actively addressing the gendered factors that drive it.

It's why this Budget also delivers funding devoted to advancing gender equality, with dedicated support to improve outcomes for Victorian women. This includes embedding gender impact analysis in the Government's budget decision-making through a brand new gender responsive budgeting unit – continuing Victoria's nation-leading approach to advancing gender equality.

These investments build on our Government's work over the past six years to achieve better outcomes for all Victorian women.

That includes Aboriginal women, culturally diverse women, LGBTIQ+ women, women with disability, young women, and older women.

As always, our success will be measured on multiple fronts – from women's workforce participation to ensuring more women are safe and supported.

We understand there's still a long road ahead and plenty of work to do.

But this Budget is dedicated to addressing the fundamental issues that matter to women across our state.

With this Budget, we're creating jobs and caring for Victorians.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabrielle Williams".

Gabrielle Williams

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

OVERVIEW

Advancing gender equality remains at the heart of the Andrews Labor Government's agenda.

In 2016, we launched *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* – an ambitious plan to achieve gender equality and reduce violence against women.

Five years on, and as we recover after the pandemic, we are continuing to deliver on that vision for a fairer, more equal Victoria.

This Budget continues our commitment to advancing gender equality.

This Budget includes \$4.3 million to ensure the needs of women are being considered at the heart of Government, including establishing a gender responsive budgeting unit to ensure outcomes for women are measured as part of the budget decision-making process.

We're also investing \$354 million for wide-ranging family violence prevention and response measures, to continue our support for women and children experiencing family violence, and increase perpetrator accountability.

This Budget will strengthen women's workforce participation and make our state safer and fairer with other investments including:

- » \$3.8 billion to build a new mental health system, consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This includes funding to deliver dedicated mental health and wellbeing support for women and expand the community perinatal mental health teams across Victoria
- » \$259 million to remove barriers to women's workforce participation, recognising the disproportionate impacts of caring responsibilities on women, by supporting universal three and four-year-old kindergarten, and continuing outside of school hours support for students with disabilities and additional needs
- » \$101 million to deliver professional standard facilities for the Home of the Matildas and a future home for Football Victoria, along with a Rugby Centre of Excellence. Both the Home of the Matildas and the Rugby Centre of Excellence will support greater participation in football and rugby, particularly for women and girls and disadvantaged groups
- » \$70 million to establish free and public in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) services for 4 000 Victorian patients each year when the program is fully operational, and deliver Australia's first public sperm and egg bank
- » \$12 million to support women's participation and gender equality in sport, including improving the visibility of our female athletes
- » \$10 million to extend the Female Friendly Facilities Fund to deliver community pavilions, change rooms, playing grounds, and courts, enabling more women and girls to get involved in grassroots sport
- » \$4.1 million to establish three new women's reproductive health hubs, enabling more women to access expert advice on sexual and reproductive health issues, and helping to catch-up on deferred check-ups and care as a result of the pandemic. Funding will also expand the operating hours and scope of services at the eight existing hubs
- » \$1.8 million to improve the representation of women in local government, to ensure local councils better reflect the communities they represent
- » Additional support for Victoria's 12 women's health services



CREATING JOBS AND BOOSTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY

Victoria's economy has bounced back strongly, and is forecast to be the fastest growing in Australia in 2021-22.

Women's employment has also rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, gender inequality in the labour market remains – with long-term impacts on women's economic security.

As at March 2021, there were over 30 000 more underemployed women than men – that's women who are working fewer hours than they would like – and 201 000 fewer women than men in the Victorian labour force.

Women are also overrepresented in part-time and casual workforces – making them more vulnerable in times of economic downturn.

The gender pay gap remains a real and persistent challenge, sitting at 10.9 per cent in Victoria in November 2020, up 1.5 per cent from the previous year. Nationally, men working full-time earn on average over \$25 000 a year more than women.

The Andrews Labor Government is taking targeted action to address barriers to women's workforce participation.

This Budget builds on last year's significant investment in women's economic security by continuing to support more women into jobs, extending initiatives to help families to better balance work and care, and providing new professional development opportunities.

Importantly, this Budget also uses a 'double benefit' approach – investing in the services and projects our state needs, while at the same time creating thousands of new job opportunities for Victorians.

This Budget provides \$4.3 million to improve outcomes for women in Victoria, including support for community organisations to deliver targeted programs to support migrant and refugee women into employment. This tailored support will help build the necessary confidence and skills for participating women to pursue employment, establish a small business or access further education.



Other initiatives in this Budget that will support and strengthen women's employment include:

- » \$3.8 billion to rebuild our mental health system from the ground up, while also building a pipeline of workers to support it – including mental health nurses, doctors, counsellors, allied health professionals and support staff. Women are strongly represented among mental health workers and students. \$206 million of this investment will provide training support, delivering 120 graduate placements for nurses, 140 postgraduate mental health scholarships, 60 new graduate placements for allied health professionals and additional rotations for psychiatry
- » \$288 million to support our creative sector. Creative industries were among the hardest hit by the pandemic, and women make up more than half of workers in creative and performing arts in Victoria. This investment includes \$24 million to develop sustainable multi-year funding for non-government creative organisations, providing greater certainty for these organisations and the women who work for them
- » \$185 million to support our valued teaching workforce – the majority of whom are women – including by delivering professional learning opportunities through the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, as well as targeted initiatives to attract more teachers to work in government schools
- » \$89 million to deliver more than 12 000 extra subsidised training places in our TAFE and training system to ensure all Victorians can access training
- » \$32 million to support training, attracting and retaining kindergarten teachers – supporting a workforce that is approximately 98 per cent women

- » \$13 million to support our essential healthcare workforce, including funding to deliver 200 000 additional student placement days in the public health system and assist clinicians to build their professional skills in student education and supervision. This investment recognises that, in addition to delivering better care for Victorian patients, this will also improve the economic security of women who represent four in every five healthcare workers
- » \$1.4 million to assist the Victorian Rural Women's Network to upskill and support the professional development of women living in our rural communities
- » \$1.2 million to support the Family Violence Graduate Program, which will help up to 80 new graduates with training and on-the-job support as they work towards becoming specialists in family violence services

Recognising that caring for children can also pose a significant barrier to entering or re-entering the workforce, this Budget delivers on initiatives to reduce these barriers and support women's workforce participation. Initiatives supporting women's workforce participation include:

- » \$167 million to continue the roll-out of universal three-year-old kindergarten to every corner of our state, offering at least five hours a week to every Victorian child in 2022, and increasing to 15 hours a week by 2029
- » \$72 million to meet increased kindergarten enrolments and support delivery of high-quality programs to all four-year-olds
- » \$20 million to support students with disabilities and additional needs, continuing the pilot of free outside school hours care and school holiday programs for young people with disability at six government school sites

WORKING TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

In March this year, Victoria's *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into force.

This nation-leading legislation is advancing gender equality in the public sector by helping to close the gender pay gap, supporting more women into leadership positions, ensuring workplaces provide flexible working arrangements, and addressing workplace sexual harassment.

Approximately 300 public sector employers, including universities and local councils – employing around 11 per cent of Victoria's workforce – have obligations under the Act.

Critically, employers are required to publicly report on their progress towards gender equality – ensuring transparency and accountability.

The Andrews Labor Government has established a Ministerial Taskforce to better respond to sexual harassment in Victorian workplaces.

The Taskforce will consider ways to strengthen the occupational health and safety framework to address sexual harassment, clarify employer obligations to boost accountability, and encourage and support workers to speak up.

The Budget supports this work, delivering new investments to advance gender equality including:

- » \$101 million to deliver professional standard facilities for the Home of the Matildas and a future home for Football Victoria, along with a Rugby Centre of Excellence. Both the Home of the Matildas and the Rugby Centre of Excellence will support greater participation in football and rugby, particularly for women and girls and disadvantaged groups

- » \$12 million to support women's participation and gender equality in sport, including improving the visibility of our female athletes

- » \$4.3 million to improve outcomes for women in Victoria, including establishing a gender responsive budgeting unit to ensure outcomes for women are measured as part of the budget decision-making process

This investment also includes funding to support gender equality programs focused on improving migrant and refugee women's financial security

- » \$1.8 million for a Community Leadership Training program for 120 women across local government, with a focus on supporting development pathways for women ahead of the next council elections in 2024 – with the aim to meet our target of 50 per cent female mayors and councillors by 2025



PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

We believe in a future free from family violence. At the same time, we know there is a long way to go.

Intimate partner violence continues to contribute to more death, disability and illness for women aged between 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor.

Family violence also remains a leading cause of homelessness for women with children.

The Government is continuing to implement all 227 recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Family Violence, with improved crisis response and early intervention, a strengthened justice system, and by addressing the attitudes and behaviours that underpin this violence.

We have implemented more than two-thirds of the Royal Commission's recommendations for system-wide reform.

This Budget builds on the \$3.1 billion already invested, delivering:

- » \$97 million to help organisations meet their obligations under the legislated family violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management framework and Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes
- » \$78 million to expand the network of specialist family violence courts to include Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Geelong, Latrobe Valley, Melbourne, Ringwood and Sunshine. This includes continuing the successful family violence remote hearing service, which enables victim survivors to give testimony remotely and safely
- » \$49 million to support all survivors of family violence and sexual assault, including women on temporary visas, providing culturally safe responses for Aboriginal victim survivors, and building the capacity of the state's services to respond to diverse and faith communities
- » \$47 million to support victims of crime, by beginning transformation of the victim service system, establishing a new Financial Assistance Scheme for victims of crime and ensuring critical support is given to victim survivors during legal proceedings
- » \$33 million to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the Victorian justice system and prevent Aboriginal deaths in custody. This includes a range of initiatives, including continuing after-hours family violence support, piloting a regional legal assistance service to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities, an early intervention family service and practitioners to keep children out of the criminal justice system, and provision of women's and men's diversion programs. Funding is also provided to establish a purpose-built, 20-bed Aboriginal Healing Unit for Aboriginal women in the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre

- » \$14 million to further strengthen the justice system's response to family violence, including establishing legal services in the Orange Door Network, counselling and trauma programs to support women in prison and tailored intervention programs to help break the cycle of family violence
- » \$13 million to continue the statewide Central Information Point, which provides information to family safety practitioners, allowing them to better support the safety of victim survivors
- » \$9.1 million to construct and operate a new Aboriginal refuge in Horsham, with six independent residential units in a secure setting for victim survivors of family violence
- » \$2.2 million to expand legal services for regional Aboriginal Victorians, including victims of family violence or sexual assault
- » \$1.3 million to deliver a pets in refuges program, giving victim survivors who are leaving violent situations comfort their pets are being cared for
- » \$1.2 million to support up to 80 new graduates to receive training and development while working to become specialists in family violence services
- » Funding to provide additional legal assistance for vulnerable women experiencing or at-risk of family violence while pregnant or with young children and expand the specialist family violence legal services model

We are also continuing to invest in prevention and early intervention, with investments in this Budget including:

- » \$44 million to address the drivers of sexual violence and family violence with young people, including continuing the statewide expansion of services to adolescents
- » \$31 million to improve legal assistance and critical early intervention support services, including funding a Victorian Law Reform Commission reference group on stalking and harassment, and their impact on women
- » \$18 million to enable family violence specialists to deliver perpetrator interventions and contribute to an increasing evidence base about what works to change behaviour and prevent violence
- » \$2.3 million for initiatives that promote gender equality and respectful relationships among young people, and address drivers of sexual and family violence



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Andrews Labor Government wants to make sure that every Victorian is healthy, happy, supported and connected.

This year's Budget continues our investments in the health and wellbeing of women.

An investment of \$91 million will address the impacts of the pandemic on community-based healthcare. This includes funding to help Victorians catch-up on treatments they may have deferred during the pandemic, including public dental, cancer services and maternal and child health. This includes funding for BreastScreen to offer catch-up breast screening and assessment.

This investment provides \$4.1 million to establish three new women's reproductive health hubs, enabling more women to access expert advice on sexual and reproductive health issues and helping to catch-up on deferred check-ups and care as a result of the pandemic. Funding will also expand the operating hours and scope of services at the eight existing hubs.

Funding will also deliver additional support for Victoria's 12 women's health services, to meet growing demand for gender responsive healthcare across the state.

This Budget also delivers the biggest social reform in a generation – building the mental health system from the ground up.

Women have a different lived experience of mental health, with women suffering twice the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder, and higher rates of self-harm, suicidal behaviour, eating disorders and anxiety, as well as post-natal depression.

The Andrews Labor Government is transforming our broken mental health system, and putting community-based care and lived experience at its heart.

Our record \$3.8 billion investment in mental health will support Victorian women by delivering:

- » \$370 million to improve access to mental health beds and better acute care, including funding to open a dedicated 35 bed women's mental health unit
- » \$264 million in community-based care, providing a 'front door' for care, with the first 20 new local services to be established across Victoria. This investment will focus on early intervention, connecting Victorians to the support they need before they reach crisis point



- » \$206 million to enable Victoria's mental health and wellbeing workforce to deliver a reformed system, including funding to expand the nursing workforce – delivering 120 graduate placements for nurses, 140 postgraduate mental health scholarships, 60 new graduate placements for allied health professionals and additional rotations for psychiatry
- » \$196 million to support the mental health and wellbeing of infants, children and families. This includes establishing 13 reformed infant and child area mental health and wellbeing services tailored to the needs of children and their families. Three infant, child and family hubs will also provide a one-stop shop for child health, including emotional, developmental and physical health, integrated with a range of other services including paediatricians

This investment includes \$6.9 million to support expansion and reform of community perinatal mental health teams across Victoria
- » \$93 million to provide better support for carers – seven in ten of whom are women. This includes additional investment in the Carer Support Fund, and funding to boost the capacity of Tandem – Victoria's peak body representing family and friends supporting people living with mental health issues – and its carer participation registers

We are also supporting the physical health and wellbeing of Victorian women through other initiatives, including:

- » \$70 million to establish free and public IVF services for 4 000 Victorian patients each year when the program is fully operational, and deliver Australia's first public sperm and egg bank
- » \$29 million for public sector residential aged care services to continue to provide high-quality care to vulnerable aged persons, including those with mental health issues. This recognises that two in three people using residential care and home care services are women. This investment will also support job security in the aged care sector, which has a predominately women-dominated workforce

The Andrews Labor Government is rebuilding our broken mental health system, and putting community-based care and lived experience at its heart



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