

Additional Funding for Victoria's Hospitals

Hospital Demand Management Strategy

The 2002–03 budget provides a \$464 million boost to hospital funding over four years, building on the significant injection of funds by the Government over the last two years to improve the quality, accessibility and efficiency of hospital services. In the 2001–02 budget, the Hospital Demand Management (HDM) Strategy was implemented by the Government to improve the capacity of hospitals to manage demand, particularly for emergency and elective surgery services.

The Government continues its commitment under the Hospital Demand Management Strategy by providing an additional \$113 million in 2002–03. The additional funding will be used to implement the following:

Creating Additional Capacity to Meet Demand

In this budget, \$93 million will be provided to increase the capacity to treat more emergency and elective surgery patients at major metropolitan and regional hospitals, and provide extra support for intensive care units and neonatal intensive care. Funding includes an additional \$6 million per annum for the expansion of mental health services provided within the hospital setting.

\$6 million was provided in 2001–02 to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery. Specialty areas such as ophthalmology will be targeted to implement clinical reform so that waiting times are reduced and improved clinical processes are achieved.

Promoting Clinical Practice Reform

Extra funding of \$20 million will be used to further reform clinical practices to improve patient management processes and promote the use of services that provide an appropriate substitute for acute care. Strategies for improving patient management processes include increasing the rate of same-day surgery as a substitution for multi-day admissions, increasing the use of pre-admission clinics, short stay units for emergency patients and improved access to appropriate community services for emergency department patients. Additional Palliative Care Services will also be provided.

Preventing the Need for Hospital Admission

In 2001–02, the Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) was introduced to develop models of care that prevent the need for emergency presentation and hospital admission by providing community and home based services for people with chronic and complex care conditions. In 2002–03, an additional \$16 million from funding allocated in the 2001–02 budget will be used to expand the services of HARP through the development of new projects and initiatives.

Expansion of Ambulance Services

The 2002–03 budget continues the Government's commitment to delivering more responsive and safer services to all Victorians with an extra \$20 million over four years to be spent on ambulance services. The enhancement of the metropolitan triage system and the addition of several new metropolitan and regional ambulance stations, will help maintain improved response times and provide improved access to services in regional and metropolitan areas.

These initiatives will enable better management of growth in demand for services as well as maintain response times in areas where there is a high level of pressure on resources.

High Pressure Areas

Additional resources have been allocated to assist areas with a high demand for ambulance services. Extra funding has been provided to deliver an additional 15,000 emergency and 13,500 non-emergency ambulance responses per annum for the Metropolitan Ambulance Service and Rural Ambulance Victoria.

New ambulance stations will also be established in Bundoora/Reservoir, Albert Park/St Kilda and Bentleigh/Brighton and will be operational from 2003–04.

In keeping its commitment to improving local access to essential health services in rural and regional communities, the Government will also establish new stations in the Mildura and Shepparton areas and co-locate stations at Kyneton, Ararat, Colac and Hopetoun.

Funding has also been provided to commence training of additional paramedics needed to staff the five new ambulance stations.

These additional resources will assist the Ambulance Service in meeting the high level of demand in these areas and consolidate improvements in response time performance.

Triaging Service

An improved telephone triage service will be implemented in the Metropolitan Ambulance Service to reduce pressure on emergency ambulance responses. Requests for assistance through the emergency number that are identified as non-urgent will be referred to more appropriate services. This triage system will provide the same high quality service as the current system whilst maximising the availability of emergency response resources.

Funding

An additional \$20 million over four years with \$5 million in 2002–03 is provided in the budget to implement the initiatives to improve Ambulance Services in Victoria. The funding will be allocated as follows:

- \$0.7 million to commence the training of paramedics to staff the new ambulance stations at Mildura and Shepparton.
- \$1.7 million for training of paramedics to staff new metropolitan stations.
- \$2.4 million to meet increased demand for services.
- \$0.2 million to improve the triage service.

Capital

Capital funding of \$3 million will be provided for buildings, vehicles and equipment needed for Victoria's new ambulance stations.

\$0.4 million has been allocated to meet the cost of enhancing call-taking software to assist in managing non-urgent calls to '000'.

A further \$1.4 million will be provided to rebuild the ambulance stations located at Hopetoun, Ararat, Colac and Kyneton as part of the redevelopment of other health services.

Hospital Superannuation

The Government has provided assistance to public hospitals to meet increased superannuation costs resulting from the rise in the Commonwealth Superannuation Levy from 1 July 2002 and from increased employer contributions.

Assistance to Hospitals to Meet Increased Costs of Medical and Pharmaceutical Supplies and Consumables

The impact of the fall in value of the Australian dollar has been considerable on the cost of medical and pharmaceutical supplies. The government has allocated \$12 million in the 2002–03 State budget to assist health services meet these additional expenses.

Funding

The total increase in funding to Victoria's hospitals is \$633.4 million over four years with \$173.3 million in 2002–03. This has been allocated in the following way:

- \$93 million to treat more emergency and elective surgery patients, and provide extra support for intensive care units, including neonatal intensive care.
- \$20 million to improve the use of more appropriate services than acute care, and to reform patient management processes.
- \$48.3 million to assist public hospitals in the payment of employer superannuation.
- \$12 million to assist in the increased cost in medical and pharmaceutical supplies and consumables.

An additional \$16 million to HARP, is also available from funding allocated in the 2001–02 budget.

Expansion of Mental Health Services

Funding has been increased by \$61 million over four years to improve services for people with a mental illness. The extra funding will not only meet the increased need for acute inpatient services, but will also assist people being treated in the community through better diversion, prevention and early intervention programs.

This funding will enable the introduction of new services to address the underlying causes of increased demand for mental health services, including:

- Increasing prevalence of co-existing mental illness and problematic substance use
- Increasing numbers of people who have severe and complex psychological and social problems leading to the onset of mental illnesses.
- The ageing population and a corresponding increase in aged related psychiatric disorders.

More Beds for Acute Inpatients

Up to 30 additional acute inpatient beds will be opened in 2002–03 to address the growth in demand for these services and reduce the number of general hospital beds used to treat patients with acute mental health needs.

Extra Community Based Services

People with more complex needs including those who are homeless or have a co-existing substance abuse will receive additional support as a result of the expansion of intensive treatment programs in 2002–03. Specialised outreach services including support to women with a mental illness and their dependent children, day programs and specialised services for older people, also receive funding in the 2002–03 budget.

Rural Workforce Initiative

The Government's commitment to improving services to rural and regional communities continues with the implementation of a rural workforce initiative. Aimed at enhancing professional support to clinical staff in rural mental health services, this initiative will not only help retain valuable qualified staff, but also enhance the quality of services available to those in regional Victoria.

New Diversion, Prevention and Early Intervention Services

The following new services and programs will receive funding in 2002–03. The programs are for people with more established mental illnesses and are aimed at diverting their need for acute inpatient services through minimising relapse and crisis episodes. These services include:

- Intensive treatment and support services for up to 50 people prioritised for placement in Office of Housing properties and to assist the implementation of the Supported Rooming House Project.
- Sub-acute services for people requiring pre crisis or post acute treatment and support to be piloted in Melbourne and a regional centre.

Additional funding has been allocated to provide early intervention services for young people by extending existing adult dual diagnosis programs to young people with mental illness and co-existing substance abuse. Integrated approaches to mental health and drug treatment have been shown to have positive outcomes, and are particularly effective with young people at the early stages of these disorders.

Funding

A total of \$61 million in additional funding has been allocated to the improvement and expansion of mental health services over four years including \$15 million in 2002–03.

The additional funding for 2002–03 will provide:

- \$4 million for additional acute inpatient beds.
- \$6.32 million for extra community based treatment and support for people with high needs.
- \$0.4 million for the Rural Workforce Initiative.
- \$3.92 million for new diversion, prevention and early intervention services, including new sub acute services.
- \$0.36 million for early intervention services for young people with mental illness and co-existing substance abuse.

Improved Services for Senior Victorians

A total of \$35.5 million over four years in additional funding will be allocated in 2002–03 for services for Senior Victorians including Home and Community Care (HACC) services. This funding supports the Government's aim of providing high quality, accessible health and community services, reducing waiting times and supporting older people to live active lives in the community. It will also help reduce demand on other areas of the health service system, such as hospitals.

HACC

HACC is a joint State and Commonwealth program that assists frail older people and people with disabilities to live independently in their own homes. Funding of \$6.9 million has been allocated to match anticipated Commonwealth funding. The new funding will be used to provide a range of support services, including home help, personal care and delivered meals.

Carers

An additional \$1 million will be allocated in 2002–03 for respite and support for carers, who play a crucial role in supporting older people with high needs to remain living in the community.

Additional respite care will enable more carers to have some free time to rest or pursue other activities. Additional one-on-one support for carers in the form of counselling, emotional support and information will also be provided to help sustain the caring relationship. Up to 1,000 additional carers will benefit from this expansion of services.

Eye Care

Increased funding of \$0.2 million will be allocated in 2002–03 to the Victorian Eye Service, which provides optometric care at nominal cost for Senior Victorians on low incomes. This will allow more Senior Victorians on low incomes to benefit from general and specialist diagnostic and treatment services.

Residential Care

The Government will also provide funding of \$0.5 million in 2002–03 to facilitate the opening of 28 new residential aged care beds in 2002–03 at four rural health services: Stawell Regional Health, Hesse Rural Health, Nathalia District Hospital and Maryborough District Health Service.

Funding

An additional \$28.7 million has been allocated to HACC over four years, with \$6.9 million budgeted for 2002–03. A further \$6.8 million over four years with \$1.7 million in 2002–03 will be allocated to expand programs for Carers and Eye Care, and provide expanded Residential Care services in rural Victoria.

Expansion of Public Dental Services

Additional funding of \$4 million over four years will be provided in response to increasing demand for public dental services. The Government is committed to addressing waiting times for health services and tackling inequality in access to health services.

Government funded dental services provide access to dental care for people who would otherwise have difficulty paying for private services.

The extra funding will be used to treat approximately 2,800 additional people per year. This initiative will benefit those who receive a pension or are entitled to a health care card, enabling them to improve their dental health and overall wellbeing. In keeping with the Government's aim of improving health services for rural and regional communities, the expansion of dental services will occur across the State.

Capital

Funding of \$1.9 million has also been allocated to upgrade and replace obsolete dental equipment. This funding will allow the purchase of additional equipment to be used in treating patients through the expansion of dental services funded in this budget.

Funding

Funding for public dental services will increase by \$4 million over four years, with \$1 million in 2002-03 to provide additional services across Victoria.

Additional Funding for Primary Health Services

The Government will provide an additional \$8 million over four years for primary health services to be delivered in over 100 Community Health Services located throughout Victoria.

The increased funding will contribute to the Government's aim of providing high quality, accessible health and community services and preventing avoidable admissions to hospital.

Community Health Services provide care including allied health, community nursing, counselling, general practice, health promotion and prevention, and early intervention services.

Additional funds will be applied to allied health services for children, older people and people with chronic conditions, targeting areas of particularly high demand.

New funding is also provided for primary health services at the new Preston Integrated Care Centre, which is scheduled to open in early 2003.

Funding

Additional funds totalling \$8 million over four years including \$2 million in 2002–03 will be allocated from the Hospital Demand Management Strategy to expand primary health services across Victoria.

Additional Funding for Breast Screening Services

Description

Additional funding of \$5.7 million over four years has been allocated to enable more women aged between 50 and 69 to participate in the free breast screening program. This service supports the Government's aims of providing high quality, accessible health and community services.

Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related death in women in Australia. The early detection of breast cancer, through the provision of free mammograms, provides the opportunity for early treatment and better health outcomes. This helps reduce the impact of breast cancer on the lives of women and their families, as well as enabling a shift of hospital resources to more effective and less costly treatments.

The increase in funding will enable an additional 7,000 women to be screened in 2002–03.

Funding

An additional \$5.7 million has been allocated to expand the free breast screening service over four years, with \$1.4 million for 2002–03.

Additional Support for Victoria's Medical Research Institutes

Additional funding of \$34.7 million over four years will be provided to increase the State's funding contribution to operational infrastructure support for Victoria's medical research institutes. This will further the Government's aim of generating more jobs, developing innovative industries across Victoria, and attracting a greater share of innovative research and development activity to Victoria.

Victoria is home to many internationally renowned biomedical and clinical research facilities. The discoveries generated from these institutes lead to improved medical treatments and form the foundation for a major part of Victoria's biotechnology industry development. Increased funding from the Victorian Government will enhance the capacity of institutes to attract new medical research grant funding.

Operational infrastructure funding to research institutes is used for essential running costs, such as state of the art equipment and facilities, which are not funded from research grants. This infrastructure is essential for researchers to create employment opportunities from their discoveries and exploit the wider economic benefits for the State.

Funding

An additional \$34.7 million over four years including \$4.9 million in 2002-03, rising to \$12.6 million on-going by 2005-06, has been allocated to provide for infrastructure support for Victoria's medical research institutes.

Women's Health and Wellbeing

Funding of \$4.4 million over four years will be directed to the commencement of the Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy will aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorian women, particularly those most at risk. From 2002–03, a Women's Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework will be in place. Implementation will occur through annual action plans.

As a component of the first annual action plan, funding has been allocated for a range of initiatives:

- Improvements in post natal care, with a particular emphasis on high risk communities.
- Improved detection and promotion of effective primary care service provision for women at risk of antenatal and postnatal depression.
- The establishment of a consumer run Breast Cancer Resource Centre.
- Extending best practice models providing intensive in home support for mothers with a mental illness.
- Building partnerships between mental health, sexual assault and domestic violence services.
- The provision of training to Primary Mental Health and Early Intervention teams focusing on effective counselling approaches for women.

Funding

Funding of \$1.3 million in 2002–03, with a total of \$4.4 million over four years will be allocated to the Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Asset Investment Program Health Portfolio

New Asset Investments 2002-03

A significant commitment has been made to continuing the renewal, expansion and refurbishment of the health services asset base of the State. Funding has been allocated to redevelopment of a number of major metropolitan hospitals to expand services, better manage emergency demand and ensure facilities meet current standards of operating and functional efficiency. The extensive program of refurbishment and redevelopment of rural health and aged care facilities will continue with a major funding injection in this budget. This program will ensure ongoing operational viability of these facilities and ensure rural and regional communities retain access to a range of local health care services. Funding has also been allocated to address core infrastructure investment requirements to ensure the operational viability of services and enable compliance with current legislative and regulatory requirements. This budget also continues the expansion of ambulance services across the state and the co-location of services with allied health facilities.

Angliss Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2A—\$18.5 million

Funding has been allocated for the next stage of redevelopment of the Angliss Hospital and will enable an increase in the capacity of the hospital to deal with emergency demand and improve access to emergency services and acute care for the residents of outer eastern Melbourne. The redevelopment will provide a new and expanded Emergency Department with an increase of 11 treatment bays, a new 8-bed Short Stay Unit, a new Critical Care/High Dependency Unit and a new General X-Ray facility to support increased demand.

Royal Melbourne Hospital Stage 3 Redevelopment—\$32 million

A major redevelopment has been funded to enable full commissioning of the integrated trauma services and provide new ward accommodation to replace existing inadequate and substandard accommodation. The redevelopment will enable the extension of the front entry building by replacement of ward accommodation on three new floors and fit out of two floors to provide 120 beds. A new high-speed patient lift to service the helipad will be installed. Construction of the new floors is planned to commence later in 2002.

Dandenong Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2—\$10 million

Initial funding has been allocated to commence the next stage of the Dandenong Hospital Redevelopment. This will involve the development of a new and expanded intensive care unit, additional sub-acute beds and support services.

Stawell District Hospital Stage 2—\$3 million

The funding of Stage 2 works will complete the redevelopment of Stawell District Hospital, and ensure the facility meets required operating standards and is able to continue to deliver specialist services to the sub-region. This Stage of redevelopment provides for a combination of major refurbishment and new construction to provide an enhanced Operating Theatre/Sterile Supply suite, redeveloped Radiology Unit and new Accident and Emergency facilities. Construction of Stage 2 will commence in 2003 upon completion of Stage 1 works.

Lorne Community Hospital—\$3 million

Additional funding has been provided to enable redevelopment of the Lorne Community Hospital on the current hospital site. The redevelopment will provide a total of 30 acute and residential aged care beds and community health facilities. Construction of the hospital will commence early in 2003.

State-wide infrastructure Renewal—\$20 million

Funding has been provided to continue the program of works addressing critical infrastructure investment requirements across health facilities. This program is targeted at ensuring the continuing operational viability of existing health facilities and ensuring compliance with current legislative and regulatory standards and requirements. The works are targeted at upgrading of infrastructure in ageing tertiary referral hospitals, ambulance services, regional community hospitals and rural sites with poor infrastructure.

Fire Risk Management Strategy—\$10 million

Continuation of the Fire Risk Management Strategy will address the upgrade of metropolitan, rural acute and aged care facilities to meet fire risk standards.

Redevelopment of Residential Aged Care Facilities and Rural Health Facilities— Stage 3—\$40 million

This strategy will continue to address upgrade and redevelopment works required to enable residential aged care facilities to meet Commonwealth accreditation and certification requirements, to address poor physical infrastructure and to undertake associated upgrade and redevelopment of linked rural health facilities.

Funding under Stage 3 will address:

- Certification Upgrade Works to ensure facilities meet 2003 Commonwealth Certification requirements.
- Construction of a connecting link between the Lumeah Nursing Home in Echuca and the associated facility to realise recurrent operating efficiencies.
- Refurbishment of heating and cooling facilities to address Legionella risks and provide cooling at the 120-bed multi storey Parkville Hostel, Melbourne Health.
- Redevelopment of 10 palliative care beds and other support services at the Grace McKellar Centre, Barwon Health Geelong.
- Redevelopment of a 45-bed high care aged care facility, medical imaging services and support services for Stage 1 of the redevelopment of the Maryborough Campus of the Maryborough District Health Service.
- Stage 2 redevelopment of the Omeo Multi Purpose Service including redevelopment of 4 acute beds and a range of primary care, dialysis and district nursing services.
- Redevelopment of high care and low care beds at Jacaranda House and Bairnsdale Regional Health Service.
- Stage 2 redevelopment of the Beechworth Hospital and Nursing Home constructing a new 13 bed acute ward, accident and emergency services, allied health day procedures, food services, administrative support services and associated engineering works.
- Renovations and extensions to aged care facilities at the Lyndoch Nursing Home, Warrnambool to accommodate 85 low care beds.

Biomedical Equipment—\$45 million

The 2002–03 budget will provide an additional \$20 million to allow the upgrade of biomedical equipment with an additional \$25 million provided in 2001–02. This equipment will address requirements across a range of metropolitan and rural health facilities including acute hospitals, residential aged care facilities, dental health services, public health laboratories and testing services.

**Metropolitan Ambulance Service & Rural Ambulance Victoria—
New Services—\$3.4 million**

Additional funding has been provided in this budget to address growing demand and provide new ambulance stations to be operational from 2003–04. New service sites at Mildura, Shepparton, and three metropolitan Melbourne locations will be established to consolidate response time improvements against increasing caseload. Funding will also enable enhancements to call-taking software to support implementation of a second level triaging service at the Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

Rural Ambulance Co-locations—\$1.4 million

Funding will enable the relocation of four existing rural ambulance services with acute health services. The stations that have been identified as priorities are Hopetoun, Ararat, Kyneton and Colac. The relocation to new facilities will be undertaken as part of current or planned redevelopments of the hospitals in the respective areas.

Hospital IT Systems Replacement—\$1 million

Funding will be used to contribute to the replacement of core hospital patient management and financial systems. Funding will enable the planning and assessment phase for replacement of core information technology that manages patient activity and services in hospitals.

Managing Demand for Child Protection and Placement Services

The Government will provide an additional \$60 million over four years to support vulnerable families and to improve child protection and placement services. This is part of its goal of improving health and community services, particularly for those most in need.

The increased funding will be used to implement a number of initiatives that are part of the Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services, to be introduced over a four year period. The strategy aims to reduce demand for statutory services by improving prevention and diversion services available in selected areas where child protection notification reports are high. This includes strengthening the service system by employing 60 more child protection workers and establishing extra out of home care places. The care and treatment of children and young people who have been abused will also be significantly improved through the provision of new therapeutic services and the introduction of the *Looking After Children* framework.

Supporting Vulnerable Families Innovation Projects

A key element of the strategy involves improving services available to vulnerable families, so that help is available at an earlier point. This will reduce the number of families notified and often re-notified to child protection services. Significant new funding has been allocated to establish six Innovation Projects that will develop fresh, pro-active approaches to supporting vulnerable families. The projects, which will be located in areas of the State where child protection demand is high, will have flexibility to provide services tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable families in each community through local agencies working in conjunction with child protection services to provide a “joined-up” response.

Two Innovation Projects to address the over representation of Indigenous children in the child protection and placement system will also be established. The 2002–03 Innovation Projects will be located in Ballarat, Central Goldfields, East Gippsland, Frankston, Greater Shepparton and Greater Geelong.

Intensive Therapeutic Service for Abused Children and Young People

This new service for children and young people who have suffered abuse has two components: a preventive service for younger children who have suffered severe physical or sexual abuse, and an intensive therapeutic treatment service for young people in care who exhibit challenging and complex behaviours.

The new service will work with children and young people, and their families, to address issues arising from abuse to reduce the escalation of difficult behaviours that can lead to diminished lifelong outcomes for a significant number of young people.

Aboriginal Protocol

Following the allocation of \$0.6 million in 2001–02, additional funding will be provided to the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to ensure, as required by the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989*, that a representative of the Aboriginal community is involved when a notification of abuse or neglect of an Indigenous child is investigated by child protection services.

Addressing the Increased Pressure on Child Protection Services

In response to the increased demand for child protection services, the Government has provided additional funding to increase the number of child protection workers. The extra funding will reduce staff workload, provide an improved career structure for child protection supervisors, provide experienced workers to strengthen the interface with the Children's Court, and provide extra child protection workers for supervising kinship and permanent care placements.

Managing Growth in Kinship and Permanent Care

Funding has been provided in response to the growth in kinship and permanent care. These preferred forms of out of home care enable the placement of children and young people who cannot remain with their parents, within their extended family, or permanently with a substitute family. The new funding will provide an additional 220 placements.

Improving the Effectiveness and Quality of Care—Looking After Children

Funding has been provided to commence implementation of the *Looking After Children* (LAC) framework, a comprehensive and proven approach to promoting positive outcomes for children and young people in out of home care. The framework will be implemented in partnership with community service organisations providing out of home care services, to promote a stronger focus on the wellbeing of children in out of home care and improved industry approaches to the monitoring of care.

Funding

An additional \$60 million has been allocated to child protection and placement services over four years. In 2002–03 \$15 million will be provided:

- \$3.7 million for six local government based and two Koori Innovation Projects for supporting vulnerable families.
- \$5 million to establish an intensive therapeutic service for abused children and young people.
- \$0.6 million to support implementation of the Aboriginal Protocol.
- \$4.2 million for additional child protection workers.
- \$1.2 million for 220 new kinship and permanent care places.
- \$0.3 million for child protection service improvements.

Capital

Residential care homes will also receive a capital boost, with the continuation of a program to build new homes or improve existing homes. A further \$5 million will be allocated to build or refurbish nine more homes.

Enhancing Preschool Services

Preschools will benefit from over \$23 million in new funding over the next four years to implement a range of initiatives arising from the Government's response to the independent *Review of the Issues that Impact on the Delivery of Preschool Services to Children and their Families in Victoria*. The 2002–03 budget provides an additional \$3.2 million for a range of initiatives that will commence in the 2003 academic year. The funding more than doubles in 2003–04, with the provision of \$6.5 million recurrently to the program.

The initiatives include the introduction of funding to support a group employer model that will reduce the administrative and financial pressures on parents as employers in stand-alone preschools and provide a professional employment model for preschool staff. Additional funding is also provided to increase the participation of children from vulnerable and marginalised groups and to improve children's access to a second year of preschool.

Group Employment Model

Funding to support a group employer model will improve the administration and infrastructure of the preschool program, and reduce the workload and responsibilities on volunteer committees of management. This model will provide a more stable employment relationship, improve the recruitment and retention of preschool staff, enhance career opportunities and professional development, address financial risks and viability issues, and lead to improved service delivery.

Increased Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs and From the Koori Community

Funds will be provided through the Preschool Support Program to enable more children with severe and complex needs to access preschools. These funds will be packaged to enable 500 children access to a range of services to assist them to actively participate in preschools.

Advisory and support services to increase the cultural relevance of preschool programs and increase the Koori participation rate will also be funded through the Koori Early Childhood Field Officer Program. These services aim to increase the participation of children from Indigenous communities in preschool by 10%.

Enhanced Access to Second Year of Preschool

Funding has been made available to enhance access to a second year of preschool to improve school readiness and reduce the need for remedial assistance programs in the early years of school.

Some children require a second year of preschool because of developmental delays or complex family issues. In the past, these children needed to withdraw from preschool prior to the commencement of second term to be eligible to return to preschool the following year. In 2002, the assessment process for eligibility to a second year of funded preschool was streamlined to provide preschool teachers and parents with more autonomy in the decision making process. To respond to the anticipated increase in demand for the second year of preschool, funds have been provided to enable the proportion of preschoolers accessing a second year to grow from 1 per cent to 2 per cent.

Funding

A total of \$23.3 million over four years has been added to preschool funding by the State Government. In 2002–03, the additional funding of \$3.2 million will be allocated as follows:

- \$1 million for the Group Employment Model (over \$2 million in 2003–04).
- \$1.69 million to increase the inclusion of children from the Koori community and children with special needs (\$3.5 million in 2003–04).
- \$0.5 million to improve access to a second year of preschool for those children who need it (over \$1 million in 2003–04).

Redeveloping the Senior Youth Training Centre System

The Government will provide \$14.85 million to close the outdated Turana Juvenile Justice facility in Parkville and replace it with a new 26-bed facility by 2004. Additional temporary bed capacity will also be added to the Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre so that the redevelopment can proceed without reducing the total number of Juvenile Justice places available in Victoria.

The new facilities will provide a secure and safe environment for young offenders aged between 17 and 21 years. The redevelopments build on the four year Juvenile Justice Reform Strategy that was released in 2000–01, with a focus on managing the demand for juvenile justice services through diversion, rehabilitation and post-release support.

Funding

\$14.85 million will be allocated to the redevelopments at Parkville and Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centres.

Best Start: Improving the Health, Development, Education and Wellbeing of Victorian Children from Pregnancy to 8 Years

A total of \$7.6 million over three years has been allocated to the Best Start project, a joint initiative of the Department of Human Services and Department of Education and Training. Best Start aims to improve the health, development, education and wellbeing of all Victorian children from pregnancy to 8 years of age, through:

- Better access to effective child and family support, health services and early education.
- An improvement in parents' capacity, confidence and enjoyment of family life.
- Communities that are more child and family friendly.

The project stems from a compelling body of evidence on the importance of the early years of life in improving the life chances of all children—especially vulnerable children and those not currently accessing universal childhood services.

Best Start will strengthen the capacity of existing universal early years services including ante-natal and maternity services, maternal and child health, parenting services, child care, pre-school and primary schools to meet the needs of young children, their parents and the communities in caring for them.

Funding has been provided for 10 demonstration projects that will explore the best ways of involving parents and communities in strengthening local early years services so that they better meet local needs.

The project is focused on achieving clear, measurable outcomes, and parents and communities will also be supported to define and address local priorities.

Best Start honours the Victorian Government's commitment to valuing and investing in lifelong education, high quality, accessible health and community services, building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities.

The project demonstrates integration and coordination of Government responses to major community and social issues, and is consistent with the vision of "Joined-Up Government" through its partnership with a number of Departments.

Funding

- Funding of \$7.6 million over three years will be provided to enable the further development of Best Start which includes \$3.8 million from the Community Support Fund.
- The Community Support Fund has contributed to Best Start in keeping with the Government's commitment to reinvest gambling funds in community-based projects.
- The Premier's Drug Prevention Council is also supporting the Project in recognition of the unique opportunity that early childhood provides to reduce later risk of poor health outcomes including problematic drug use. Funding provided by the Council will be used to research methods of better engaging high risk children and their families in universal early years services and to trial such approaches within the Best Start demonstration projects.

Assisting People with Disabilities

Services that allow people with disabilities to remain living in the community will benefit from a funding increase of \$28 million over four years including \$7 million in 2002–03. This additional funding will be used to expand support services for people with disabilities and their families, and to increase accommodation options.

Community and Home-Based Support

The Community Home-Based Support program will receive extra funding in the 2002–03 budget. The program provides support to people with severe or profound disabilities and their families.

The additional funding will be used to expand services to assist 72 individuals remain living in their own home or in a family environment. The waiting times for these services will also be reduced.

Futures for Young Adults

Additional funding has been allocated to the Futures for Young Adults program to assist young people with disabilities, who will be leaving school at the end of the 2002 academic year, make a successful transition to a range of post-school service options. Program enhancements will also generate further funding to support these school leavers. The program aims to maximise a young person's choice and facilitate access to the services most suitable to their needs. The total number of young people participating in the program will increase by 160.

Supported Accommodation Services

Additional funds for supported and transitional accommodation services will be provided in 2002–03. This reflects the third successive increase in funding for the initiative, as set out in the Government's election commitments. The funding will enable 25 people with disabilities in urgent need of accommodation services, to receive intensive accommodation support and still live in their local community.

Funding

A total of \$ 28 million over four years including \$7 million for 2002–03 has been allocated to improve services for people with a disability. Additional funding to assist people with disabilities will be allocated in the following way:

- \$4 million for Community and Home Based Support Services.
- \$1 million to the Futures for Young Adults program.
- \$2 million for the Shared Support Accommodation program.

Capital

Community Infrastructure Project

This project will be implemented in 2002–03 and has three main objectives. Firstly, to expand the provision of shared supported accommodation to assist more people with a disability to live in the community by building seven to eight new houses. Secondly, to develop at least one community centre partnership project in conjunction with local government, a funded agency, and other community organisations that promote community inclusion of people with a disability. Thirdly, to improve community day services infrastructure through partnerships with funded agencies, by addressing the high priority works identified in the Day Services Fabric Survey. Capital funding of \$10 million over three years has been allocated to this project.

Redevelopment of Kew Residential Services

Accommodation and Support Services

The redevelopment of Kew Residential Services (KRS) announced by the Government last year will receive funding in the 2002–03 budget to assist in the relocation of existing residents. A total of \$25.4 million over four years has been allocated to the redevelopment, ensuring residents are provided with high quality, appropriate housing.

The redevelopment will enable the residents of KRS to experience a lifestyle that is as close as possible to that enjoyed in the general community, and is part of the Government's commitment to building cohesive communities and reducing inequality. The funding will be used to relocate approximately 100 residents and includes the provision of accommodation support and associated services required by the residents. Each resident is consulted to determine their requirements for services and preferences for where they wish to live. This represents the first stage of the relocation of residents. Funding for the relocation of remaining KRS residents will be factored into subsequent years' budgets.

Funding

Funding of \$25.4 million over four years with \$6.2 million in 2002–03 will be allocated to the redevelopment of Kew Residential Services in the 2002–03 budget.

Capital

The redevelopment is a major construction project, involving a residential sub-division and the eventual sale of land at the current Kew site. Revenue from the land sales will be applied to the capital costs of the redevelopment including the construction of 84 residences on and off the site. The first stage of capital funding will provide for approximately 100 people to be relocated into purpose built homes in the eastern, northern and southern suburbs of Melbourne.

Housing Budget Highlights

Significant Boost for Housing Assistance Programs

A total of \$380 million will be made available in the Office of Housing 2002–03 budget for new projects to expand the supply (\$210 million) and improve the quality of public and community housing (\$170 million). This expenditure reflects the Government's commitment to provide high quality, accessible services, provide jobs in local communities, build cohesive communities and reduce inequalities. A highlight of the Government's housing assistance budget this year will be the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative which will assist disadvantaged communities across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

This investment will be supplemented by an increased maintenance effort and by improved services to tenants, to help ensure that tenancies and communities are sustainable. Office of Housing expenditure in 2002–03 on housing construction, purchase, improvements and maintenance will help provide some 5,500 direct jobs in the housing industry.

The year 2002–03 is the final year of the current Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, (CSHA) and the Housing Program will continue to grow supply and achieve four-year outputs which were agreed in the Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth.

The major features of the 2002–03 Housing budget are summarised below.

\$210 million to Expand the Supply of Social Housing

A total of \$210 million will be provided in 2002–03 for the acquisition of public, community and affordable housing units to expand stock in areas of highest need, including outer Melbourne suburbs. The emphasis will be on expanding long term housing supply, as this will provide more options for low income households as well as improving pathways out of homelessness.

This large acquisition budget has been made possible by the injection of additional State funds as part of the Government's commitment for \$94.5 million over three years to expand supply.

This funding will enable more than 1,500 properties to be acquired during the year, using an innovative mix of direct capital expenditure, headleasing arrangements and partnerships with community based organisations, local government and the private sector. A further 850 unit constructions will be commenced. This budget will enable total social housing stock numbers to grow to more than 76,000 properties at June 2003, up from 73,300 at June 1999 and thus achieving four-year targets established in agreement with the Commonwealth under the CSHA.

\$170 million to Improve Housing Quality

A record total of \$170 million is allocated to the 2002–03 housing physical improvements budget for projects which will improve living conditions on public housing estates in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. This funding highlights the Government's commitment to provide more and better quality housing, to protect the State's valuable asset base and to redress years of under investment in housing upgrading. Housing projects will form part of wider initiatives across the whole of Government to provide an impetus for economic rejuvenation, community strengthening and creating employment across the State. The 2002–03 budget provides more funds to rebuild and transform local communities through neighbourhood renewal schemes, such as those in the Latrobe Valley and Wendouree West.

Expansion of Services for Homelessness

The Government will invest an additional \$8.8 million over four years to help homeless individuals and families by enhancing the capacity of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

The Housing Budget will allocate \$18 million in 2002–03 to provide additional Crisis Supported and Transitional Housing properties.

In addition, funding for non-hospital based mental health services includes \$4.6 million over four years to implement a housing and mental health partnership to provide specialist mental health treatment and support services and pathways out of homelessness for people with a mental illness.

\$210 million to Expand the Supply of Social Housing

A total of \$210 million will be provided in the Office of Housing 2002–03 budget for the acquisition of public, community and affordable housing units to expand stock in areas of highest need, including outer Melbourne suburbs. The boost to long term housing will provide more affordable housing options and support the emphasis of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy to expand long term supply to improve exits out of homelessness.

\$18 million to Expand Crisis Supported and Transitional Housing

The Housing budget will allocate \$18 million in 2002–03 for Crisis Supported/Transitional Housing properties, short to medium term accommodation for homeless people, linked to SAAP services. These funds will supplement the \$8.8 million expansion (over four years) in support services for homeless people and enable implementation of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy.

Additional assistance can be provided to address growing demand in areas such as Melbourne's growing south eastern suburbs, boost services to young people in regional areas such as Bendigo, improve services for people with complex needs and target groups with a vulnerability to homelessness, including those with a mental illness.

\$144 million for Long Term Public and Community Housing

\$98 million will be available for new public rental land and property, a significantly increased budget, in line with the Victorian Homelessness Strategy emphasis on the need to increase long term housing. The emphasis will be on construction in areas of highest need including outer metropolitan areas, in line with metropolitan planning objectives to increase employment, services and transport in areas of strongest growth.

A further \$28 million has been allocated to redevelop existing stock with new properties which better meet housing needs and provide a better quality of home. Tenants will benefit from greater diversity of housing types and sizes and more one and two-bedroom accommodation for the elderly, singles and smaller households. This funding is not just about bricks and mortar, but also about social and environmental improvements, where people living in public housing belong to a wider local community with good safe access to a range of social and health services, transport and employment. These funds will enable progress to be made on redeveloping estates in Ashburton, Bendigo, North Carlton, East Geelong, Kensington, Maidstone/Braybrook, Port Melbourne, Richmond, Morwell, Shepparton, Wodonga and Wendouree West.

\$18m million will be available in 2002–03 to build, buy or modify properties for long term community managed housing, in particular for older people, people with disabilities, and singles and families on a low income. These properties are managed by community agencies, which bring self-management principles, commitment, local knowledge and good linkages with support networks.

\$12 million for Housing for Indigenous People

Some \$12 million will be allocated for new acquisition or replacement of properties administered by the Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV). This is significantly higher than the tied funds provided for this program under the CSHA.

\$36 million for Joint Venture Partnerships

A joint venture budget of \$36 million is available to deliver and build upon the Government's innovative \$94.5 million social housing program. The Government has to date announced funding for a total of 66 innovative social housing partnership projects in areas such as Apollo Bay, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Kyneton, Maffra, Mildura, Seymour, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Wonthaggi and Yarrawonga.

Two of the announced projects are primarily for older ethnic citizens in Warrnambool and Robinvale.

\$170 million to Improve Housing Quality

A total of \$170 million is allocated in the Office of Housing budget for projects to renew neighbourhoods and improve living conditions on public housing estates in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Neighbourhood Renewal and Housing Quality

The physical improvement budget includes funding for works to progressively transform the physical form of older public housing estates as part of a concerted whole-of-government effort in community building. These projects involve coordinated action with local communities linking housing renewal with employment, education and training, safety and local involvement in decision making. An initial \$12 million has been set aside for Neighbourhood Renewal.

Communities will benefit in areas including Eaglehawk/Long Gully near Bendigo, Shepparton, Maidstone/Braybrook, Geelong North, Seymour, and Collingwood/Fitzroy, as well as the Latrobe Valley and Wendouree West, where neighbourhood renewal projects have already commenced.

Inner City High Rise Estates

Physical improvement projects in 2002–03 will include upgrade works to family and older persons' units in public and community housing throughout Victoria, the introduction of security measures in high rise estates, fire safety works, and minor capital items such as re-roofing and replacement of hot water services.

Indicating the commitment to improving living environments and reducing inequalities, the budget includes an allocation of some \$70 million for inner city high rise estates, including:

- Upgrades of family units in high rise buildings. This includes unit upgrades and conversions in family towers, including unit kitchens, bathrooms, living and sleeping areas, and individual laundry facilities.
- The establishment of safety and security measures, including concierges, electronic surveillance cameras, improved external and internal lighting, intercom systems, car park security and controlled building access.
- Upgrades in older persons' high rise buildings, including conversion of bed-sits to one bedroom accommodation.
- Fire safety measures, including health and safety works such as fire services infrastructure, emergency and exit lighting upgrades, plant room safety upgrades, asbestos removal and providing appropriate rooftop railings and anchor points and sprinklers.
- Lift improvements, including lift lobby and foyer upgrades to address amenity issues, lift upgrades to improve safety and convenience by having lifts stopping on all floors, and where appropriate, installation of new or additional lifts.

The balance of these funds will be available for upgrade of social housing in metropolitan and regional Victoria, with a focus on older properties with long term tenancies in occupation.

Both tenants and the wider local community will benefit from estate improvement projects as they improve the overall standard of accommodation and neighbourhood environment in the area, and will be supported by comprehensive community development projects and partnerships with the community, local government and the private sector. These projects will harness local knowledge, energy and support for improvements in building stronger communities.

In addition to the \$170 million physical improvements budget, \$82 million is allocated for ongoing programmed, responsive and vacated maintenance works on properties throughout Victoria.

Expansion of Services for Homelessness

The Government will invest an additional \$8.8 million over four years to help homeless individuals and families by enhancing the capacity of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). These funds add to the additional funding provided in the last two budgets.

These budget initiatives will be supported by \$210 million of expenditure in the Housing budget to expand Crisis/Transitional housing and long term housing in high demand locations and to help provide pathways out of homelessness. These initiatives will improve access to community services, reduce inequalities and build cohesive communities.

In line with the Government's priority to address homelessness, the final report of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS), *Directions for Change* was released in February 2002. Additional funding is being provided to support the strategic directions in the strategy for changes which improve client outcomes, better integrate across government and the community, and focus on practical initiatives to prevent people who are vulnerable from becoming homeless.

SAAP services provide case management, assessment and referral, supported accommodation, living skills, counselling and advocacy services. A total of \$8.8 million will be provided for growth funds to tackle homelessness, address critical service gaps and increase capacity, particularly in areas such as Melbourne's growing south eastern suburbs, boosting services to young people in major centres such as Bendigo and improving services for people with complex needs.

In addition, funding for non-hospital based mental health services includes \$4.6 million over four years to implement a housing and mental health partnership to provide specialist mental health treatment and support services and pathways out of homelessness for people with a mental illness.

The Housing budget will allocate \$18 million in 2002-03 to provide additional Crisis Supported and Transitional Housing properties.



State Budget 2002

3a

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Tuesday, May 7 2002

\$960 MILLION BOOST TO HEALTH

The rebuilding of Victoria's public health system will continue with a **\$960 million** increase over four years to treat more patients, employ more nurses and reduce hospital waiting lists.

Public hospitals and medical research institutes will receive a record boost in equipment and infrastructure with an extra \$100 million to keep Victoria at the leading edge of treatment and medical research.

Health Minister John Thwaites said the Bracks Government's priorities were set out in its 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger communities, and deliver the highest quality health services for Victorians throughout their lives – no matter where they live," Mr Thwaites said.

"Those priorities are clearly reflected in today's Budget – we are turning around the health system and investing in health services right across the State," Mr Thwaites said.

"The boost will mean 30,000 more patients will be treated a year and a further 700 nurses and other health workers will be employed to reduce emergency delays and surgery waiting lists.

"The Budget builds on the successful *Hospital Demand Strategy* introduced last year that has more than halved ambulance bypass and reduced waiting lists for the first time in many years."

The \$960 million health boost includes:

- **\$100 million** for medical equipment and infrastructure upgrades - \$45 million for intensive care ventilators, mobile x-ray units, electronic adjustable beds and other equipment; \$20 million to upgrade hospital plant such as emergency back-up systems; and \$35 million for medical research institutes to maintain Victoria's leading role in medical research;
- **\$464 million** over four years to enhance the *Hospital Demand Strategy* by opening more beds to treat 30,000 extra patients, new hospital prevention initiatives and the recruitment of 700 additional nurses and health workers;
- **\$169 million** over four years to assist hospitals fund superannuation and medical supplies;
- **\$36 million** over four years to expand community mental health services such as crisis-response teams and \$25 million (included in the *Hospital Demand Strategy* funding) to open more mental health hospital beds;

...2

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- **\$29 million** over four years for Home and Community Care services to support people, particularly the frail and elderly, to continue living active lives in their own home;
- **\$21 million** over four years to expand elective surgery, dental health services, breast screening and women's health initiatives, and develop a National Neurological Centre; and
- **\$20 million** over four years to boost ambulance services and employ 43 additional paramedics in Shepparton, Mildura, Bentleigh/Brighton, Bundoora/Reservoir and Albert Park/St Kilda.

“Our *Hospital Demand Strategy* is turning around the health system, not just with bricks and mortar and extra hospital beds, but with more staff to improve the care for patients and new approaches to help keep people out of hospital,” Mr Thwaites said.

Mr Thwaites said the Budget also continued the Bracks Government's major capital works program to address years of neglect in the health system, with:

- **\$32 million** for a major redevelopment at the Royal Melbourne Hospital for a new helipad to allow commissioning of a new Trauma Service, and 120-bed ward accommodation;
- **\$18.5 million** for the Angliss Hospital for a new and expanded emergency department and critical care/high dependency unit;
- **\$10 million** to expand and refurbish Dandenong Hospital;
- **\$40 million** for a major upgrade of rural aged care facilities at Warrnambool, Maryborough, Omeo, Geelong, Bairnsdale and Beechworth;
- **\$3 million** for further redevelopment of Stawell Hospital with a new operating theatre, radiology unit and emergency service;
- **\$11 million** for fire safety works and Information Technology upgrades at health facilities;
- **\$3 million** for the redevelopment of Lorne Community Hospital; and
- **\$4.8 million** to establish ambulance stations and facilities including co-location with other health services in Kyneton, Ararat, Colac and Hopetoun.

“The Bracks Government has committed more than \$900 million to health capital works in its first three budgets to repair the seven years of damage done by the Kennett Government,” Mr Thwaites said.

“This Budget continues the turn around, with better facilities, new approaches and more health workers to give Victorians the highest quality of health care,” he said.



State Budget 2002

3b

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Tuesday, May 7 2002

\$69 MILLION FOR OLDER VICTORIANS

The Bracks Government will invest **\$69 million** over four years for a major upgrade of rural health and residential aged care facilities and an expansion of health services for older Victorians.

Health Minister John Thwaites said building stronger communities and delivering the highest quality health services for Victorians throughout their lives were among the highest priorities of the Government's 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We are turning around the health system and investing in better health services for older Victorians right across the State," Mr Thwaites said.

Mr Thwaites said **\$40 million** had been allocated for a Residential Aged Care Strategy to upgrade facilities in rural Victoria to address the ageing population and growing pressure from an under-supply of Commonwealth nursing home beds.

And an extra **\$29 million** has been allocated to Home and Community Care services to support people to live independent lives with support in their own homes and communities.

"There is a need for new responses to aged care pressures in Victoria, especially in rural communities to help people stay in the region they have lived in all their lives.

"This Budget expands our investment in home and community-based alternatives while rebuilding residential care in rural and regional Victoria to ease the pressure on families and help older people to live independently," Mr Thwaites said.

The \$40 million boost will redevelop rural aged care facilities at Maryborough, Omeo, Bairnsdale, Warrnambool, Beechworth, and Geelong.

"This new funding builds on the \$91.5 million announced in the Bracks Government's first two budgets for residential aged care facilities.

"We are making a major effort to address the shortfall in investment in aged care left by the previous Government, and to develop new responses to aged care pressures," Mr Thwaites said.

Mr Thwaites said the \$29 million boost to HACC funding would assist councils and other service providers to support people to live active lives in the community.

Senior Victorians would also benefit from the **\$464 million** boost in the *Hospital Demand Strategy* to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and improve the quality of care for the elderly, Mr Thwaites said.

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Tuesday, 7 May 2002

\$61 MILLION TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

The Bracks Government will spend an extra **\$61 million** over four years to expand mental health services in the community and in hospitals and employ more mental health workers to improve crisis responses.

Health Minister John Thwaites said the Bracks Government's priorities were set out in its 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger, more caring communities, and deliver the highest quality health services for Victorians throughout their lives – priorities which are strongly reflected in today's Budget," Mr Thwaites said.

Mr Thwaites said the mental health funding boost included **\$36 million** to expand community-based mental health services and **\$25 million** from the Hospital Demand Strategy to treat people in an acute phase of their mental illness.

"We will employ up to 40 extra staff to improve crisis responses and provide more intensive community treatment and support," he said.

Other mental health initiatives include:

- 30 new sub-acute beds in mental health units;
- the re-opening of up to 30 acute mental health hospital beds;
- **\$1.2 million** to support mental health clients living in rooming houses and public housing;
- **\$360,000** to expand services for teenagers whose mental health problems are complicated by drug abuse; and
- **\$400,000** for extra professional support for mental health workers in rural Victoria.

"Mental health services will also employ up to 15 extra psychogeriatric assessment and treatment staff to work with older people living at home and in aged care facilities," Mr Thwaites said.

"Up to 14 new psychiatric disability support staff will provide day programs and home-based outreach services, including home-based support for mothers with a mental illness.

"The support staff will also help mental health clients with drug or alcohol problems living in residential rehabilitation."

Mr Thwaites said the 30 sub-acute beds and support services would help people experiencing a crisis that could, without treatment, lead to a hospital admission. The service would also support people recovering from a mental health crisis who were not yet ready to return home.

Tuesday, May 7 2002

\$65M PACKAGE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

A **\$65 million** investment in child protection over four years will fund more child protection workers, enhanced support for abused children, and strategies for preventing abuse.

Community Services and Housing Minister Bronwyn Pike said the 2002-03 Budget delivered a **\$60 million** package for a new Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services and **\$5 million** in upgrades to residential care facilities across Victoria.

“Building stronger and more caring communities are priorities for the Bracks Government which we set out in our 10-year plan for the State, *Growing Victoria Together*,” Ms Pike said.

“The Bracks Government cares about vulnerable members of our community – this investment will help turn around the child protection system and repair the damage of years of neglect.

“This package will provide extra workers supervising out-of-home placements of children and young people in family homes in kinship care and permanent care.

“It will immediately deliver 60 extra frontline child protection workers – a 10 per cent increase.

The \$65 million package for child protection workers and services includes:

- **\$16.8 million** for 60 extra child protection workers;
- **\$20 million** over four years for an Intensive Therapeutic Service to assist 1300 children and young people each year to recover from the impact of physical and sexual abuse;
- **\$14.8 million** over four years for the Supporting Vulnerable Families Innovation Project;
- **\$2.4 million** over four years to assist Aboriginal communities protect children;
- **\$5 million** infrastructure investment for refurbishment and replacement of existing residential facilities for residential services;
- **\$4.8 million** over 4 years for 220 additional kinship and permanent care places, and
- **\$1.2 million** for service improvements

“Child protection work is demanding and stressful and these initiatives help ease the workload on frontline protection workers,” Ms Pike said.

Intensive Therapeutic Service

“This initiative is a response to very vulnerable children and young people who need close professional support to help repair the damage to their lives of abuse,” Ms Pike said.

“Importantly, it is also about breaking the cycle of abuse and helping children who have been abused to establish fulfilling lives.

“There is a great need to give children and young people the professional attention and support they need at an early stage to ensure they do not become trapped in an abusive cycle,” she said.

Supporting Vulnerable Families Innovation Project

“This initiative will help 850 families each year and there will be services in Ballarat, Central Goldfields, East Gippsland, Frankston, Geelong and Shepparton,” Ms Pike said.

“We want to find ways of helping these families at an early stage, averting an escalation of strain within the family to a point where abuse may become a problem.

“Many of the 37,000 calls to Child Protection each year relate to families whose concerns are not about abuse, but about child and family welfare. In these cases, we are striving for prevention after we have detected an early need for help.”

Two of the innovation initiatives – in East Gippsland and Shepparton – will support indigenous communities, Ms Pike said.

Assistance to Koori communities

“The Bracks Government has recently signed a new protocol with Koori leaders, to assist Koori communities to protect children and young people,” Ms Pike said.

“We will encourage cultural sensitivity and awareness in our investigations, ensuring a representative of the Koori community is involved in child protection investigations.

“In this Budget we will double funds to support this initiative to \$1.2 million a year.”

Ms Pike said the Budget initiatives would include expanding the kinship and permanent care program by encouraging more people to care for children who cannot remain with their parents.

“An extra 220 people or families will be able to care for children and young people who need alternative homes because of abuse or neglect, or the risk of abuse,” Ms Pike said.

She said the health, education and well-being of children in out-of-home care would also be improved, especially in residential care where young people live in small group homes under supervision.

“We will improve the focus and monitoring of the quality of care that these young people receive,” Ms Pike said.

Tuesday, May 7 2002

RENEWING PUBLIC HOUSING AND TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

The Bracks Government will continue to help strengthen communities across the State through renewals to public and community housing, and a boost to services for the homeless.

Community Services and Housing Minister Brownyn Pike said the Bracks Government's priorities were set out in its 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger, more caring communities and deliver high quality services in the suburbs and the regions – priorities which are clearly reflected in today's Budget," she said.

Ms Pike said the Office of Housing would invest **\$380 million** to expand the supply of public and community housing and renew ageing public housing estates.

The 2002-03 Budget also includes a boost of **\$8.8 million** to services for the homeless.

"Under *Growing Victoria Together* we committed to expanding the supply of secure, affordable and appropriate public housing," Ms Pike said.

"Today's Budget announcement continues to deliver on that commitment - and is a strong demonstration of the Bracks Government's social, environmental and economic priorities.

"We are planning for the future by turning around years of neglect by the previous government and building better quality, affordable public and community housing," Ms Pike said.

Renewing public and community housing

In 2002-03, **\$210 million** will be spent expanding the supply of affordable housing and **\$170 million** on upgrading and improving public and community housing across the whole State.

The Government's commitment to expand the supply of public and community housing by \$210 million will create some 1500 new social housing units. This expenditure includes:

- **\$18 million** to buy, build or lease additional crisis and transitional housing to meet growing demand in areas such as Melbourne's south eastern suburbs and regional areas like Bendigo;
- **\$144 million** to build and buy extra housing including \$18 million for community housing, \$28 million to continue work on the redevelopment of run-down public housing estates in areas such as Ashburton, Carlton, Richmond, East Geelong, Kensington, Long Gully in Bendigo, Port Melbourne and Wodonga, and \$98 million to provide a general boost to public housing stock and land;

...2

- **\$12 million** for new and replacement housing for indigenous people; and
- **\$36 million** to implement the third stage of the Bracks Government's \$94.5 Social Housing Innovations Program that will deliver affordable housing properties, particularly in rural areas such as Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Kyneton, Wangaratta and Yarrawonga.

Ms Pike said that the allocation of \$210 million to expand overall public and community housing supply responded to priorities identified in the Victorian Homelessness Strategy and would help meet the need for more long-term, low-cost housing.

Ms Pike said \$170 million would upgrade and improve the energy efficiency of public and community housing. This includes:

- **\$70 million** for safety and security initiatives and to upgrade and modernise facilities for residents of inner-city high-rise estates;
- **\$12.4 million** to rebuild and transform local communities through neighbourhood renewal schemes in communities such as Geelong North, Eaglehawk in Bendigo, Seymour, Collingwood/Fitzroy, Maidstone/Braybrook, and Parkside in Shepparton;
- **\$87.6 million** to upgrade, improve energy efficiency and modernise public and community housing in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

"Neighbourhood renewal is a key initiative of the Bracks Government in housing and focuses on creating job and educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities," Ms Pike said.

"In the Latrobe Valley, over 100 job opportunities have been created - with 40 people going on to permanent employment.

"This is a great example of combining the upgrading of housing stock with job creation and community building activities."

Tackling Homelessness

Ms Pike said an extra \$8.8 million over four years had been earmarked to further the implementation of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy and to pilot new early intervention and prevention measures. This funding includes:

- **\$8.8 million** over four years to expand homelessness services and pilot new programs;
- **\$4.6 million** over four years from the expanded mental health budget to expand support initiatives targeted to homeless people with a psychiatric illness.

Housing affordability for low income

As well as major initiatives to boost public housing and homelessness services, the Budget also allocates **\$13 million** a year to reform, streamline and expand existing concessions to enable more Victorian families and people on low incomes to purchase their own homes.

Under the new arrangements the maximum concession available will rise to \$4,660. This will double the numbers of concession card holders and families with dependent children expected to receive a concession in 2002-03 from around 4000 to 8000.



State Budget 2002

3f

FROM THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING

Tuesday, May 7 2002

\$55.4 M TO IMPROVE DISABILITY SERVICES ACROSS VICTORIA

The 2002-03 Budget delivers an additional **\$55.4 million** over the next four years to help build stronger communities by improving services for people with disabilities in high need areas.

Community Services Minister Bronwyn Pike said the Bracks Government's priorities were set out in its 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger, more caring communities and deliver high quality community services for all Victorians – priorities which are clearly reflected in this Budget," Ms Pike said.

"Everyone has a right to the opportunity to be active members of a borderless community that maximises their ability for participation and independent living," she said.

The 2002-03 Budget will increase home-based supports for people with a disability, provide more post school options for young adults with a disability, more supported accommodation, and deliver the first stage of Kew Residential Services redevelopment plan.

The \$55.4 million boost to disabilities will provide:

- **\$16 million** over four years to meet increased demand for community and home-based disability support services and shared supported accommodation services;
- an extra **\$4 million** for the Futures for Young Adults program to help 160 extra young people with a disability make the transition from school to a range of post school options;
- **\$10 million** infrastructure investment to assist people with a disability to live in the community and get involved in their local communities by increasing access to a range facilities and address priority upgrade works for existing services; and
- **\$25.4 million** over four years for the first stage of the redevelopment of the Kew Residential Services redevelopment.

"This first stage of Kew Residential Services redevelopment will provide for about 100 people to be relocated into purpose-built homes in the Eastern, Northern and Southern suburbs of Melbourne," Ms Pike said

"Most importantly, the Kew Residential Services redevelopment represents a new future for the residents at Kew as they move to more appropriate accommodation within the community, or to improved accommodation on site," she said.

The Bracks Government will use money from the sale of land at the site to pay for new homes for residents on and off the site.



State Budget 2002

3g

FROM THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING

Tuesday, 7 May 2002

\$14.8M REDEVELOPMENT FOR SENIOR YOUTH TRAINING SYSTEM

The Bracks Government will rebuild the Turana Juvenile Justice facility under a \$14.8 million redevelopment plan involving the Melbourne and Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centres.

Community Services Minister Bronwyn Pike said the project strongly reflected the priorities set out in the Bracks Government's 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger, safer communities and deliver high quality community services – and this project symbolises the strength of that commitment," Ms Pike said.

"The redevelopment of Turana was put in the too hard basket by the previous Government, which neglected it for years and then planned to privatise it.

"The Bracks Government's plan to close the aged and out-dated facility by June 2004 and build new facilities once again demonstrates how very different our priorities are," she said.

The Government will build a 26-bed facility adjacent to Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre on the old Turana site, and a 16-bed demountable unit at Malmsbury to enable the redevelopment to proceed without losing bed capacity.

"Both new facilities will provide a secure environment to help young male offenders aged between 17 and 21 years," Ms Pike said.

The Malmsbury redevelopment will be completed in 2003 while the Melbourne (Turana) redevelopment is expected to be operational by late 2004.

"This capital funding boost supports the \$34.2 million allocated over four years for the Juvenile Justice Reform Strategy in 2000," Ms Pike said.

"The strategy was developed to manage the increasing demand for juvenile justice services and focussed on diversion, rehabilitation and post release support strategies for young offenders."

Tuesday, May 7 2002

HEALTH BOOST FOR COUNTRY VICTORIA

The Bracks Government will deliver major upgrades to eight country and regional hospitals, and four new rural ambulance stations under the 2002-03 State Budget.

Health Minister John Thwaites said the Budget reflected the priorities set out in the Bracks Government's 10-year plan for the State's future, *Growing Victoria Together*.

"We said we would build stronger communities and deliver the highest quality health services for all Victorians - no matter where they live," Mr Thwaites said.

"Rebuilding country health facilities is a major priority of the Bracks Government after years of neglect by the former Kennett Government."

Mr Thwaites said the 2002-03 Budget delivered major upgrades across rural Victoria, including:

- **\$11 million** for the Lyndoch Nursing Home in Warrnambool for major renovations and upgrade of nursing home beds;
- **\$8 million** for Maryborough Hospital for a 45 high care bed aged facility and imaging services;
- **\$3 million** of additional funding to last year's \$19 million redevelopment of the Grace McKellar Centre in Geelong for palliative care beds and other support services;
- **\$2.7 million** for Omeo Hospital to complete the multi-purpose service comprising 14 aged care, four acute beds and primary care, dialysis and district nursing;
- **\$4.3 million** for Bairnsdale Regional Health Service for redevelopment to link with 39 low care beds at Sutherland Lodge;
- **\$4.7 million** for Beechworth Health Service for a new 13-bed acute ward, accident and emergency and allied health service;
- **\$3 million** for a new operating theatre and radiology unit at Stawell District Hospital and to provide new accident and emergency services;
- **\$2.2 million** for upgraded ambulance stations at Mildura and Shepparton;
- **\$1.4 million** for ambulance services at Kyneton, Ararat, Colac and Hopetoun to co-locate with health services; and
- **\$4 million** to upgrade nursing homes to meet Commonwealth accreditation standards in 2003.

The Government has also committed **\$2 million** over four years to help open 28 new nursing home beds in Stawell, Hesse, Nathalia, Avoca and Dunnolly.

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“There are now a record number of hospital, ambulance and aged care rebuilding projects across country Victoria.

“The Bracks Government has committed \$190 million for upgrading 23 country hospitals and aged care facilities in its first three budgets – more than the Kennett Government achieved in seven.”

The Budget also provides an **\$800,000** recurrent boost to Rural Ambulance Victoria to meet growing demand for ambulance services.

Mr Thwaites said the Bracks Government was turning around the health system in country Victoria by improving local access to essential health, aged care and community services.



State Budget 2002

2d FROM THE PREMIER & MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING

Tuesday, May 7 2002

BUDGET BOOST FOR VICTORIA'S PRESCHOOLS

In a landmark boost, the Bracks Government has delivered an extra **\$28.3 million** to preschools across Victoria in the 2002-03 State Budget.

The Premier, Steve Bracks, said the boost included upgrades to over 530 preschools throughout the State, and major new initiatives to help children with disabilities and special learning needs.

Mr Bracks said the extra funding would also lift the administrative burden of accounts, staffing, and other pressures on Victorian parents serving as volunteers on kindergarten committees.

“We have made education our top priority, investing unprecedented levels of funding to build a better education system for all Victorian children - no matter where they live.

“Victorian families have told us they want better facilities and a better start for their preschool children – and we are delivering,” Mr Bracks said.

“Cutbacks under the previous government made it more expensive to send children to preschool, and put all the administrative pressure of running a kindergarten onto parents.

“We’ve lifted that burden, and given extra help to children with disabilities and special learning needs to give them a better chance at a decent education.

“We are investing in education – from pre-schools to TAFES - to build smarter, stronger, more caring communities,” he said.

Mr Bracks said the Government had already increased the preschool subsidy for all children by \$65 per child, and for low income families from \$100 to \$250, as well as delivering a 20% pay increase to retain and attract quality kindergarten teachers.

He said the new kindergarten package addressed major issues raised by the Kirby Preschool Review.

That report revealed that the Kennett Government had cut funding to preschools by around 20 per cent, increased fees for parents by 120 per cent and imposed a major organisational and financial burden on parents.

“Today’s funding will repair much of the damage caused by those cuts and will benefit every preschool in every suburb and region in Victoria,” he said.

Mr Bracks said grants ranging from \$1000 to \$180,000, at a total cost of **\$5 million**, would fund upgrades to 534 kindergartens across Victoria.

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“The upgrades will range from fencing of outdoor areas to new facilities such as toilets and hand basins, and will provide safer and more secure learning environments for Victorian children,” Mr Bracks said.

He said the Budget would also provide an extra **\$7.3 million** over four years to develop a new management model for kindergartens.

“This will enable local government, churches and community organisations to take on the group employment and management of staff for a number of kindergartens in their local area,” he said.

“Parents will retain an active role in running preschools, but this new initiative will relieve them of many of the administrative, financial and industrial burdens that were loaded onto them by the previous government,” he said.

Mr Bracks said the Budget would also deliver more intensive support to 5000 children - 8 per cent of preschool children - who had a disability or special learning needs.

“An additional **\$12.3 million** over four years will deliver more early intervention services to give those children extra help and support at a critical time in their education,” he said.

Community Services Minister Bronwyn Pike said the new \$12.3 million program would support 500 children with severe and complex needs, with extra kindergarten assistants and specialist early intervention services to enable the children to better participate in programs.

“It will also provide extra support for 4,500 children with special needs – giving extra training to teachers and an average of 12 hours of additional specialised support for children with special needs such as speech difficulties or developmental delay,” she said.

Ms Pike said a further \$3.6 million over four years would fund a second year of preschool for an extra 640 children who had been identified as having learning difficulties or a developmental delay.

Ms Pike said the Budget also included over \$15 million as part of a 20% salary increase for preschool teachers.