

State Budget 2001-02

Hospital Services

Further Funding Boost for Public Hospitals

Description

The 2001-2002 Budget provides a \$1.1 billion boost to hospital funding over four years, building on the significant injection of funds in the Labor Government's first budget to reopen beds and restore public confidence in the quality of hospital services. Hospitals continue to operate under great pressure from rising demand and costs, and require continued investment in infrastructure and equipment to ensure that Victorians maintain access to a world class public hospital system.

The 2001-2002 Budget continues the Government's commitment to improve the quality, accessibility and efficiency of hospital services, through a range of initiatives including a four year \$582 million Hospital Demand Strategy. Additional funding includes:

- \$384 million over four years (\$96 million in 2001-2002) to increase emergency department and elective surgery capacity at major metropolitan and regional hospitals, treat extra patients, provide extra support for intensive care units and neonatal intensive care, open more than 300 new hospital beds and improve patient care processes;
- \$48 million over four years (\$12 million in 2001-2002) to take pressure off emergency departments by expanding access to sub-acute and interim care services so that elderly patients can be treated in a more appropriate environment than busy hospital emergency departments;
- \$150 million over four years for a Patient Management Strategy (\$17 million in 2001-2002) to ease emergency demand by diverting elderly people and those with chronic conditions from unnecessarily ending up in emergency departments;

Other key initiatives in the budget include:

- \$469 million over four years (\$96 million in 2001-2002) to recruit 1300 new nurses, and improve nurse-patient ratios and working conditions;
- additional funding of \$12 million in 2001-2002 to meet the growing cost of imported equipment and medical and pharmaceutical supplies; and
- over \$500 million in capital funding to rebuild six metropolitan and 10 regional hospitals and aged care facilities, expand hospital technology and equipment, and upgrade infrastructure.

State Budget 2001-02

Hospital Services

Hospital Demand Strategy

Description

This Budget provides an additional \$582 million over four years (\$125 million in 2001-2002) to further strengthen the capacity to manage increasing demand, in particular for emergency services in the major metropolitan and regional hospitals.

Hospital systems around Australia are experiencing similar demand pressures, which when combined with a shortage of aged residential care options for people being discharged, place great pressure on hospitals' capacity to provide timely access to emergency departments and to elective surgery. Following extensive consultation with hospitals through the Patient Management Taskforce, the Government is proposing a new approach to the management of demand for hospital services. The major elements of this new Hospital Demand Strategy will be:

- increasing capacity to respond to demand growth, in particular demand for emergency services, and to reform patient care processes in hospitals, including admission and discharge procedures, with additional funding of \$384 million over four years (\$96 million in 2001-2002);
- substitution of more appropriate care options for people in acute beds such as sub-acute and home-based alternatives, with additional funding of \$48 million over four years (\$12 million in 2001-2002);
- major investment in preventing hospital admissions. Preventative programs which improve management of chronic conditions and reduce readmissions will receive additional funding of \$150 million over a four year period for a Patient Management Strategy, including \$17 million in 2001-2002;
- collaboration with senior hospital management, clinicians and nurses in responding to service pressures.

Funding for the Hospital Demand Strategy will focus on the acute care/aged care interface and will be allocated to hospitals on the basis of improving patient management and the achievement of negotiated targets.

Increased hospital capacity to respond to demand growth and improve patient care processes

Funding is provided in this Budget for growth in the capacity of hospital emergency departments, intensive care units (ICUs), elective surgery, inpatient mental health and radiotherapy services to treat extra patients. A total of \$96 million is provided in 2001-02 (\$384 million over four years) to treat an extra 14,000 emergency patients, 11,800 elective surgery patients, 2,400 mental health inpatients, and 280 renal and ICU patients each year, as well as to boost access to specialised blood products and implement new regulatory standards to protect the blood supply.

Growth funding for inpatient services will focus in particular on the expansion of the Sunshine Hospital and its emergency department, to take pressure off the other major metropolitan hospitals. Extra beds will also be provided as a priority to Frankston Hospital. Radiotherapy services will also be opened in Ballarat and Bendigo in 2001-2002, with planning to begin on radiotherapy services for the Latrobe Valley.

The additional funds will also assist hospitals to improve patient care processes and ensure best practice with a focus on optimising use of available resources. The Government will implement initiatives to increase day of surgery admissions, increase day surgery substitution for multiday stays (to increase bed availability for new emergency and urgent elective surgery patients), improve admission and discharge procedures and encourage all hospitals to adopt best practice inpatient care processes.

Demand diversion and prevention

Additional funding of \$150 million is provided over four years for a Patient Management Strategy (\$17 million in 2001-2002, rising to \$50 million by 2003-2004) to divert anticipated future demand for hospital services by at-risk groups (for example, the frail aged and those with chronic illness) to community and home based services that avoid or prevent the need for hospital admission.

Further funding of \$48 million over four years (\$12 million in 2001-2002) is provided to expand sub-acute and interim care services to provide hospitals with a greater capacity to substitute more appropriate forms of sub-acute or interim care for inpatient acute care. These funds will be targeted to assist patients, in particular the elderly, who require time and a more holistic multi-disciplinary treatment approach rather than acute care.

The undersupply of this type of care in the face of increasing demand contributes to hospital admission and exit blockages as acute beds become increasingly occupied by longer stay patients who are awaiting discharge to other forms of care.

These additional diversion and prevention funds will be allocated to hospitals on the basis of negotiated strategies to reduce demand for hospital services. Funded measures will include an expansion of services to support patients' return home and prevent readmission, expansion of falls prevention and acquired brain injury services, reopening of residential aged care beds and improved chronic disease management through better care coordination and linkage with GP services. Clinical advisory groups will also be established to foster best practice in treatment and demand management.

Partnership with clinicians and hospitals

The funding boost for hospitals in the 2001-2002 budget will be implemented in partnership with clinicians and hospitals, to ensure that funding addresses specific issues for hospitals and enables local solutions to be developed. DHS will negotiate contracts with the major metropolitan hospitals comprising individual performance targets and strategies to address such issues as ambulance bypass and discharge blockage to aged residential care.

Nurse recruitment and retention

A total of \$469 million is to be allocated over four years to address shortages of nurses across the public health sector and improve the quality of health and aged care services provided to the community. The funding will allow for creation of 1300 additional nursing positions, together with a wide range of measures specifically designed to reduce workload, improve conditions of employment, and otherwise assist with the recruitment and retention of qualified nursing staff. Specific measures include the creation of specialist and senior nursing positions, greater emphasis on professional development, and the introduction of a postgraduate qualifications allowance



State Budget 2001-02

Acute Health Services

Meeting Growing Costs of Equipment and Medical and Pharmaceutical Supplies

Description

The hospital sector expends a significant proportion of its budget on imported medical supplies, pharmaceutical supplies, and equipment purchases.

The deterioration in the value of the Australian dollar since January 2000 has had a significant impact on the cost of these items.

Large pieces of equipment costing over \$1 million each such as radiotherapy equipment, PET cameras, CT scanners, MRI equipment are imported and either quoted in US dollars or an Australian dollar equivalent based on an imported price. Significant cost increases have been incurred for these items of equipment.

In addition medical, surgical supplies and pharmaceutical supplies used by hospitals are predominantly imported. These supplies total over 12% of total hospital expenditure.

Funding

Funding of \$12 million in 2001-2002 has been allocated to assist hospital to meet these increased costs.

State Budget 2001-02

Acute Health Services

New Capital Works

The 2001-2002 Budget provides an unprecedented \$500 million injection of new capital funding for hospitals, aged care and related facilities, including major expansions to the Maroondah and Angliss hospitals (\$18.5 million), Northern Hospital (\$12 million), Frankston Hospital (\$9 million), Ararat and Stawell hospitals (\$10.5 million), a new Community Health Service in Werribee (\$11 million); rebuilding the Grace McKellar Centre at Geelong (\$19 million) and rebuilding the Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre (\$311 million).

The Government has also committed \$30 million to basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure to link metropolitan health services, regional and rural hospitals and primary care partnerships throughout Victoria. The major elements of the initiative are the establishment of wide area and local area networks for hospitals and primary care partnerships in rural, regional and metropolitan areas, and the consolidation, rationalisation and standardisation of data centres for metropolitan health services.

In addition, funding of \$28 million has been allocated to undertake works in rural hospital and nursing home facilities as part of the on-going Fire Risk Management Strategy and \$20 million has been allocated to purchase major bio-medical equipment required for public hospitals, ambulance services, reference laboratories and public dental services across the State in 2001-2002. A further \$25 million will be spent on upgrading aged care facilities in rural Victoria, and more than \$6 million is provided for new ambulance stations and vehicles.

More detail on Acute Health and Ambulance Services capital works projects is provided in the information sheet on Health and Human Services Asset Investments.

State Budget 2001-02

Acute Health Services

Ambulance Services Expansion

Description

The 2001-2002 Budget continues the Government's commitment to delivering more responsive and safer services to all Victorians. Additional funding will address growing demand, provide new ambulance stations at Barwon South and Romsey and deliver 12 additional and 12 replacement ambulance vehicles to improve coverage and responsiveness.

Growth in demand for ambulance services

In total, funding for growth in demand for ambulance services will be \$17.2 million over four years (with \$4 million in 2001-2002).

The Metropolitan Ambulance Service has been experiencing significant growth in demand for services over the past several years. Growth in utilisation of the service by pensioners, who are provided with ambulance transport free of charge, has been particularly significant.

Additional funding of \$6 million over four years (\$1.2 million in 2001-2002) has been provided to meet the growth in demand for ambulance services in the metropolitan area. Funding will deliver an additional 21,000 emergency and 3,000 non-emergency ambulance responses per annum.

A further \$2.8 million over four years (\$0.7 million in 2001-2002) has been provided to fund the emergency services telecommunications centre to deal with the additional demand for ambulance services.

Rural Ambulance Victoria has been provided with additional funding of \$1.6 million over four years (\$0.4 million in 2001-2002) to deliver approximately 3,000 emergency ambulance responses and 3,000 non-emergency responses per annum.

Additional funding of \$6.8 million over four years (\$1.7 million in 2001-2002) is also provided to staff new services at Romsey and Barwon South and for the new professional service operating at Bright.

Rural Ambulance Stations

Funding of \$2.2 million over two years is provided for the construction of new ambulance stations for Rural Ambulance Victoria at Romsey and Barwon South and new vehicles for these stations. This initiative will significantly strengthen the emergency health infrastructure available to these rural communities and reduce current response time.

Rural Ambulance Victoria will also benefit from additional funding for essential station upgrades and replacement of biomedical equipment.

24 hour MICA in regional centres and improving ambulance officer skills

An additional \$0.6 million will enable the continued expansion of MICA coverage in regional centres which was commenced in the 2000-2001 Budget.

A further \$0.1 million has been provided to continue the roll out, commenced in the 2000-2001 Budget, of the Advanced Life Support (ALS) program to all ambulance paramedics.

Ambulance Vehicles

A total of \$4.4 million will be provided over two years for new and replacement vehicles for rural and metropolitan ambulance services. Fourteen vehicles will be provided for metropolitan locations and ten for rural locations. This will ensure appropriate vehicle replacement programs are maintained and extend the availability of services.

Upgrade of Air Ambulance Services

The Air Ambulance Helicopter fleet is an integral part of the ambulance service delivering 2,000 flights per annum, for the most critically ill and injured patients.

Additional funds of \$18 million over four years (\$4.5 million per annum) will enable a new state of the art air ambulance helicopter, based at Bendigo and serving northern Victoria, to commence operation. Funds will also enable upgrades to the existing helicopters at Morwell and Essendon

State Budget 2001-02

Primary Health Services

Expansion of Primary Health Services

Description

Primary Health programs, which include Counselling, Community Nursing, Allied Health, Women's Health, Family Planning and Family and Reproductive Rights programs, form an integral part of the Victorian health care system. These services promote health and help to reduce the likelihood of serious illness and the need for hospital and medical services.

Additional recurrent funds are provided in this budget to:

- provide additional allied health services for people with chronic and complex conditions, and for patients leaving hospital as part of their discharge care plan; and
- to implement the Government's commitment to introduce community-based elections for the boards of community health centres and increase consumer participation in locally based Primary Health Services.

The Government will also fund consumer and carer best practice projects through Primary Care Partnerships and provide funds to increase participation by the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$1.4 million will be provided from 2001-2002 to expand allied health services and implement the election of community health centre boards.

School Nursing Program

Description

The secondary school nursing program focuses on prevention, supporting the community in addressing contemporary health and social issues facing young people and their families, and providing appropriate primary health care through professional clinical nursing, referral and support. 100 School Nurses will be employed in Victoria Secondary School during 2001-2002.

Funding

Additional funding of \$0.5 million has been allocated in 2001-2002 for the secondary school nursing program.

State Budget 2001-02

Mental Health Services

Expansion of Mental Health Services

Description

The Government is providing additional recurrent funds to expand the provision of mental health services to Victorians.

Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability, accounting for 26% of the non-fatal disease burden in Victoria. Mental disorders are also ranked third behind cardio-vascular disease and cancer as a cause of the combined burden of mortality and disability in the community. Additional funds will assist Victorians to continue to access high quality mental health services.

Funding will be allocated to hospital-based mental health services to increase the availability of inpatient mental health beds. This will improve access to inpatient treatment for those most in need of highly intensive treatment and care.

In addition, new mental health workers will be employed in programs such as Mobile Support and Treatment Teams, Continuing Care Units and Psychiatric Disability Support Services. The mental health workers will be targeted to areas of greatest need. Funds will also be provided to enhance the Victorian Aboriginal Mental Health Services, including additional mental health workers to be employed by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and the Royal Children's Hospital to improve access to mental health services for the Koori community.

Homeless people with a mental illness will be assisted to find more permanent accommodation. New outreach support workers will be employed in a number of metropolitan suburbs and Geelong.

Funding

\$4.0 million additional recurrent funding will be committed in 2001-2002 as part of the Hospital Demand Strategy to increase the availability of inpatient mental health beds in response to growing demand for intensive mental health treatment services.

\$3.0 million has been allocated for the employment of mental health workers in programs such as Mobile Support and Treatment Teams, Continuing Care Units and Psychiatric Disability Support Services and improving access of the Koori community to mental health services.

\$0.5 million has been allocated for the employment of mental health workers to provide outreach services to people at risk of homelessness.



State Budget 2001-02

Dental Health Services

Expansion of Public Dental Health Services

Description

Further funds are provided in this Budget to continue to expand access to public dental health services and the School Dental Program, and improve the oral health of young people in Years 9 to 12 from disadvantaged backgrounds who may be unable to afford appropriate dental care.

Demand for public dental health treatment is increasing. This is primarily due to three factors:

- an increasing number of concession card holders in the community;
- demand for treatment as opposed to extractions is increasing as more people within the eligible population are retaining their teeth;
- more children are receiving dental care through the School Dental program.

The expansion of the School Dental Program and the extension of the Year 9 to 12 program for children from disadvantaged backgrounds will result in an extra 4,800 children receiving dental care in 2001-2002.

In addition to the initiatives described above, extra funding will enable the Government's commitment to make a start on reducing the waiting time for disadvantaged Victorians to access dental services and will treat an additional 3,500 adults.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$2.1 million will be provided from 2001-2002 to address growth in demand for community dental services, including \$0.6 million for the School Dental program.

State Budget 2001-02

Public Health

Tobacco Reforms

Description

Reducing tobacco use, particularly by preventing the uptake of smoking by young people, is the single most effective way to enhance the health status of Victorians and to release scarce health care resources for the prevention and treatment of other conditions. Tobacco use costs Victoria around \$3.3 billion per year in health care and economic expenses.

During 2000-2001 a number of tobacco reforms were implemented including the introduction of increased penalties for retailers selling cigarettes to minors, and the creation of the Department's Cigarette Sales to Minors Enforcement Team. Reforms to be introduced in 2001-2002 include smoke free dining, a requirement for retailers selling tobacco to display a health warning or smoking cessation sign, and the regulation of tobacco displays and tobacco advertising at shops that sell tobacco.

Funding

Ongoing funding of \$2.9 million will be provided to implement the Government's tobacco reforms, including stakeholder education and enforcement of the new laws.

State Budget 2001-02

Public Health

Expansion of Breast Screening Services

Description

Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer related death in women in Australia. The early detection of breast cancer provides the opportunity for early treatment and may lead to a reduction in the morbidity and mortality attributable to breast cancer.

Additional funds will be provided to increase the number of Victorian women aged 50-69 that are able to participate in breast screening programs.

Funds will increase the capacity of BreastScreen Victoria to provide free mammograms. The increase in base funding will enable an additional 11,400 women to be screened in 2001-2002.

Funding

Total additional recurrent funding of \$1.2 million in 2001-2002.

State Budget 2001-02

Public Health

Implementation of Victorian Government Drug Initiative

Description

In 2001-2002, DHS continues implementation of new drug treatment and rehabilitation services funded as part of the Victorian Drug Initiative, launched in November 2000.

A total of \$12 million will be spent in 2001-2002 on services targeted to young people and families, to saving lives, other service enhancements, and preventive programs.

Services for young people

Services totalling \$2.48 million in 2001-2002 include:

- Youth Residential Withdrawal Units (\$1.3 million) located in Ballarat and Geelong, with each service having the capacity to provide drug withdrawal and 'time out' services to 124 young people per annum.
- Youth Alcohol & Drug Supported Accommodation Services (\$0.12 million) with two new ten-bed services located across northern and western Melbourne providing short-term support in a safe, drug-free environment to help young people aged 12-21 years. These services are located in Brunswick West, Coburg, Moreland, Moonee Valley, Essendon, Avondale Heights and Pascoe Vale.
- Youth Residential Rehabilitation Service (\$1.06 million), comprising a 15-bed Statewide facility to provide a 24-hour staffed residential program that will provide a range of interventions for young people whose established use of drugs has caused them significant harm. The selection process for the provider of this service will be finalised by the end of May.

Services for families

Services totalling \$0.96 million in 2001-2002 include:

- Parent Support Programs (\$0.2 million) assisting over 1200 parents to respond effectively to children and other family members with a drug problem.
- Family Counselling Programs (\$0.62 million) located in community-based organizations such as Community Health Centres, providing assistance, support and counselling to 780 families affected by drug usage.
- Families Drug Information and Support Service (\$0.14 million) supporting nine self-help groups for family members of drug users.

Enhancing Services

Services totalling \$4.46 million in 2001-2002 include:

- Post Withdrawal Linkage Support (\$0.49 million) to coordinate assistance to over 800 people to remain off drugs and prevent relapse.
- Extended Hours Capacity for Drug Treatment Agencies (\$0.39 million) so that clients who are unable to attend the drug treatment service during working hours or require out of hours support can have access. Agencies providing this service include the Eastern Drug and Alcohol Service, the Banyule Community Health Service, Task Force Community Agency, the Western Community Health Association and Barwon Health Services.
- Methadone Regional Outreach Workers (\$0.18 million) to support and enhance the role of trained general practitioners in regional areas in encouraging, recruiting and retaining opiate dependent persons in treatment and ultimately assisting in an effective withdrawal.

- Three new Dual Diagnosis Teams (\$ 0.9 million) to provide an integrated, statewide service response which will improve the health outcomes for clients with dual problems of mental illness and substance abuse.
- Homeless Persons Support Service (\$2.5 million) providing an integrated case management, treatment and ongoing care strategy leading to new life opportunities for homeless drug users who are referred from Melbourne's three major crisis accommodation services – Hanover Welfare Services Southbank, the Salvation Army Flagstaff Crisis Supported Accommodation and the Society of St Vincent de Paul's Ozanum Community.

Saving Lives

Services totalling \$0.95 million in 2001-2002 include:

- Mobile Drug Safety Workers (\$0.5 million/annum) providing education on drug safety, plus needle distribution, and sterile supplies in areas of high drug use.
- Mobile Overdose Response Services (\$ 0.45 million) offering non-fatal overdose survivors support, information and assistance with access to rehabilitation services. The service offers mobile non-medical support to ambulance officers and emergency staff who encounter people who have overdosed.

Prevention

Services totalling \$3.7 million in 2001-2002 include:

- Community Strengthening Initiatives (\$2 million) to enhance the capacity of local communities to respond to drug issues by promoting social cohesion, encouraging participation in community activities and promoting community understanding of drug issues. It is anticipated that up to 70 projects will be funded across the State.
- Community Drug Education (\$1.2 million) targeting young people through a media campaign (TV, radio, print) and a range of information products for specific target groups.
- Drug Education Targeted Initiatives (\$0.5 million) which will target heroin overdose and provide specific information for the Indo-Chinese and Koori communities.

State Budget 2001-02

Public Health

Diabetes Prevention and Support

Description

Diabetes is one of the fastest growing chronic health conditions in Australia. The most recent data available estimates that about 940 000 people in Australia over the age of 25 years have diabetes and this figure is projected to rise. The emergence of diabetes as a major health issue is reflected in the demand for acute health services.

Early detection, intervention and comprehensive management can significantly reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with diabetes. Benefits are also realised in the acute health care system by preventing the progression of illness to the tertiary stages, which ultimately require expensive acute care.

In 2001-2002, \$0.6 million will be directed to programs to increase the awareness of the risk factors associated with the onset of type 2 diabetes and increase the number of people with diabetes participating in programs that prevent or delay the onset of common complications. Target areas will include programs addressing community awareness of diabetes risk factors, primary care interventions, comprehensive diabetes management programs including nutrition and weight control advice and support, foot health programs and screening for diabetes complications including diabetic retinopathy. In addition, programs will be targeted towards specific population groups at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes— people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people from Aboriginal communities.

An additional \$0.6 million will be directed to meeting the co-payment currently borne by people with insulin dependent diabetes for needles and syringes. This arrangement is contingent on continued Commonwealth funding of the National Diabetic Services Scheme.

Funding

Recurrent funding of \$1.2 million will be provided from 2001-2002.

State Budget 2001-02

Public Health

Expansion of Immunisation Services

Description

Additional funds have been allocated in 2001-2002 to address the increasing demand for disease prevention and control services. Funds will be directed towards improving the immunisation levels of hard to reach/at risk groups including children with disabilities and recently arrived migrants.

Immunisation services over time result in decreased mortality, morbidity and health expenditure. Since immunisation programs began, deaths due to vaccine preventable diseases have declined by more than 99% from 9,300 in the decade 1926-35 to 64 in the decade 1986-95, despite the Australian population increasing 2.6 fold over this time.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$0.7 million will be provided to expand immunisation services in 2001-2002.

State Budget 2001-02

Aged and Home Care

Better Services for Older Victorians

The Government is committed to building on its record of expanding and improving services for older Victorians in 2001-2002. Substantial capital funding is being provided to upgrade and redevelop residential aged care and rural health facilities along with growth funding to further improve services and access to services for older Victorians.

Growth in Home and Community Care (HACC) Services

Description

Building on last year's additional funding for Home and Community Care (HACC) and related services, HACC services will be further expanded in 2001-2002 to provide support to the increasing numbers of frail older people and people with disabilities who wish to continue to live independently in their own communities for as long as possible. As well as recognizing the importance of supporting people to live in their own homes this funding has the added benefit of relieving pressure on Victoria's hospitals and nursing homes.

Additional funds will be used to deliver a range of support services that will enable these individuals to continue to live in their homes and to actively participate in their communities. Access to HACC services will prevent premature admission to residential care facilities and ensure that appropriate support is available to older people when they are discharged from acute or sub-acute facilities.

Funding

\$6.0 million recurrent funding has been allocated to this initiative in 2001-2002 to match Commonwealth growth funding. This is in addition to the extra \$41 million in State-only funding over four years announced in last year's budget for HACC and HACC-related services, such as Adult Day Care Centres and Hospital to Home services.

Additional funds for Palliative Care

The government is committed to improving the balance of care available to all Victorians. Access to appropriate quality care, including palliative care, is fundamental to this commitment. Additional funds totalling \$0.5 million will be available in 2001-2002 to recognise the complexity of patient needs and improve funding for inpatient palliative care.

Aged Care Components of Hospital Demand Strategy

Older Victorians will be major beneficiaries of the Hospital Demand Strategy

The 2001-2002 budget provides an additional \$582 million over four years (\$125 million in 2001-2002) to Victoria's public hospitals to further strengthen their capacity to manage increasing demand in the major metropolitan and regional hospitals.

The major elements of this new Hospital Demand Strategy will be to enhance services to older Victorians including:

- major investment in preventing hospital admissions. Preventative programs which improve management of chronic conditions and reduce readmissions will receive additional funding of \$150 million over a four year period for a Patient Management Strategy;

- substitution of more appropriate care options for people in acute beds such as sub-acute and home-based alternatives; and
- reform of patient care processes in hospitals including improved admission and discharge procedures in hospitals.

Funding of \$48 million over four years (\$12 million in 2001-2002) is provided to expand sub-acute and interim care services to provide hospitals with a greater capacity to substitute more appropriate forms of sub-acute or interim care for inpatient acute care. These funds will be targeted to assist patients, in particular the older Victorians, who require time and a more holistic multi-disciplinary treatment approach rather than acute care, receive their care in the most appropriate environment.

Funding will also focus on the interface between acute hospitals and other levels of care will be allocated to hospitals on the basis of improving patient management and the achievement of negotiated targets.

Additional funding of \$150 million over four years for a Patient Management Strategy (\$17 million in 2001-2002, rising to \$50 million by 2003-2004), for initiatives to divert potential future demand for hospital services by older people and people with chronic illness and other risk groups to community and home based services that avoid or prevent the need for hospital admission.

These new funds will also be allocated to hospitals on the basis of negotiated strategies to reduce demand for hospital services. Potential measures will include an expansion of post-acute care services to support patients' return home and prevent readmission, intensive community support services to better help people manage chronic illness, expansion of falls prevention services, and improved chronic disease management through better care coordination and linkage with GP services. Clinical advisory groups will also be established to foster best practice in treatment and demand management.

Expansion of Acquired Brain Injury services

Description

The Acquired Brain Injury: Slow-to-Recover program at Southern Health provides intensive case rehabilitation and case management for people with acquired brain injuries. Funding will be allocated to provide 30 additional places in the Slow-to-Recover program.

Funding

Additional funds totalling \$1.0 million will be available from the Hospital Demand Strategy in 2001-2002 to expand the Acquired Brain Injury: Slow-to-Recover program.

Expansion of Falls Prevention services

Description

Falls are one of the most common causes of injury, ill health and admission to hospital for older people. Additional Falls Prevention initiatives will promote health and well-being of older people and prevent falls and unnecessary admissions to hospitals.

Additional funding in 2001-2002 will provide new Falls Prevention clinics in the Hume, Grampians, Gippsland and the Southern Metropolitan Regions and enable expansion of falls prevention initiatives in a number of metropolitan areas.

Funding

Additional funding of \$1.5 million for falls prevention will be provided under the Hospital Demand Strategy. This strategy provides total funding of \$150 million over four years for initiatives that prevent admission to hospital (see Hospital Services).

Reopen 110 Residential Aged Care Beds

Description

An additional 110 public-sector beds that were closed as part of the previous Government's privatisation proposals will be re-opened at Caulfield General Medical Centre (Bayside Health), Mt Eliza Aged Care and Rehabilitation Services (Peninsula Health), the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre and the Grace McKellar Centre Geelong (Barwon Health). \$4.9 million was allocated to capital refurbishment for these facilities in 2000 - 2001.

Funding

Additional recurrent funds totalling \$1.0 million will be available from the Hospital Demand Strategy to enable these additional residential aged care services to reopen.

State Budget 2001-02

Aged Care Capital Works

Upgrading Residential Aged Care and Rural Health Services

Description

The 2001-2002 Capital Works Program builds on last year's budget to improve rural health, residential aged care and sub-acute facilities in Victoria.

A new injection of capital funding is provided for the redevelopment of a number of rural health, residential aged care and sub-acute facilities for rural and regional Victoria. Residential facilities to be redeveloped include those at Avoca, Dunolly, Ballarat, Hopetoun, Beechworth (Stage 1), Rainbow, Wonthaggi and Omeo.

New funding builds on the \$47.5 million residential aged care strategy over 3 years announced in last year's budget for the redevelopment of residential aged care facilities including Maldon Hospital, Casterton Memorial Hospital, Natimuk (West Wimmera Health Care Group), Dimboola (Wimmera Health Care Group), Lumeah Nursing Home (Echuca Regional Health), Evelyn Wilson Nursing Home, The Grange (Hamilton), Heywood & District Memorial Hospital, Myrtleford, Swan Hill District Hospital, Yea and District Memorial Hospital, The Ann Caudle Centre (Bendigo Health Care Group) and the Manangatang Hospital.

The Department of Human Services will be working with a number of other agencies, including those in rural and regional Victoria in 2001-2002 to assist them in developing plans for the further development of aged care and rural health services in the future.

Funding

The Government will spend \$25 million on redeveloping the Aged Care residential facilities at Avoca, Dunolly, Ballarat, Hopetoun, Beechworth, Rainbow, Wonthaggi and Omeo.

Funding of \$19 million has been allocated towards the redevelopment of sub acute and residential aged care services in Geelong. Barwon Health through the Grace McKellar Centre currently provides a range of sub acute and residential aged care services to the people of Geelong and surrounding areas. This significant investment involves the replacement and expansion of geriatric evaluation and management, rehabilitation beds and redevelopment of residential aged care beds.

Redevelopment of services at the Angliss Hospital and Kyneton Hospital will also provide better facilities for older people.

These projects will ensure that services for older Victorians are provided in the most appropriate settings, designed to promote the provision of high quality care.

State Budget 2001-02

Community Care Services

Improved Child Protection and Care Services

Description

The Government will provide significant additional recurrent funding of \$8.7 million in this budget to improve child protection and placement services and cater for the additional demand for services.

The objective of Protection and Placement Services is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of adolescents and children at risk of harm, abuse and neglect. These services include Victoria's child protection services and accommodation and support services for children and adolescents in care.

Over a number of years, there has been a steady increase in the number of these notifications, and new protection orders made by the Victorian Children's Court. Of significance has been the increase in the complexity and severity of adolescent client behaviours linked particularly to increased substance abuse that have placed particular pressures on residential care services. These residential services, which are provided by the non-government sector, have experienced major client and funding pressures in recent years.

Funding

Additional funds of \$7.5 million will be allocated in 2001-2002 to improve service provision to young people in residential care. This funding will improve the quality of client care and service viability for community service organisations providing these services.

Additional funds of \$0.2 million will be allocated in 2001-2002 to cater for service demands in kinship and permanent care by providing an additional 25 places.

Additional funds of \$1.0 million will be allocated in 2001-2002 to child protection services in rural regions for expansion of after hours services.

State Budget 2001-02

Community Care Services

Expanded Family Support Services

Description

Family support services provide support to vulnerable families to enhance family functioning and emotional well-being ensuring stronger families and adequate supports for all families, including Koori families. These services build on services available to all Victorian families, such as preschool and maternal and child health services, to provide parents with the additional skills and support they need to provide the best care for their children and help reduce or avoid the difficulties that can lead to child abuse or neglect.

Funding

An additional, on-going \$0.6 million will be allocated for these services in 2001-2002.

This will be combined with \$1.0 million that has been allocated as part of Departmental reprioritisation mechanisms. These combined funds will provide support to more than 1,000 additional families in 2001-2002.

Victorian Parenting Strategy

Description

Victoria's parenting services provide support to parents and to professionals and community service organisations working with vulnerable children and families.

Parenting Services have previously been funded through the Community Support Fund for a three-year period with funding expiring in 2000-2001.

The budget secures recurrent funding to enable a range of innovative parenting services in 2001-2002.

Funding

On-going funding of \$0.45 million will enable the continuation of these services in 2001-2002.

This will be combined with \$1.6 million that has been allocated as part of Departmental reprioritisation mechanisms, giving a total of \$2.05 million. This will provide a strong base upon which to build Victoria's parenting services.

Improved Early Intervention Services

Description

Early Intervention services include specialised allied health services to children under the age of six with disabilities and developmental delays. These services are provided by the Department's Specialist Children's Services regional teams, and early intervention agencies. These services are vital for assisting families provide the best start in life for children with special needs.

Additional funding will be provided to reduce waiting times for these vital services and enable an additional 322 children to be provided with a service.

Funding

An additional, on-going \$1.0 million will be allocated for these services in 2001-2002.

Per Capita Support to Preschools

Description

Preschool funding is provided on a per capita basis according to the number of eligible children enrolled and attending a preschool program. There are four per capita grant categories, standard, long day care, rural and small rural.

On-going funding will be provided in 2001-2002 to maintain the \$65 per capita increase in grants to all categories which was provided on a one-off basis through the Community Support Fund in 2000-2001.

The value of the grants will enhance affordability of preschools for all Victorian families by reducing the requirement on services to raise additional operating funds through higher user fees or intensive voluntary fund-raising, which may discourage participation.

Funding

\$4 million will be allocated to this initiative in 2001-2002 to guarantee on-going provision of funding at this level.

Juvenile Justice Group Conferencing

Description

Significant new resources were allocated in 2000-01 to a range of diversion, rehabilitation, transition and post-release programs primarily focussed on 17-20 years olds in Senior Youth Training Centre custodial facilities.

Additional Funding of \$0.3million in 2001-02, rising to \$0.5million in 2002-2003, will be provided to expand group conferencing, which has operated on a limited pilot basis for a number of years. Funds will enable conferencing to be established in the Metropolitan regions and the regional centres of Shepparton and Moe.

Juvenile Justice Group Conferencing places an emphasis on the relationship between offenders, victims, communities and their mutual reconciliation and aims to divert young people from further contact with the criminal justice system.

Funding

An additional \$0.3 million recurrent funding will be allocated in 2001-2002.

New Capital Works 2001-2002

Placement and Support Capital Project – Stage 2

An additional \$12 million over 3 years has been allocated for Stage 2 of the Placement and Support Capital Project to improve placement and support residential facilities. \$5 million will be allocated to this initiative in 2001-2002 to upgrade existing facilities and to purchase new facilities for accommodation and support of children and adolescents at risk of abuse or neglect.

These funds build on the \$5 million provided in 2000-2001 to commence this important task.

State Budget 2001-02

DisAbility Services

Growth in DisAbility Services

Description

Funding of \$25.3 million has been allocated in 2001-2002 to provide new services for people with disabilities and their families.

New growth funding of \$6 million has been allocated in the 2001-2002 Budget to address growth in the urgent waiting list for accommodation services. This is in addition to increased funds of \$7 million previously committed to the Futures for Young Adults program and \$12.3 million to be provided in 2001-2002 under the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement (CSDA) for community-based services.

Supported Accommodation Services

Additional funding of \$6 million will be provided in 2001-2002 for supported and transitional accommodation services. The funding will enable 100 people with disabilities in urgent need of accommodation services, to receive intensive accommodation support.

Funding for this initiative will ensure supported and transitional accommodation options are available to enable people with disabilities to remain living in their local community.

The funding will reduce the number of people awaiting services. Additional services will be provided to those people with disabilities assessed by the Department as being in greatest need.

Futures for Young Adults

Additional funds of \$7 million have been allocated to the Futures for Young Adults program to assist 900 young people with disabilities, who will be leaving school at the end of the 2001 academic year, make a successful transition to a range of adult service options.

Funding for the Futures for Young Adults program is customised to the needs of each young person. It aims to maximize client choice and facilitate access to the service most suitable to individuals' needs.

Home and Community Based Support Services

Additional CSDA funds of \$5.9 million in 2001-2002 will be provided to enable people with disabilities to live in their home and community.

Funds will not only assist people with disabilities to be supported in their home environment, they will also provide case-co-ordination and individual service packages. Up to 150 intensive personal support packages for people with disabilities and their families will be provided.

Respite Care

Additional support will be provided to families through increased CSDA funding for respite care of \$3.3 million in 2001-02. This initiative will provide additional short-term and time-limited breaks for 250 families and other voluntary carers of people with disabilities.

The range of respite offered will include planned, emergency and weekend services.

Flexible Care Packages

Additional CSDA funding of \$3.1 million will be provided in 2001-2002 in the form of flexible care packages to better assist families who are caring for a family member with high support needs. These packages will provide a flexible range of lower level support services customised to the needs of each family.

Funds will provide 500 additional people with disabilities and families with packages.

DisAbility Services Quality Improvement

Funding of \$2.6 million has been allocated in 2001-2002 to implement a quality improvement strategy, principally in response to the Auditor-General's report Services for people with an intellectual disability. Funding is provided through reallocation of Departmental funds with further reprioritisation mechanisms expected to provide additional funds to support the strategy.

The strategy comprises quality improvements to assist the Department:

- meet legislative requirements regarding eligibility assessments and case management;
- deliver higher level service reviews and performance monitoring; and
- develop a disability workforce better able to meet its statutory duty of care requirements.

These funds will enable the expansion of regionally delivered intake assessment and case management services, the development of a more structured service monitoring and review framework, and the introduction of a competency based training system for direct care staff.

State Budget 2001-02

Housing Assistance

Further Boost for Housing Assistance Programs

The 2001-2002 Housing Budget has three key objectives:-

- to continue to address homelessness with a particular focus on adding to supply and increasing support services to complement the \$17 million expansion of the Supported Accommodation Assistance program announced in the 2000-2001 Budget;
- to expand the supply of public, community and affordable housing with an emphasis on joint ventures with local government, community organisations and the private sector;
- the continued upgrading of existing public and community housing to improve the social and physical amenity for existing residents.

Expanding assistance for homeless people

The 2001-2002 budget provides an additional \$3.2 million in recurrent funding (\$12.8 million over four years) for assistance to the homeless or those at risk of homelessness. Funding includes \$2.2 million to expand the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), which provides case management, assessment and referral, supported accommodation, living skills, counselling and advocacy services. Also included is an additional \$1 million for the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) to boost it to \$6 million to help 33,500 households.

In addition to these recurrent Housing funds, the DHS Mental Health program will also provide a further \$0.5 million to assist people with a mental illness who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Supporting this expansion in recurrent assistance for homelessness programs, the Housing budget will provide total funding of \$28 million in 2001-2002 for the acquisition or construction of 300 Crisis Support or Transitional Housing properties, which provide short to medium term accommodation for homeless people, often linked to SAAP services. This funding includes \$1 million for the leasing of 130 additional properties for Transitional Housing, as well as \$27 million in capital funds for the acquisition or construction of a further 170 Crisis Support or Transitional Housing properties. The Government will work closely with the homelessness sector in determining priorities for allocation.

These 2001-2002 budget initiatives underline the Government's continuing commitment to further improving assistance for homeless people on a whole of Government basis. Priority will be given to homeless people with a history of psychiatric illness, young people exiting the juvenile justice system and people leaving prisons. A Homelessness Strategy is being developed to provide a better coordinated and improved response to homelessness. The Strategy will guide expenditure over the longer term to address priorities and gaps in service provision, particularly in outer Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Expanding and Improving the Supply of Social Housing

The Government is committed to rebuilding social infrastructure, creating employment and renewing and rejuvenating communities across the State. In addition to the \$27 million of capital funds committed to homelessness initiatives, a further \$144 million is provided in the 2001-2002 Housing budget for the acquisition of public, community and affordable housing units to expand stock in areas of highest need. In total, some 1400 properties will be added to the supply of social housing, using an innovative mix of direct capital expenditure, new headleasing arrangements and partnerships with community based organisations, local government and the private sector.

These objectives will be complemented by an overarching goal to create employment opportunities for existing residents and local communities and to link housing with services to ensure tenancies are sustainable. Housing capital and maintenance expenditure in 2001-2002 will help provide some 5,000 jobs.

\$81 million for Public Rental Housing Acquisition and Construction

Capital funding of \$57 million will be available for land and property additions for public rental housing. This includes \$16 million for the Supported Housing program, to build, buy or modify properties designed for people who are frail aged or have an intellectual, sensory or physical disability, or mental illness, who require support to live independently in the community. This expenditure will provide for 70 properties where tenants will benefit from the linked specialist support services provided through the Disability, Aged Care and Mental Health programs.

In addition, \$24 million has been allocated in 2001-2002 to replace existing stock with new properties which better meet housing needs and provide a better quality of home. Public housing tenants will benefit from estate improvement projects which introduce a greater diversity of housing types and sizes and provide 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. Approximately 330 new homes will be constructed with these funds in 2001-02.

Major redevelopment projects have been announced in Ashburton, Bendigo, North Carlton, Doveton, East Geelong, Kensington, Maidstone/Braybrook, Port Melbourne, Richmond, Morwell, Shepparton, Wodonga and Wendouree West.

In addition to direct acquisitions, new headleasing arrangements will be made to enable 170 properties to be leased, primarily to assist with redevelopment relocations. These initiatives will provide accommodation for some 1,060 new family, older person, single, couple and group households.

\$28 million for Expanding Community Managed Housing

A budget of \$28 million will be available in 2001-2002 to build, buy or modify some 150 long term community managed housing properties, in particular for older people, people with disabilities and singles and families on a low income. These properties are owned by the Director of Housing and 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 some 70 properties administered by the Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV) to increase total stock dedicated to Aboriginal housing to some 1,100 units by June 2002.

\$23 million for Joint Venture Partnerships

As part of the Government's four year \$94.5 million Social Housing Innovations Program (SHIP), the Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced funding for 50 innovative social housing partnership projects.

The joint venture budget for 2001-2002 of \$23 million is expected to deliver some 140 units during the year as part of the SHIP initiative. In the coming years, as the program is fully implemented, a total of over 400 units will be delivered from the 50 projects recently announced by the Minister.

Twenty two of the announced projects are in rural and regional Victoria in areas such as Apollo Bay, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Kyneton, Maffra, Mildura, Seymour, Wangarratta, Warnambool, Wodonga, Wonthaggi and Yarrawonga.

Three of the announced projects are primarily for older ethnic citizens in Carrum Downs, Delahey and Shepparton.

Upgrading Social Housing

Description

A total of \$154 million is committed in the 2001-2002 Housing budget to improve living conditions on public housing estates in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. This funding represents the start of a new wave of redevelopment and improvement of older public housing estates. 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.

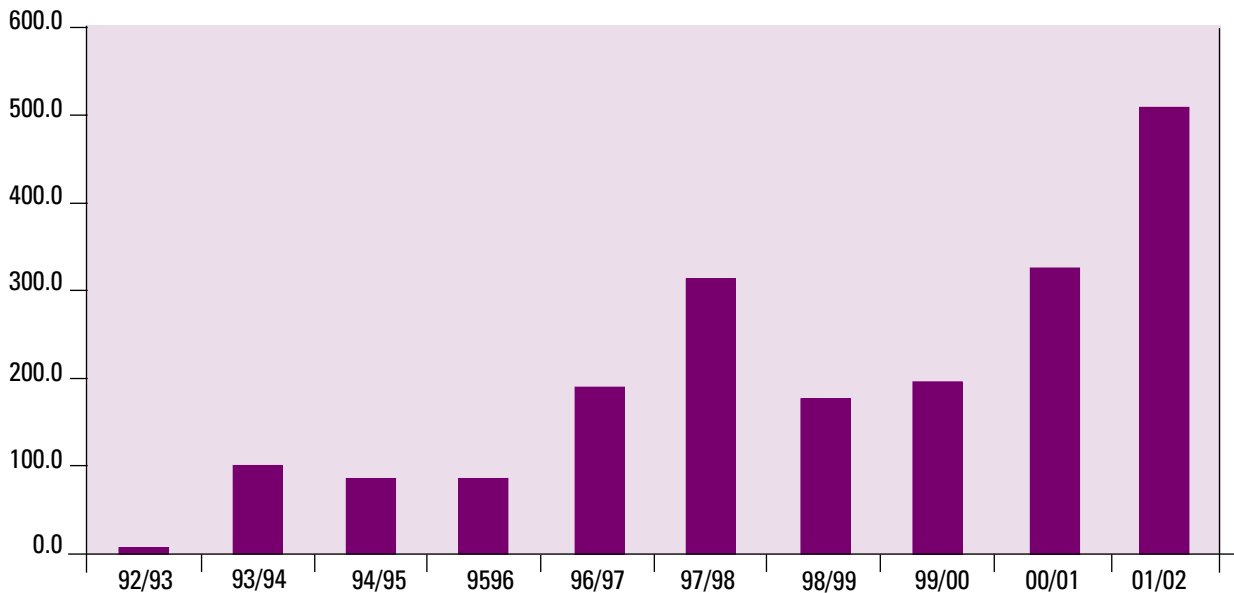
Physical improvement projects in 2001-2002 will include upgrade works in high rise estates, fire safety works, upgrade and physical improvements to family and older persons units in public and community housing throughout Victoria and minor capital items including re-roofing and replacement of hot water services.

Upgrade budgets will also contribute to improvements in redevelopment projects throughout Victoria. In addition, some \$78 million will be spent in 2001-2002 on the ongoing general maintenance of properties.

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.

State Budget 2001-02

Health & Human Services Asset Investments



New Asset Investments 2001-2002

The 2001-2002 asset investment program represents the largest investment in state health and human services infrastructure in recent history. Projects totalling \$514.1 million have been funded to expand and upgrade public health and human services facilities. This continues the Government's commitment to rebuild the health and human services infrastructure of the state and provide a viable and quality system for the people of Victoria.

Significant funding has been endorsed for the acute health system including \$310.7 million of state funding for the complete redevelopment of the Austin and Repatriation Hospital and relocation of the Mercy Hospital to Heidelberg. Funding is also provided to expand and upgrade services in a number of key metropolitan, regional and rural hospitals to better meet emergency demand and to ensure facilities are of a standard appropriate to current service requirements – Northern Hospital: \$12 million, Frankston Hospital: \$9 million, Outer East Service Expansion and Redevelopment (Maroondah & Angliss Hospitals): \$18.5 million, Ararat Hospital: \$7.3 million, Stawell Hospital: \$3.3 million.

This budget also makes a major investment in upgrading existing health and human services infrastructure. \$25 million has been allocated to continue the upgrade of Residential Aged Care Facilities across the state to ensure both Commonwealth and State standards are met. The upgrade of residential facilities will also continue with a further \$12 million allocated to provide an appropriate standard of accommodation in the right location for children at risk. Funding has also been allocated for equipment upgrades, for ambulance vehicle replacement and for infrastructure upgrade works.

Metropolitan Health and Human Services Infrastructure:

Austin, Repatriation and Mercy Medical Centre Redevelopment

The Government has committed to a major redevelopment of the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre to provide integrated health services appropriate for future provision of efficient and cost effective health services to the northern community. The full cost of the redevelopment is \$325.7 million over a five-year period with a contribution of \$310.7 million from the state budget. The redevelopment project will address hospital and support facilities including clinical services, operating theatres, emergency, radiology, intensive care and wards, and the redevelopment of mental health facilities. Associated research and training facilities will also be redeveloped. The Project also provides for the relocation of the Mercy Women's Hospital to the Heidelberg site to provide specialist obstetric and gynaecology facilities.

Frankston Hospital Ward Redevelopment

\$9 million of funding for further expansion and redevelopment of the Frankston Hospital will provide a new integrated maternity facility including 25 post/natal gynaecology beds, a 17 bed paediatric unit, a special care nursery and a birthing suite. This will complete the current Frankston Hospital Ward Redevelopment (\$12 million approved in 2000-2001 for medical/surgical ward expansion and refurbishment) and provide the local community with high quality maternity and paediatric facilities.

Outer East Service Expansion and Redevelopment

Funding of \$18.5 million has been provided for the first stage of redevelopments at Maroondah Hospital and the Angliss Health Service. For Maroondah Hospital this will involve upgrading of the emergency department, a new 12-bed short stay unit and a new acute inpatient ward. Redevelopment of the Angliss Health Service involves a new geriatric evaluation and management service with an expanded rehabilitation service and provision of temporary car parking spaces. This expansion of services will improve the capacity of health services in the Outer East to respond to growing demand, particularly emergency demand and will better address the changing needs of the local population.

Northern Hospital Redevelopment

An investment of \$12 million has been committed to expand the Northern Hospital facilities to meet the increasing demand for the Hospital's health service delivery needs through to the year 2005 and beyond. The investment involves the reconfiguration of existing facilities and the development of new services to provide two new operating theatres with enlarged recovery, set up and storage spaces, improved day surgery/day procedure facilities, new multipurpose ward accommodation (32 additional beds), and redevelopment of the central sterilising and supply department. This redevelopment will effectively double the current day surgery capacity and significantly improve access to services for the residents of Melbourne's northern corridor.

New Community Health Centre for Wyndham

\$11 million has been allocated to construct a new purpose built facility for Wyndham Health Services that will provide a broad range of community health, dental, mental health, and other health services to the people of this growing community. The new facility will consolidate the delivery of services onto one site to support delivery of quality health care services and improved client access to services.

State-wide Health & Human Services Infrastructure:

Residential Aged Care Strategy

Funding of \$25 million is provided for the second stage of the Residential Aged Care Strategy continuing the upgrade and redevelopment of aged care facilities statewide to ensure they meet both State requirements and Commonwealth requirements for certification and accreditation. This government has a continuing commitment to ensure quality in its aged care facilities and to ensure that all standards both Commonwealth and State are met.

Upgrade of Placement & Support Residential Care Facilities

Further funding of \$12 million has been approved to continue the program of refurbishment and replacement of residential facilities throughout the state for the Placement & Support Program that provides residential services for children removed from their families or primary caregivers. This funding will continue the program to upgrade and relocate residential facilities to appropriate standards and locations to meet service need and will also fund the refurbishment of the Male Secure Welfare Service at Ascot Vale to provide improved levels of safety and security for staff and clients and to create a non institutional environment for service delivery.

Infrastructure Upgrades

Funding of \$28million has been allocated to undertake works in rural hospital and nursing home facilities as part of the on-going Fire Risk Management Strategy to ensure that facilities attain an acceptable level of safety from the risk of fire for clients, staff and visitors. The funding will also address priority infrastructure upgrade works in hospital and ambulance facilities including the upgrading of cooling towers to meet the requirements of the Legionella Strategy.

BioMedical Equipment Upgrades

Funding of \$20 million is allocated in this budget to purchase new and replacement items of major bio-medical equipment required for public hospitals, ambulance services, reference laboratories and public dental services across the State in 2001-2002. The funding will flow to a range of priority equipment needs including items such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging units and patient monitoring equipment for hospitals, defibrillators for ambulance services and ultracentrifuge units for public health laboratories.

Ambulance Vehicles

A total of \$4.4 million will be provided for new and replacement vehicles for rural and metropolitan ambulance services. Fourteen vehicles will be provided for metropolitan locations and ten for rural locations. This will ensure appropriate vehicle replacement programs are maintained and extend the availability of existing services.

Information and Communication Strategy

The Government has also committed \$30 million to basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure to link metropolitan health services, regional and rural hospitals and primary care partnerships throughout Victoria. The major elements of the initiative are the establishment of wide area and local area networks for hospitals and primary care partnerships in rural, regional and metropolitan areas, and the consolidation, rationalisation and standardisation of data centres for metropolitan health services.

The initiative will improve provider productivity and demand management by building a new capacity for connectivity between hospitals, general practitioners and other primary care providers. In turn, this better connectivity will facilitate better continuity of care, shifts from higher to lower cost services, improved clinical decision making and management of chronically ill, frail aged and disabled people in the community, and support local referral and care co-ordination networks.

The new infrastructure will also:

- enhance decision-making and efficient use of resources by health care providers through electronic capture of clinical documentation;
- reduce incidence and level of adverse events through improved access to key patient information;
- improve care planning and reduced patient waiting times as resources are provided as and when needed; and
- allow more effective utilisation and management of resources.

Rural and Regional Health & Human Services Infrastructure:

Grace McKellar Centre Redevelopment

The Government has approved \$19 million for the first stage of the redevelopment of the Grace McKellar Centre in Geelong. This stage of the redevelopment will provide a new purpose built 90-bed sub-acute facility, comprising 40 geriatric evaluation and management beds and 50 rehabilitation beds. It will also commence the strategy to decommission the existing Geriatric Centre and improve the geographical distribution of residential aged care by the development off-site of a 30 bed aged care facility. The redevelopment delivers much needed expanded sub-acute services in Geelong and commences the replacement of the ageing aged care facilities with purpose built facilities better located to meet community demand.

Ararat Hospital Redevelopment

The Government is funding \$7.3 million for a redevelopment of the Ararat Hospital. The project involves a combination of major refurbishment of existing facilities and new construction to provide an acute medical/surgical ward unit at ground floor level, a dedicated day procedures unit, an operating theatre suite, accident and emergency unit, medical imaging facilities, a birthing and obstetrics suite and administration and medical records areas. The redevelopment will give the local community access to high quality acute health services.

Stawell Hospital Redevelopment

\$3.3 million has been allocated to commence the redevelopment and expansion of facilities at the Stawell District Hospital. This funding provides for the initial stage of this redevelopment and is intended to provide up to date quality facilities and operational efficiencies for the Hospital.

Rural Ambulance Stations

Funding of \$2.2 million is provided for the construction of new ambulance stations for Rural Ambulance Victoria at Romsey and Barwon South and new vehicles for these stations. This initiative will significantly strengthen the emergency health infrastructure available to these rural communities and reduce current response time.

Kyneton – Additional Funds

\$1.7 million is provided to complete the development of the new Kyneton Hospital.

Statewide Social Housing Infrastructure

Significant funding will also flow in 2001-2002 to a range of initiatives to expand the supply of public, community and affordable housing with an emphasis on joint ventures with local government, community organisations and the private sector. Priority will also be given to addressing homelessness and the continued upgrading of existing public and community housing to improve the social and physical amenity for existing residents. These initiatives are detailed in a separate budget kit on Housing Assistance.