

State Government Budget 2000–2001



Overview

This Information Kit provides a summary of the key elements of the 2000–2001 State Budget for the human services portfolio.

In this budget the Government expands and enhances human services in accordance with the Government's key pillars of policy:

- Improving services for all Victorians
- Restoring democracy
- Growing the whole of Victoria
and
- Responsible financial management.

The 2000–01 budget initiatives implement the Government's election commitments and substantially increase the State's investment in the health and social support system. Further funding has also been provided to enable existing programs to meet increasing demand from population growth and other factors.

In aggregate, the Department of Human Services output budget for 2000–2001 is \$7,253 million, an increase of \$576 million (8.6%) over the 1999–2000 Budget (\$6,677 million). This excludes Hospital and Community funded activities of \$302.5 million which are spent directly by those sectors.

Real increases in funding are provided across all the programs of the Department of Human Services to put into action the Government's key policy directions:

- \$241 million (7%) extra for Acute Health to expand public hospital services and improve the quality of care;
- \$22.5 million (11%) growth in Ambulance Services to expand services, particularly in rural areas, and reduce response times;
- \$66 million (8%) in Aged Care and Primary Health.
- \$40 million (9%) increase in funding for Mental Health to continue the process of reform.
- \$12.6 million (6%) for Public Health for such measures as the Government's drug strategy.
- \$96.6 million (17%) for Disability Services to support people living in the community.
- \$42 million (9%) for Community Care to strengthen early intervention strategies that support families at risk, improve the quality of child protection services, and enhance the juvenile justice system.
- \$45 million (12%) to expand social housing and boost the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to address homelessness.

Budget highlights

Acute Health Services

- \$60.2 million in 2000–01 for the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy to open 360 beds in public hospitals and new initiatives to improve access to emergency care and elective surgery, starting this winter.
- \$23 million this year to improve the quality of hospital services through nurse retention and recruitment strategies (\$6.3 million), hospital cleaning and infection control (\$7.2 million), and hospital to home support (\$9.5 million).
- Changing direction from the previous Government's unsustainable demand that hospitals deliver more services each year with less funds, this budget provides a \$53 million injection of funds to the base operating budgets of acute hospitals.
- A total of \$44 million to increase inpatient activity by 2.2%, \$16 million as part of the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy and \$28 million from annual growth funds.
- Additional \$22 million for growth in non-inpatient care such as outpatients, sub-acute care and renal dialysis.

Ambulance Services

- \$19.95 million additional funding is provided to ambulances to deliver more ambulances and officers on the road.
- For metropolitan areas, \$8.8 million is provided to the Metropolitan Ambulance Service to fund 6 new peak period ambulance units, convert existing units to MICA capability, and contribute to the cost of a new Victoria Police air ambulance helicopter. An additional \$2.3 million is provided in capital funds for 6 new ambulance stations and to purchase 8 new emergency vehicles.
- For rural areas, funds are provided for blackspot areas, a new helicopter service for northern Victoria, upgrading crewing levels across regional centres, an all year round station at Bright, and extended regional coverage of the Mobile Intensive Ambulance Service.

Other Health Services

- An additional \$10.3 million for community based health care.
- \$6 million for targeted initiatives for rural and regional communities.
- Ambulance services receive funding for black spot areas (\$1 million), an additional emergency helicopter and replacement of the Victorian Police air ambulance (\$4.8 million), \$7 million for the Metropolitan Ambulance Services Operations Plan, improved ambulance officer skills training (\$0.15 million), and \$3.7 million to provide additional services in response to statewide demand growth.
- \$20 million to implement the Government's comprehensive drug strategy.
- \$6.3 million for improved dental health services.
- \$4 million to expand the School Nursing Program.
- \$9.8 million for mental health services.

Aged Care

- \$3.12 million to increase Adult Day Care Centre services.
- \$1.2 million to improve and expand Community Rehabilitation Centre.
- \$5.5 million to fund an additional 50 rehabilitation and geriatric assessment beds.
- \$0.5 million to fund specific health promotion programs for older people.
- \$8.75 million to expand Home and Community Care services.

Community Care

- \$7.8 million for improved and expanded child protection and care services.
- \$3 million for enhanced maternal and child health services.
- \$1.7 million to expand services for vulnerable families.

Disability

- \$16.4 million for improved and expanded disability services.

Housing

- An historic injection of new funds (\$94.5m) into social housing stock over 3 years above that already committed through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, with \$11.5 million in 2000–2001 to expand social housing stock and provide community housing for older ethnic citizens.
- \$1.6 million in 2000–2001 increasing to \$3.2 million in the following year to increase funding for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

Capital

- New capital works spending of \$485.2 million in 2000–01, comprising \$388 million for social housing and total cost of \$227.4 million for other human services projects, including aged care facilities.
- \$47.5 million over 3 years will be provided to upgrade or redevelop Nursing Homes to comply with Commonwealth Aged Care standards.



Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy

Description

Significant new funds will be provided under the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy in the 2000–2001 Budget to enable Victorian public hospitals to reopen public hospital beds and address a range of emergency services pressures in the hospital sector. The strategy is designed to reduce waiting times for hospital emergency services, and reduce pressures on emergency departments. The strategy also aims to reduce waiting times for hospital admission for targeted elective cases and to reduce cancellation of surgery.

A package of initiatives under the strategy will ensure that the additional beds provide optimum service, including care co-ordinators to liaise with service providers, arrange appropriate patient care and prevent unnecessary admission to hospital. Key staff will be provided with immunisation to protect their health and maintain staffing levels.

Funds will enable an additional 360 hospital beds to be reopened.

Winter Emergency Demand Strategy and Elective Surgery

The Winter Emergency Demand component of the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy encompasses a number of initiatives, including the re-opening of emergency beds, post-acute care beds, and additional sub-acute beds, as well as increasing funding to emergency departments. This strategy is designed to enable Victoria's public hospitals to adequately meet the emergency demand pressures expected to be placed on it during winter 2000. The strategy has already commenced operation, with \$26.6 million already committed for six months across the 1999–2000 and 2000–2001 years.

\$60.2 million is committed in total for 2000–2001 for the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy. After the winter period, resources will be maintained in hospitals and beds may be reallocated to better meet needs for elective surgery.

Funds will also be allocated to improve the way the acute hospital system caters for the needs of patients with chronic illness. Patients who need extended lengths of stay will have access to a better mix of acute, sub-acute and post-acute services as they move through their episode of care.

The number of elective surgery patients from Category 1 (the most urgent) and Category 2 will be closely monitored to ensure that patients most in need receive care within clinically appropriate timeframes.

This initiative will be reviewed annually to ensure that funds can be targeted to particular patients (for example, those experiencing long waits) or specialties, procedures and locations where the greatest health benefits can be achieved for patients, and where timely intervention can prevent emerging demands in the acute health care sector.

Additional funds will be provided in this budget to establish a website to make information available to patients and doctors on elective surgery waiting lists at different public hospitals.

The improved access to information will allow patients and doctors to make more informed decisions about their treatment and care options. This will provide the opportunity for patients to discuss with their doctors where they might receive treatment sooner than if they went to the hospital nearest their home.

Levels of use and satisfaction with the website will be monitored to ensure patients' and doctors' needs are met.

Funding

Additional funding of \$60.2 million will be provided in 2000–01 to Victorian public hospitals to implement this initiative, including the \$5.5 million allocated for sub-acute care beds as part of the Older Victorians initiative.

The Government's election commitment of \$30 million is almost doubled through the allocation in this Budget, recognising the need to fund hospitals fully for the work they do, and not at the marginal rate.



Acute Health Services

Funding Boost for Public Hospital Services

Description

In addition to the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy, extra recurrent funding will be provided to public hospitals in 2000–2001 to meet the increasing demand for services associated with population growth and ageing, the increased use of new technology, and to redress past under-funding.

The Victorian population is growing at approximately 1% each year and is ageing. Older people have a much higher per capita use of hospitals, and tend to stay in hospital longer because of generally slower recovery and associated illnesses. The per capita use of hospital services is also growing in response to technology-related improvements in treatment, including new technology which enables previously untreated conditions to be treated and may substitute for current treatments (including drugs). Examples include stent procedures for cardiac and gastroenterology operations, and advances in the treatment of premature babies.

Additional funding will help public hospitals to meet and manage the continuing growth in demand for inpatient and outpatient services, 80% of which are now estimated to be emergency or non-discretionary. It will also enable hospitals to continue to invest in the equipment, information technology and management systems needed to maintain Victoria's benchmark levels of hospital efficiency and to enhance the quality of services.

Funding

In addition to funds allocated to implement the Government's election commitments, further funding totalling \$93.5 million in 2000–01 will be provided to hospitals for growth in inpatient and other services and to ease the financial pressures on hospitals.

This initiative represents a major break from the past when hospitals were asked to provide extra services with less funds. Funding will be provided for two purposes: to enable hospitals to manage demand growth, and to boost the price paid for hospital services.

Growth Funding

First, funding is provided for 2.2% growth in additional inpatient activity to meet changes from the growing and ageing population. A total of \$44 million is provided to treat an extra 20,000 inpatients, \$28 million from growth funds and \$16 million from the extra beds opened under the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy. The balance of growth funds will provide \$22 million for 70,000 extra non-inpatient services, including hospital outpatients, subacute and renal dialysis services.

Funding to Boost Price

Second, additional funding of \$53 million has been added to the base budget of hospitals by boosting the WIES price, increased sub-acute bedday rates, and extra funding for rural hospitals to maintain financial viability. This more than offsets the annual 1.5% productivity saving of \$33 million for acute health and provides public hospitals with the opportunity to establish a sound financial position after years of budget reductions.



Acute Health Services

Better Infection Control and Cleaner Victorian Hospitals

Description

Significant new funding will be provided in the Budget to Victorian public hospitals for improved infection control and cleanliness standards in hospitals. A range of initiatives will be funded that will enhance quality of care and provide a better hospital environment for patients, including:

(1) Additional Infection Control Practitioners (ICPs) and Training

Additional funding will enable 30 nurses to be recruited and to undertake certificate-level education to become infection control practitioners in Victorian public hospitals. Infection control practitioners monitor hospital infections, and educate and advise healthcare professionals on infection control and prevention in hospitals.

(2) Improved Infection Control Management at Hospital Level

New funds will enable additional infrastructure and operational support for staff and patient infection control. Auditing of infection control standards will take place in hospitals and rural health services. Increased emphasis on handwashing and strategies for ensuring healthcare professionals maintain standards will also be funded through this initiative.

Specific surveillance measures and approaches to reducing inappropriate antibiotic prescription will be introduced in hospitals.

(3) Establishment of a Victorian Hospital-Acquired Infection Surveillance System

The Victorian Nosocomial Infection Surveillance Centre will monitor hospital-acquired infection rates and compile baseline data to compare future performance by hospitals. Baseline infection rates will be established and validated.

(4) Improved Cleaning Standards

New cleaning standards will be implemented as part of this initiative. Random audits of public hospitals will take place to ensure compliance.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$7.15 million will be provided to Victorian hospitals in 2000–2001, to assist in the control and management of hospital-acquired infection and improve hospital cleaning. Capital funding of \$2 million will also be provided to hospitals across the State to support this initiative. The integrated elective and emergency services strategy also provides funding to immunise staff against a range of infectious diseases which in turn will reduce the risk of infection for hospital patients.



Acute Health Services

Nurses Recruitment and Professional Development Package

Description

Significant new funds have been allocated in the Budget to support a range of initiatives that will attract more qualified nurses into the Victorian health workforce, and ensure nurses are provided with better opportunities for training and professional development. These initiatives will lead to improved quality of care for patients, and will help address current shortages of nurses in a number of vital specialties.

Funds have been allocated to implement recommendations of the Nurse Recruitment and Retention Committee, including recommendations on:

- **HECS scholarships** for up to 200 university post graduate courses.
- **Post graduate specialist study assistance** for 1000 nurses to undertake specialist post graduate study.
- **A Post graduate Qualification Allowance** for nurses in recognition of the specialised study they have undertaken.
- **Refresher courses** for up to 350 nurses to assist nurses wishing to re-enter the workforce.
- **Assistance to upgrade Division 2 nurses to Division 1 (registered) nurses** through expanding the number of Division 2 nurses enrolled in undergraduate courses.
- **Clinical placements for 400 undergraduate nursing students** for up to five weeks in rural hospitals.

Funding

\$6.28 million recurrent funding will be provided in 2000–2001 to support these initiatives.



Safer Blood Products

Description

Funding will be provided to implement nucleic acid blood testing (NAT) of fresh blood products. NAT is a technology which can detect the presence of specific viral nucleic acids in blood, thus allowing for the detection of viral infection in an individual before the development of antibodies to the virus. NAT testing of blood products is a more stringent test for HIV and Hepatitis C and the implementation of these tests across Australia has now commenced.

The implementation of NAT is a requirement for the Australian blood banking system to continue to operate at standards that reflect world's best practice.

Funding

Funding of \$2 million for 2000–2001 has been provided to implement nucleic acid blood testing (NAT) of fresh blood products.



Ambulance Services

A Better Ambulance System

Description

The 2000–2001 Budget provides a major funding boost to ambulance services to deliver more responsive and safer services to Victorians in both metropolitan, regional and rural areas, and address major inadequacies in coverage and response times.

Metropolitan Ambulance Service (MAS)

In 2000–2001, additional funding of \$7 million will be provided to fund 6 peak period units, an additional 100 ambulance officers, increases in MICA availability and improved services on the outskirts of Melbourne. Six units operating 16 to 18 hours per day will be established at Kew, Langwarrin, Craigieburn, Diamond Creek, Beaconsfield and Hoppers Crossing.

Funds have been provided in this budget to enable the MAS to begin converting existing paramedic response units to MICA Units which are crewed by two MICA Paramedics. A total of seven MICA units are being established progressively at Clayton, Dromana, Deer Park, Rowville, Coolaroo, Bundoora and Hampton Park. Improved clinical outcomes can be expected from the expanded MICA capability.

In 2000–2001, additional funding of \$1.8 million will also be allocated for the replacement of a Victoria Police air ambulance helicopter which is used by the Metropolitan Ambulance Service to respond to medical emergencies. Capital funding of \$2.3 million has also been provided for 6 new ambulance stations and 8 emergency vehicles.

Rural and Regional Ambulance Initiatives

Black Spot Areas

Additional funding of \$1 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 to provide additional services in black spot areas such as Phillip Island and along the Great Ocean Road.

These services will reduce response times and meet previously unmet demand in these areas that attract large numbers of visitors every year.

Additional Helicopter Services and Vehicles in Rural Areas

Funding of \$3 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 for the provision of an additional emergency medical helicopter which will improve services to northern Victoria, particularly along the Hume Highway.

Emergency response times will be much improved, and place more of Victoria within reach of Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) capability. More patients will have timely access to Melbourne's acute medical and trauma facilities.

More cases that were previously handled by road ambulance vehicles will now access air transport.

Additional capital funding of \$2.9 million will also be provided to upgrade the rural ambulance fleet in 2000–2001 by replacing 17 ageing vehicles.

Upgraded Ambulance Crewing in Regional Centres

Additional funding of \$1.4 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 to increase the number of cases receiving care from two paramedics in regional centres. Additional paramedics are being recruited and trained to boost crewing levels in these centres, with full implementation in 2001–2002.

The Bright ambulance station will be upgraded to an all year round station with a career officer staffing, while detailed capital planning will commence for new ambulance stations to be established at Romsey and Surf Coast in 2001–2002.

24 Hour MICA in Regional Cities

In 2000–2001, funding of \$0.6 million will be provided to enable the establishment of 24 hour MICA units in Geelong, Morwell, Wangaratta, Shepparton, Mildura, Bendigo and Ballarat. These centres do not currently have sufficient MICA Paramedics to meet their needs.

Improving Ambulance Officer Skills

In 2000–2001, additional funding of \$0.15 million will be allocated to fund Advanced Life Support (ALS) programs that enhance ambulance officer skills in intubation, intravenous therapy and drug administration in rural communities. Areas which do not have ready access to the MICA level of care will benefit from ambulance officers' improved skills, resulting in lives saved and improved health outcomes for rural communities.

Emergency and Community Safety programs

Additional funds of \$0.85 million will be allocated to Rural Ambulance Victoria in 2000–2001 to fund emergency/urgent care services and community safety programs in rural and regional Victoria.

This initiative will enable Rural Ambulance Victoria to become more involved in community safety and preventative efforts, and to support Community Ambulance Officer Volunteers and Auxiliaries.

The quality and safety of rural ambulance services is also being targeted by this initiative, with improved occupational health and safety for patients and employees to meet regulatory standards and patient requirements.

Funding

A total of \$19.95 million additional recurrent funding has been provided for ambulance services in 2000–2001. This includes \$3.7 million to be provided in 2000–2001 to enable ambulance services to expand in line with underlying population growth and manage the increasing numbers of non-fee paying clients.



A New Approach to Drug and Alcohol Problems

Description

The drug problem is one of the most serious social problems confronting the community. The number of heroin related deaths in Victoria has risen dramatically in recent years, while at the same time, tobacco and alcohol are contributing to more deaths in the long-term. The drug problem is complex and requires a multi-faceted policy response.

In this Budget, the Government has provided funding for a comprehensive strategy to tackle the drugs crisis, which includes not only Human Services programs, but also Education and Justice portfolios. The strategy encompasses initiatives which aim to prevent drug abuse, save lives, help sufferers get their lives back on track and effectively police the drug trade.

The Drug Policy Expert Committee chaired by Dr Penington is providing advice to the Government on further initiatives to tackle the illicit drugs problem. The committee will report in two stages. The first stage which was presented in April focuses on the development of local drug strategies, particularly in areas of heavy street drug use and the trialing of injecting facilities in identified areas. A second report in relation to other initiatives is due at the end of the year.

Funding will also be provided in this budget to support growing demand for a range of existing drug services.

Funding

Total additional recurrent funding of \$17 million in 2000–2001 (\$10 million from the Community Support Fund) will be provided to support new initiatives, rising to \$20 million in 2000–2003. A further \$3 million in capital funding will be provided for the construction of a residential drug and alcohol treatment facility. Additional recurrent funding of \$1 million will also be provided in 2000–2001 to support growing demand for existing drug services.



Expansion of Disease Prevention Services

Description

Funds have been allocated in this budget to address the issue of increasing demand for disease prevention services such as immunisation and genetic screening. Funds will be directed towards improving the influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia immunisation coverage of older persons, as well as providing additional genetic screening and counselling contacts.

Genetic screening and immunisation services over time result in decreased mortality, morbidity and health expenditure from, pneumonia, influenza and certain forms of cancer.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$0.9 million will be provided to assist Disease Prevention Services meet growing demand in 2000–2001.



Expansion of School Nursing Program

Description

Young people face many health risks including drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco smoking, eating disorders, obesity, depression, suicide and injuries from risk taking behaviour. The Government has expanded the school nursing program from Primary to the early years of Secondary schools to focus on primary health care and early intervention in schools.

The secondary school nursing program will focus on prevention, support the community in addressing contemporary health and social issues facing young people and their families, and provide appropriate primary health care through professional clinical nursing, referral and support. Nurses will be placed in areas of greatest health need and socio-economic disadvantage and will focus on the junior secondary years.

Funding

\$4 million recurrent funding has been allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.



Improved Community Based Health Care

Description

Community health services help people develop and maintain safe, healthy lifestyles, through a range of health services which focus on early intervention and preventative approaches. Community health services are central to improving the health of the community and reducing the preventable use of hospital and medical services.

Significant new funding of \$10.3 million has been provided in 2000–2001 to enhance the current service system, including the expansion of information, counselling and assessment services in community health and women's health services. There will be an increased focus on health promotion activities and care in the community for people with chronic illnesses.

Staff development and training will also be enhanced and local Community Health Plans will be developed to ensure a more effective continuum of client care.

These new services will be supported by increased capital, in particular the Preston Integrated Care Centre and Sunbury Integrated Care Centre.

Funding

Recurrent funding of \$10.3 million will be provided in 2000–2001.

Growth funding of \$0.7 million will also be provided to expand Community Health Services in 2000–2001.



Mental Health Services

Expansion and Enhancement of Mental Health Services

Description

The Government has provided a significant new injection of funds in this Budget to improve and expand the range of mental health services available to Victorians.

The Budget will provide capacity to improve access to mental health services, and create a more inclusive health system.

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.

New initiatives to be funded include:

- improving early intervention services for adolescents and young people through the development of a mental health early intervention framework and the establishment of dedicated early intervention positions through the employment of 15 additional mental health workers;
- expansion of crisis prevention capacity in community health centres and community mental health services through the employment of an additional 21 mental health workers. This will improve the response to people suffering from mental illness prior to the onset of a crisis;
- development of additional clinical and Psychiatric Disability Support outreach services to improve the service response to people with chronic and complex mental health and drug and alcohol disorders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and
- training programs targeting community mental health staff so that a broader range of staff can respond to people prior to crisis or near crisis.

\$4.8M has also been allocated to meet the growing demand for mental health services due to population growth and increased awareness of mental illness.

National Centre of Excellence in Depression

The establishment of a National Centre of Excellence in Depression has been identified as a high priority by the Government. It is proposed that the Centre will be developed in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. Establishment of this Centre will increase the quality and effectiveness of treatment provided for people with depression and aims to reduce the prevalence and impact of depression through community education, training and development and research. Both the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have indicated their strong commitment to the project and are currently working together to develop the proposal and agree on the joint funding arrangements for the establishment and operation of the Centre.

Funding

\$5 million additional recurrent funding will be committed in 2000–2001 to fund new initiatives. In addition, \$4.8 million recurrent funding will be provided in 2000–01 to enable the mental health system to keep up with growth in underlying demand.

Joint Commonwealth/State funding arrangements for the Centre of Excellence in Depression are currently being negotiated.



Dental Health Services

Improved and Expanded Dental Health Services

Description

The Government has provided new funds to improve access to dental care for all eligible Victorians. Additional funding will be provided to extend services, cut the cost of dentures for pensioners and extend the school dental services to all low income young people in Years 9–10.

Addressing Waiting Lists in Public Dental Health Services

Additional funding of \$1.5 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to allow more disadvantaged Victorians to receive dental services, and make a start on reducing the waiting time for treatment and to address the growth in demand. This funding, when combined with demand growth funding, will enable an additional 8,250 people to be treated.

Many concession card holders require emergency treatment while on the waiting list, adding to their pain and suffering as well as increasing the total cost of their treatment.

Access will be increased through the expansion of services in community dental clinics, and through private dentists. People living in rural areas in particular will benefit from the Victorian General Dental Scheme, where eligible people receive care from private dentists in areas where there are no public clinics or where public clinics are at full capacity.

Cutting the Cost of Full Dentures for Concession Card Holders

Funding of \$1 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to reduce the cost of acrylic dentures provided through community dental clinics and the Dental Hospital to pensioners and health card holders

This funding will provide 12,500 eligible individuals with full or partial dentures at a maximum fee of \$100, compared with the previous fee of \$180.

This will make dentures more affordable for disadvantaged people, and reduce the negative impact on nutrition and self-esteem and other complications which might arise from not receiving dentures at an appropriate time.

Extension of Free School Dental Services to Low Income Students in Years 9 to 11

Additional funding of \$2.8 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to improve the oral health of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who may be unable to afford appropriate dental care. School dental services have previously only been offered to students up to year 8. The initiative will provide free dental care for eligible young people in years 9–11 through Community Dental Clinics.

The additional funds will mean that young people will receive priority treatment without a waiting period. This treatment will be focused on prevention, ensuring that these young people reach adulthood with good oral health, and with the knowledge to maintain it. Their improved self esteem and appearance will also increase their chances of gaining employment.

From 2001–2002, Year 12 students from low-income backgrounds will also benefit from this initiative.

Funding

\$6.3 million of additional recurrent funding (including \$1 million for demand growth) will be provided in 2000–2001 for new dental health initiatives. The Government recognises that dental health for disadvantaged people is a major area of unmet need and this Budget takes action to redress this.



New Capital Works 2000–2001

Acute Health

Royal Women's Hospital Redevelopment

A further \$37 million is allocated towards the major redevelopment of the Royal Women's Hospital. This will provide for the redevelopment of the Emergency, Operating and Day Procedures Unit, Birthing Suites and Complex Care and Neonatal Intensive Care Units. Creation of a common imaging area will enable the consolidation of the currently fragmented imaging services to a single location and a number of day services will be co-located into a new Integrated Care Centre.

Frankston Hospital Expansion

\$12 million of funding for expansion of the Frankston Hospital will provide a new 60 bed general adult ward (including 11 Coronary Care beds). A 16 bed Observation Ward will also be established in the Emergency Department.

Sunshine Hospital Development

\$8 million is allocated in this budget to complete the Acute Services development at the hospital including the fit out of medical and surgical wards (60 beds), construction of 2 operating theatres and completion of the imaging department. Completion of the Sunshine Hospital Redevelopment will enable a full range of acute services to be delivered to the local community and improve geographical access to acute health services to the outer western metropolitan areas.

Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre Redevelopment

The Government is 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 redevelopment project will address all hospital and support facilities including operating theatres, emergency, intensive care and wards, and the redevelopment of mental health facilities. Associated research and training facilities will also be redeveloped. It is also intended to co-locate the Mercy Women's Hospital which provides specialist obstetric and gynaecology inpatient facilities. A review of options for the redevelopment is currently being considered by Government and a decision on the proposal including funding is expected shortly.

Neonatal Facilities

This new funding addresses the capital component of a major commitment to improve maternity and neonatal care services in Victoria. The capital funding will total \$2 million and provide for the expansion and upgrading of nurseries at 5 metropolitan, and 1 country site. These sites are The Angliss, Dandenong Hospital, Monash Medical Centre, Ballarat Base Hospital, Werribee Mercy Hospital and Sunshine Hospital. Expenditure of \$0.2 million is expected in 2000–01.

Hospital Equipment Upgrades

Additional funding of \$20 million is allocated in this budget to purchase new and replacement items of major medical and other hospital equipment for public hospitals and reference laboratory equipment across the State in 2000–2001.

Hospital Infection Control Program

\$3 million has been provided in 2000–2001 for a grants scheme that will allocate funds to metropolitan, provincial and rural public hospitals for the purchase of medical and other equipment to ensure compliance with key Australian Standards and Infection Control Guidelines.

Rural Health

Kyneton – New Hospital

\$11 million is provided for the construction of a new facility on a “greenfield” site incorporating 32 acute bed and 20 aged care bed facilities together with provision of new accommodation for the range of allied health and other services. The new hospital will co-locate services, expand access to services and provide a significantly higher standard of facilities.

Colac Hospital Redevelopment

\$13 million is provided in this budget for a major redevelopment of Colac Hospital. The redevelopment will provide for new labour delivery suites, theatres, accident and emergency services and wards. It will also include residential aged community nursing home, dental, allied health, primary health facilities and relocation of the ambulance station.

Ballarat Health Service Redevelopment

Total funding of \$6 million is provided to complete the third and final stage of redevelopment of the Ballarat Base Hospital. This funding will provide for redevelopment of Emergency and Imaging facilities, Intensive Care, Day Surgery, Outpatients, Allied Health and Ancillary Services.

Swan Hill District Hospital

An additional \$1 million is provided for the Swan Hill District Hospital for engineering, external works and infrastructure to consolidate the acute hospital and aged care services.

Radiotherapy SMU trial

New radiotherapy facilities are to be established at Bendigo and Ballarat Base Hospitals and Latrobe Regional Hospital. A budget allocation of \$10 million has been provided to enable a radiotherapy facility, including Linac equipment, to be built at Bendigo Base Hospital. This new radiotherapy treatment service will provide the north western Victorian community with significantly improved access to radiotherapy services and reduce the number of people who have to travel to Melbourne for treatment. Planning is currently underway for the establishment of similar facilities at Ballarat Base and Latrobe Hospitals.

Ambulance Services

Rural Ambulance Service Equipment

A total of \$4.4 million will be provided to Rural Ambulance Victoria for an accelerated replacement program to upgrade an aging vehicle fleet, including \$2.9 million in 2000–01.

Metro Ambulance Service Equipment

A total of \$2.3 million will be provided in 2000–01 for the establishment of new ambulance stations and the purchase of new emergency vehicles to enable the Metropolitan Ambulance Service to finalise the expansion of services under the Emergency Operations Plan .

Community Health

Community Health Centres

A total of \$15.5 million will be provided over the next three years (including \$6.5 million in 2000–2001) for works at five Community Health Centres.

A total of \$5 million will be provided over two years for the development of an Integrated Care Centre at Preston. The Centre will provide a mix of medical, acute, sub-acute and primary health services to the Darebin community. Preston Integrated Care Centre is in the service planning phase, and early indications are that the service will include specialist outpatient clinics such as renal dialysis, cardiac, shared care and aged care clinics, rehabilitation facilities, allied health services, adult day care programs, counselling and dental services.

A total of \$7.5 million is provided over two years for the development of an Integrated Care facility at Sunbury to accommodate existing community health programs such as counselling, allied health, nursing, paediatric unit, audiology and dental services. A disability service will be co-located and it is anticipated that the private sector will operate a medical service and pharmacy from the facility.

Funding will be provided to enable the re-location of dental health services from the Sunshine Hospital to ISIS Primary Care at Brimbank to provide for a consolidated service and improved integration and access to other existing non-acute health services.

Funding will also be provided for fit out of space at the former Essendon Hospital to enable delivery of allied public health services within the redevelopment planned by the new owner.

Funding is also allocated for remodelling and extension of the Daylesford Community Health Care facility.

Public Health

Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment facilities

A total of \$3 million will be provided for the construction of a 30 bed residential drug and alcohol treatment facility for youth residential rehabilitation . This facility will provide an essential service element needed to enable continuity of care for young people in drug treatment.

Fire Safety -

Fire Risk Management Strategy

A further \$20 million for fire risk management in the 2000–2001 Budget will continue the ongoing strategy to improve fire safety in existing Departmental, Statutory Authority and some Non-Government buildings where residential services are provided for patients and clients. The Strategy includes development of guidelines and accountability structures, audits and upgrades of existing facilities, and implementation of practices to ensure continued operational readiness in facilities.



Strategies to Improve Health and Wellbeing in Rural and Regional Communities

Description

Victorians living in rural and metropolitan areas alike will benefit from the general enhancement and expansion of health, community and housing services provided for in this Budget. However, in addition to these services, extra funding has been provided for special services to meet the needs of rural and regional communities. This is in recognition of the fact that rural and regional people experience a higher death rate and in general their health status is lower than that of their metropolitan counterparts.

Transport Services for the Elderly

Funding of \$0.22 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to expand community transport services in rural and regional Victoria, to enhance the quality of life of older Victorians in rural areas.

This funding will facilitate the employment of regional coordinators to arrange volunteer transport for elderly people in rural and regional areas to access health care facilities for routine checks and for treatment. It will also enable the purchase of vehicles where this is required.

Priority will be given to those areas most in need.

Women's Health Program

\$0.22 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to enhance the provision of health services to women living in rural and remote Victoria. This initiative will allow for the development of common adaptable support materials for women's health promotion efforts and grants to local programs involving community groups.

The program will include targeted health promotion programs tailored to address rural women, and consider the specific needs of health services aimed at rural women.

Men's Health Program

\$0.22 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 for men's health programs in rural and regional Victoria. The program will allow the development of common adaptable support materials for men's health promotion programs and support local groups.

Men's access and use of health services will be addressed by this initiative.

Health Screening and Promotion

\$0.44 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to improve the health status of rural and regional Victorians by enhancing health screening and promotion activities in areas of high need. Funds will be allocated to existing services to implement plans, especially at the regional level. The women's health, men's health and screening and promotion initiatives will be implemented in a co-ordinated process.

Health concerns such as chronic disease prevention will be targeted in accordance with local priorities.

Rural Health Workforce Initiative

\$0.75 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 for programs to improve recruitment and retention of rural GPs and nurses. Additional funding will be provided to the Rural Medical Family Network and the Continuing Medical Education Program. Additional new programs will also be considered in collaboration with each of the rural health professionals and rural and regional communities.

Bush Nursing Hospitals

\$0.5 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to provide additional support to Bush Nursing Hospitals to assist them to maintain current service levels and quality.

This initiative will support Bush Nursing Hospitals to maintain a wide range of services to local communities, including 24-hour urgent care services and primary care services.

Bush Nursing Hospitals in greatest need will receive priority funding following consultation and service and business planning with local communities.

Support for Rural Hospitals

\$2.55 million to support rural hospitals will be allocated in 2000–2001 to provide funding to support rural hospitals and communities. The aim is to improve the sustainability, quality and development of rural hospitals.

Funding will be used to provide quality enhancement activities including staff training and development, information technology and communications infrastructure and training, and training and support for hospital boards of management.

Existing programs will be enhanced using the funding, and new programs commenced where appropriate and in consultation with rural communities.

Rural Youth Suicide

Additional funding of \$0.25 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to address youth suicide in country areas through the development and implementation of local suicide prevention plans.

Consultation with rural communities will be essential to the development of a co-ordinated response to the issue of rural youth suicide. The development of local plans by involving the whole community will ensure that suicide prevention action and programs are relevant and feasible. Cooperation with existing rural mental health programs and youth programs will also be undertaken.

Rural Ambulance: Emergency and Community Safety*

Additional funds of \$0.85 million will be allocated to Rural Ambulance Victoria in 2000–2001 to support a range of emergency/urgent care services and community safety programs in rural and regional Victoria.

This initiative will enable Rural Ambulance Victoria to become more involved in community safety and preventative efforts, and to support Community Ambulance Officer Volunteers and Auxiliaries.

The quality and safety of rural ambulance services is also being targeted by this initiative, with improved occupational health and safety for patients and employees to meet regulatory standards and patient requirements.

Black Spot Areas*

Funding of \$1.0 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 to provide additional ambulance services in black spot areas such as Phillip Island and along the Great Ocean Road.

These services will reduce response times and meet previously unmet demand in these areas that attract large numbers of visitors every year.

Additional Helicopter Services*

Funding of \$3 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 for the provision of an additional emergency medical helicopter which will improve services to northern Victoria, particularly along the Hume Highway.

Emergency response times will be much improved, and place more of Victoria within reach of Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) capability. More patients will have timely access to Melbourne's acute medical and trauma facilities.

More cases that were previously handled by road ambulance vehicles will now access air transport.

Upgraded Ambulance Crewing in Regional Centres*

Additional funding of \$1.4 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 to increase the number of cases receiving care from two paramedics in regional centres. Additional paramedics are being recruited and trained to boost crewing levels in these centres, with full implementation in 2001–2002. The Bright Ambulance Station will be upgraded to an all year round station with career officer staffing, while detailed capital planning will commence for new ambulance stations to be established at Romsey and Surf Coast in 2001–2002.

24 Hour MICA in Regional Cities*

In 2000–2001, funding of \$0.6 million will be provided to enable the establishment of 24 hour MICA units in Geelong, Morwell, Wangaratta, Shepparton, Mildura, Bendigo and Ballarat. These centres do not currently have sufficient MICA Paramedics to meet their needs.

**These initiatives are also outlined in the Ambulance Services information sheet.*

Rural Health additional capital funding

Kyneton – New Hospital *

\$11 million will be provided for the construction of a new facility on a “greenfield” site incorporating 32 acute bed and 20 aged care bed facilities together with provision of new accommodation for the range of allied health and other services. Expenditure of \$1.2 million is expected in 2000–01. The new hospital will co-locate services, expand access to services and provide a significantly higher standard of facilities.

Colac Hospital Redevelopment*

\$13 million is provided in this budget for a major redevelopment of Colac Hospital. The redevelopment will provide for new labour delivery suites, theatres, accident and emergency services and wards. It will also include residential aged community nursing home, dental, allied health, primary health facilities and relocation of the ambulance station.

Ballarat Health Service Redevelopment *

Total funding of \$6 million is provided to complete the third and final stage of redevelopment of the Ballarat Base Hospital. This funding will provide for redevelopment of Emergency and Imaging facilities, Intensive Care, Day Surgery, Outpatients, Allied Health and Ancillary Services.

Swan Hill District Hospital *

An additional \$1 million is provided for the Swan Hill District Hospital for engineering, external works and infrastructure to consolidate the acute hospital and aged care services.

Radiotherapy SMU trial *

New radiotherapy facilities are to be established at Bendigo and Ballarat base hospitals and Latrobe Regional Hospital. A budget allocation of \$10 million has been provided to enable a radiotherapy facility, including Linac equipment, to be built at Bendigo Base Hospital. This new radiotherapy treatment service will provide the north western Victorian community with significantly improved access to radiotherapy services and reduce the number of people who have to travel to Melbourne for treatment. Planning is currently underway for the establishment of similar facilities at Ballarat Base Hospital and Latrobe.

Rural Ambulance Service Equipment*

A total of \$4.4 million will be provided to Rural Ambulance Victoria for an accelerated replacement program to upgrade an aging fleet, including \$2.9 million in 2000–01.

Nursing home upgrades*

A total of \$47.5 million is committed in this budget, including expenditure of \$8 million in 2000–2001, for the redevelopment of nursing homes to comply with Commonwealth Aged Care standards.

Rural communities will also be major beneficiaries from this additional \$47.5 million to be spent on nursing homes.

** These initiatives are also outlined in the Health Capital Works and Aged Care Capital Works information sheets.*

Housing Initiatives in Rural and Regional Victoria *

An acquisition budget of \$165 million will be available to buy or build some 1,380 public and community housing properties during 2000/01. Approximately 20% of acquisitions are planned to be in rural Victoria, with an emphasis on key regional centres.

Approximately 32% of social housing stock is located in DHS rural regions. The \$165 million budget for upgrade of social housing stock during 2000/01 will follow a pattern of expenditure which reflects the sizeable proportion of social housing in rural Victoria.

The \$15 million budget for Crisis Supported and Transitional housing in 2000/01 will focus on increasing crisis assistance places in outer metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria, to address a recognised gap in the crisis system. Single adults, homeless families and children needing crisis accommodation, particularly from outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, will benefit from additional funding of \$1.6 million in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) in 2000/01. This additional SAAP funding will support the additional places funded under the Housing capital program.

**These initiatives are also outlined in the Housing Services information sheets.*



Hospital to Home Program

Description

In the past under casemix funding, too many patients have been discharged from hospital without adequate community backup or support, increasing the risk of readmission. The Hospital to Home Program will be established to ensure appropriate community supports are in place when patients are discharged from hospital. Significant new funds have been provided in this Budget to expand and enhance existing post-acute care, district nursing and home care services, including:

- additional funding for discharge planning, district nursing and home-based care services to ensure people are properly cared for after hospital discharge and are able to stay out of hospital;
- establishment of new processes and responsibilities for hospitals in ensuring continuous care post-discharge, with extra funding for hospitals to remain in contact with clients for post-discharge care; and
- increased funding for allied health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, speech therapy, day programs and home nursing services. Funds will also enable after hours services to be increased.

Funding

Additional recurrent funding of \$9.5 million in 2000–2001 has been allocated to this initiative.



Aged Care and Community Health Services

Older Victorians – Enhanced and Expanded Services

Description

The Government is committed to improving services for older Victorians. Significant new funding has been provided in the Budget to strengthen services that support the health and wellbeing of frail elderly people. Older Victorians, and their families and carers, will benefit from increased funding to expand and enhance services.

Adult Day Care Centres

Additional funding of \$3.12 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to Adult Day Care Centres so they can expand their services which support frail older people and provide respite to carers. The range of programs offered will also take into account the needs of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Home and Community Care

The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) assists frail older people and people with disabilities to continue living in their own homes and participate in community life. Additional State funds of \$8.75 million (including \$1.6 million from reallocation of existing resources) will be used to expand the program so that these vulnerable older people have improved access to home and community care services. These funds meet the Government's commitment to match Commonwealth growth funding and provide an additional \$14 million over 4 years, of which \$3.75 million is allocated for 2000–2001.

Community Rehabilitation Centres

Community Rehabilitation Centres provide a range of rehabilitation services to older people.

Additional funding of \$1.2 million in 2000–2001 will expand the range of services offered by Centres, and will also enable some Centres to increase their days of operation. An extra 4,000 occasions of service will be provided across Victoria.

Rehabilitation and Geriatric Assessment Beds

Additional rehabilitation and geriatric assessment beds will be funded to increase the capacity of hospitals to treat older patients. Funds of \$5.5 million have been allocated in 2000–2001 for this initiative, which will be managed within the Integrated Elective and Emergency Services Strategy to ensure improved sub-acute care for elderly patients.

Older Persons Health Promotion Programs

In 2000–2001 additional funds totalling \$0.5 million will be allocated to health promotion initiatives assisting older Victorians to lead healthy and independent lives. These initiatives will support local communities in developing innovative approaches to improving physical and mental health in old age, as well as implementing statewide strategies targeting major risk factors for chronic conditions.

Funding

Recurrent funding of \$10.32 million will be provided in 2000–2001. State funding of \$8.75 million, including \$1.6 million from reallocation of existing resources, will also be provided for service enhancements and growth under the HACC program in 2000–2001, with additional funding for growth to be provided by the Commonwealth under matching arrangements.

State Government Budget 2000–2001

Aged Care Capital Works



New Capital Works 2000–2001

Nursing Home Upgrades

The Government is committed to ensuring that all residential aged care facilities meet certification and accreditation standards which have been established by the Commonwealth Government.

A total of \$47.5 million has been committed in this budget, including expenditure of \$8 million in 2000–2001, for the redevelopment of nursing homes to comply with Commonwealth Aged Care Building Certification standards.

The majority of redevelopments are expected to occur in rural and regional Victoria. A number of Nursing Homes which had previously been earmarked for privatisation are also expected to benefit from this initiative.



Improved Child Protection and Care Services

Description

The Government will provide significant additional funding in this budget to improve the quality of 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, substantiations of abuse or neglect, and new protection orders made by the Victorian Children's Court.

Of particular significance has been the increase in the complexity and severity of adolescent client behaviours linked particularly to increased substance abuse which 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.

At the same time, continued emphasis has been placed on kinship care and permanent care services for children unable to remain in the care of their parents. The growth in these services requires additional funding and increased support for caregivers to improve service quality.

Funding

Additional funds of \$7.8 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to cater for the additional service demands, improve the quality of residential care services, address specific needs of adolescents at risk, and provide increased funding and support for the growing emphasis on kinship and permanent care services.



Professional Development of Child Protection Workers

Description

Additional funds will be provided in this budget to enable child protection workers to access better professional development opportunities.

Child protection workers provide a vital and difficult service for children and families at risk. Stressful working conditions mean that turnover is often high. Additional funds will be provided to develop an improved protective worker orientation program for newly recruited workers and a leadership development program for child protection team leaders. This will help to develop, lead and retain good staff, which in turn will provide a better outcome for clients.

Funding

\$0.3 million has been allocated for this initiative in 2000–2001.



Supporting Vulnerable Families

Description

Additional funds will be provided to expand services for vulnerable families to enhance family functioning and emotional well-being. These services build on services available to all Victorian families, such as pre-school 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.

The services provided to vulnerable families, including families notified to child protection services, cover outreach, case management and in-home support. Additional funds will enable more vulnerable families to be assisted.

Funding

\$1.7 million allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.



Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services

Description

Maternal and Child Health Services are universal services providing centre-based health surveillance to mothers and children at key ages and stages, some home visiting to individual mothers and support groups for first time mothers.

Additional funds will be provided to expand the service to new mothers, vulnerable women and families with young children with particular needs. In particular, new mothers (including teenage mothers) with early parenting difficulties, including post-natal depression, breastfeeding and bonding/attachment, will be the focus of an enhanced home visiting service.

The linkage between Maternal and Child Health Services and other support services such as family support, parenting and early intervention services will also be emphasised.

These enhanced services will help improve the health and well being of children and improve the skills and confidence of parents.

Funding

\$3 million has been allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.



Community Care Services

Equipment Grants to Community-Based Child Care Services

Description

Community-based child care services assist families in their child-rearing responsibilities, regardless of whether parents are in the paid or unpaid workforce. These services assist parents to undertake work-related activities and foster all aspects of a child's development. The Government is committed to community-based child care services that provide stimulating environments, positive experiences and interactions.

Grants of \$3000 will be provided to each community owned, not for profit child care centre and \$1500 to each community-based Out of School Hours Program for the purchase of maintenance and equipment. Children and families who use community-based child care services will benefit from improved service quality through better equipment.

Funding

\$2 million has been allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.

Capital Grants to Community-Based Child Care Services

Description

Additional funding will be provided to community-based child care services, such as out-of-school hours services, long day care centres and occasional care services, to upgrade their premises so that they meet statutory requirements and continue to provide a range of flexible, accessible, affordable and high-quality child care. Children and families who use community-based child care services will benefit from improved service quality through better equipment.

Funding

\$1.25 million will be provided in 2000–2001 for this initiative



Juvenile Justice Diversionary Strategy

Description

The Government's overall policy framework for Victoria's juvenile justice system emphasises diversion of offenders from unwarranted incarceration in the juvenile justice system, rehabilitation of more serious offenders and a reduction in the custodial capacity requirement.

Towards this end, significant new resources will be allocated 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. Particular emphasis will be given to programs for young women, young Indo-Chinese and young Aboriginals.

The three pronged strategy will involve

- A strong co-ordinated range of options including housing, drug treatment, support and vocational training to divert lower level offenders from custody and from later escalation to more serious offences.
- Intensive approaches with those in custody targeting problem areas such as drugs, offending behaviour, education and vocational training and supporting links with community and family.
- Strongly supporting temporary leave, parole and pre and post release programs to ensure young people are not unnecessarily detained in custody and actively supported through transition from custody.

Initiatives will be implemented progressively over a two year timeframe commencing July 2000.

Funding

An additional \$34.2 million recurrent funding will be allocated for these initiatives over 4 years, including \$4.8 million in 2000–2001.



Pre-school Fee Subsidies

Description

Funding will be provided in 2000–2001 for an additional pre-school fee subsidy of \$150 for 4 year olds from low income families who are recipients of Commonwealth Health Care Cards. This will bring the total annual subsidy up to \$250 per eligible child.

This significant increase in the subsidy will support low income families to enrol their children in pre-schools.

Funding

\$4 million will be allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.



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 health services are vital for assisting families provide the best start in life for children with special needs.

Additional funds will be provided to enable waiting times for these vital services to be reduced, and improved services provided.

Funding

\$1.8 million will be allocated to this initiative in 2000–2001.

Strengthening Parent Support

Description

Additional funding will be provided to the Strengthening Parent Support program to enhance the mutual supports available to families of children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Funds will be used to employ additional Regional Parent Support workers to assist families in establishing formal and informal support groups and provide professional development and training.

The initiative will enhance families' access to services and build on the capacity of local communities to respond to the needs of eligible families.

Funding

\$0.25 million will be allocated in 2000–2001



Additional Co-ordination Funds for Neighbourhood Houses

Description

Additional funding has been provided to Neighbourhood Houses for co-ordination of services to local communities. Neighbourhood Houses perform a valuable role within communities in addressing issues of social isolation and marginalisation by providing a range of services in a friendly, supportive setting.

Funds will be distributed to assist Neighbourhood Houses that currently do not receive any funding for co-ordination and to increase the co-ordination funding to neighbourhood houses that currently receive limited co-ordination funding.

Funding

\$1.75 million will be provided in 2000–2001.



Expanded Sexual Assault Services

Description

Sexual assault services are provided by the Centres Against Sexual Assault linked to hospitals and community agencies in metropolitan and rural areas. Services provided by these agencies include 24 hour crisis care and specialist counselling. The Government is committed to ensuring 24 hour face-to-face crisis support, advocacy and accommodation is provided to all women and men who need these services.

Waiting times for these important specialist counselling services have significantly increased.

The additional funds will enhance the timeliness of crisis care and counselling services to ensure that the immediate and longer term needs of victims and survivors are met.

Funding

\$0.5 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to help victims and survivors of sexual assault and help address the unacceptable waiting times that currently exist for these services.

State Government Budget 2000–2001

Community Care Services Capital Works

Human
Services



Peoplefirst

New Capital Works 2000–2001

Placement and Support Capital Project

\$5 million has been allocated for high priority projects to improve placement and support residential facilities. This initiative will provide for upgrading of existing facilities and purchase of new facilities for accommodation and support of children and adolescents at risk of abuse or neglect.

Juvenile Justice

\$2.2 million has been allocated for the purchase and refurbishment of community housing for people in the juvenile justice system. This housing will be used to support young offenders preparing for their release from custody. Young people will be provided with intensive supervision and support to assist their transition back into the community.



Helping People with Disabilities

Description

Significant new funding has been allocated in 2000–2001 to services for people with disabilities to provide a better lifestyle choice for disabled people and their families, and increase the number of people with disabilities who will be able to access appropriate community-based services. A large number of services will be expanded, in addition to funding provided for ongoing growth in demand. The Government is also reserving a minimum of 5% of the total public housing stock for people with disabilities, and providing funds for appropriately modifying that stock.

Demand Growth

The Victorian Government will provide additional funds of \$6.2 million in 2000–2001 which will be distributed across a range of community based services to meet the increased demand for disability services associated with population growth and ageing. The number of people with disabilities is now estimated to be increasing by 4% per year.

Community-Based Accommodation and Support Services

Additional funds of \$2.5 million in 2000–2001 will provide people with disabilities with more high quality supported accommodation options. Community based accommodation and support services encourage developmental opportunities and client choice, enabling maximum integration with the wider community and a lifestyle which emulates that of other community members.

An extra 50 clients and their families will benefit from these services. The additional funding will allow a reduction in the number of eligible clients awaiting services.

Services will be provided to those clients currently assessed by the Department of Human Services as being in greatest need of services.

Additional capital investment in housing options to support these initiatives has also been provided in this budget.

Redevelop Kew Residential Services

This initiative will redevelop accommodation services for 50 Kew residents and increase the quality and safety of services for all Kew Residential Services (KRS) clients. Additional funding of \$2.9 million has been allocated in 2000–2001.

A master plan for the Kew site will be developed after an assessment of clients needs and preferences.

Additional services will ensure KRS clients receive care which meets key quality standards. Funding under this initiative will enable an increase in behavioural management services, specialist therapeutic services, and recreation activities so that a minimum of 15 hours of day programs per week is provided to all KRS clients.

Assisting Parents of Children with Disabilities

Additional funding of \$1 million will be provided in 2000–2001 for the *Early Choices* and *Making a Difference* programs to better assist families and unpaid carers caring for children and teenagers with a disability and high support needs. These programs provide a flexible range of services that meet these families' additional support needs.

An additional 50 flexible care packages will be made available to children exiting the *Early Choices* program and transferring to the *Making a Difference* program upon turning 6 years of age.

A further 162 flexible funding packages under the *Making a Difference* program will be provided to parents caring for children and adolescents with challenging behaviours.

Home Care Program

Additional funds of \$5 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to enable people with disabilities to remain living in their home and community.

Funding for this initiative will permit the development of early intervention services in community settings and will facilitate access to practical supports to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

Services will assist clients to be maintained in their home environment and also provide case-co-ordination and individual service packages.

Respite Care

Additional support will be provided to carers through increased funding for respite care of \$1 million in 2000–2001. This initiative will provide additional short-term and time-limited breaks for families and other voluntary care givers of people with disabilities on a planned or emergency basis.

Aids and Equipment

Additional funding of \$1 million has been allocated in 2000–2001 to expand the provision of aids and equipment to people with disabilities.

The aim is to enhance the safety and independence of people with disabilities, to reduce their reliance on carers and prevent premature admission to residential care, and reduce the cost burden on families and reduce waiting time for clients needing aids and equipment.

Assistance will be provided to 60 families with young children to purchase electronic communication devices by way of a \$3,000 contribution to the cost.

Some low-cost aids and equipment previously not funded will become available under the Program of Aids for Disabled People.

Support for Carers

Increased funding of \$1 million will be provided in 2000–2001 for in-home support programs for people with disabilities. These programs aim to support individuals with a disability to remain in their homes and ensure carers receive appropriate support.

A full range of programs which provide different services will be expanded to ensure continuity in care provided to clients and their carers, including emergency hours, assessments, home modification and equipment.

Clients and carers in most urgent need of support will be given priority.

Increase Funding for Speech Therapy

Additional funds of \$1 million will be provided in 2000–2001 to improve access to speech therapy services for a range of clients with a severe communication impairment.

Clients with physical and sensory disabilities and children 0–6 years old with delayed development requiring speech therapy will become eligible for assistance. Speech therapy assists people with speech impairments to maintain skills and functional independence.

Assistance will also be targeted at rural clients who currently experience significant costs accessing Melbourne-based services.

Adult Training Support Services

Funding of \$1 million will be allocated in 2000–2001 to provide additional adult training support services.

Additional funding will support expansion of life and social skills training, occupational therapy, recreation programs and supported employment for people with disabilities. The aim of these services is to enhance independence, skills, community participation and quality of life of these clients.

An additional 81 clients will receive services as a result of increased funding for this program.

Funding

\$16.4 million additional recurrent funding will be provided in 2000–2001 to enhance and expand services. In addition, \$22 million has been provided to enable disability services to expand in line with underlying growth in the disabled population and to address areas of unmet need. This includes an increase for Futures for Young Adults of \$6.9 million, \$8.9 million to address urgent waiting list pressures and \$6.2 million to meet increasing demand associated with population increases. In total, an additional \$38.4 million will be made available in 2000–2001 for people with disabilities.

New funds will permit the State to match the Commonwealth Government's offer of \$12.3 million new funding in 2000–01 under the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement to meet urgent unmet client needs.

State Government Budget 2000–2001

DisAbility Services Capital Works

Human
Services



Peoplefirst

New Capital Works 2000–2001

Community Residential Units

Commencing with \$5 million in 2000–2001, \$15 million has been allocated to the construction and purchase of additional Community Residential Units for people with a disability who are urgently in need of purpose-designed accommodation for a safe and secure environment. Over the next three years, this housing program will provide 150 accommodation places.

Priority Housing for People with a Disability

A total of \$7 million will be provided to meet the priority housing needs of people with a disability who have already been allocated recurrent support funding but are in inappropriate or transitional housing. This project will include purchasing sites, and establishing new houses to meet the regional demand. In total, 70 extra accommodation places will be provided.



Expanding SAAP Services for Homeless People

Description

Recognising that homeless people and those at risk of homelessness are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the community, additional funding will be provided in this budget for Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services, to provide support for new crisis centres and expand services for vulnerable groups.

Enhanced funding will provide:

- Additional support services for new crisis accommodation funded under the Housing Capital Program.
- Improved assistance for, in particular, homeless children and homeless single adults, whose needs have not been appropriately addressed in the current service system.
and
- Additional telephone interpreter services for SAAP agencies.

Additional crisis accommodation placements will be funded in outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Victoria aims to increase placements by 180 subject to the successful outcome of negotiations with the Commonwealth.

Funding

An additional \$11.2 million will be provided over 4 years to complement Commonwealth growth funding for SAAP services, including \$1.6 million to be allocated in 2000–2001, rising to \$3.2 million per annum in 2001/02 and the following 3 years.

This is the first time in six years that SAAP funding has been increased to help address the high need for homelessness assistance.

People to Benefit

Single adults, homeless families and children needing crisis accommodation, particularly from outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, will benefit from additional funding of SAAP.



Expanding Accommodation for Homeless People

Description

Crisis Supported and Transitional Housing provides for emergency and medium term accommodation, linked to support services, to enable people to access appropriate long term housing. In line with the Government commitment *Responding to Homelessness*, crisis accommodation will be expanded, based on an assessment of unmet demand in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

\$15 Million for Expansion of Crisis and Transitional Housing

In 2000/01 an allocation of \$15 million will further expand Crisis and Transitional Housing accommodation.

Some 140 properties are planned to be acquired in 2000/01. This will enable growth of some 11% since June 1999 in stock specifically for assistance to people who are amongst the most marginalised in the community.

Additional Crisis Facilities and Linkages

Short term crisis accommodation will be expanded with the more crisis accommodation in areas of highest need such as outer Melbourne and regional Victoria. Additional Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) funding will enable these crisis places to be supported and also provide additional assistance for children, single adults and people needing interpreting services.

Management of the SAAP program has recently been transferred to the Office of Housing to improve links between accommodation and support services. The aim is to strengthen the pathways that lead from crisis centres to transitional housing and longer term accommodation and to improve outcomes for homeless people.

A Homelessness Strategy will be developed with a focus on bringing together the ideas and expertise of both the community and government, to provide a better coordinated and improved response to homelessness. The establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee in conjunction with an Interdepartmental Committee, will play an important role in the development of prevention and early intervention strategies, as well as strengthening the quality of responses. The Strategy will guide expenditure over the longer term to address gaps in service provision in outer Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Additional \$94.5 Million to Expand Social Housing

Description

Housing assistance is governed by the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), under which the Commonwealth and State provide funds for the management of the social housing asset base. CSHA funding has declined by about half in real terms since its peak in the mid 1980's.

For the first time since the late 1980's/ early 1990s, the State Government is providing significant capital funds over and above the CSHA, to honour election commitments to provide over three years:

- An additional \$90 million to expand the supply of social housing,
and
- \$4.5 million for specialised ethno-specific housing for independent living for older citizens.

These funds will be used to provide diverse and innovative housing solutions. A project officer will be appointed to advise on ways to maximise the impact of the additional funding for the expansion of social housing, by exploring innovative models in partnership with local government, community groups, churches and the private sector, so that the growth in public and community housing can be maximised.

\$11.5 Million for Acquisitions and Joint Ventures in 2000–01

Of the \$94.5 million, \$11.5 million will be available in 2000–01 the first year of the commitment, to increase the social housing stock. The remaining \$83 million will be available over the following two years, to provide a total of around 800 additional units, including joint venture units.

Low income and disadvantaged Victorians, including homeless people, low income families, couples and single women and men, older ethnic citizens and people with disabilities or complex needs will benefit from the application of these additional funds.



Social Housing Capital Program

Description

The major financial tables in the State Budget papers include \$349 million State and Commonwealth funds provided to Housing and exclude \$414 million of funds generated from tenants' rents, home loan repayments, asset sales and other internal sources.

The Office of Housing ***total capital budget of \$388 million in 2000/01*** will enable growth in the size of the social housing stock. The capital budget also funds physical improvements and redevelopment of existing stock.

\$165 Million for Acquisitions

An acquisition budget of \$165 million will be available to buy or build approximately 1,380 public and community housing properties during 2000/01. These acquisitions will add housing stock to assist low income Victorians and also marginalised people in the community. Stock additions will be on the basis of meeting needs, and will emphasise stock which is well located close to transport, employment opportunities and services. Approximately 20% of acquisitions are planned to be in rural Victoria, with an emphasis on key regional centres.

More Housing for Low Income Victorians

Of the \$165 million, close to \$100 million will be available for land and property acquisitions for more than 1,000 public rental stock.

A further \$20 million will be available to buy or build approximately 110 long term community managed housing properties enabling a growth of 9% since June 1999. In addition, an allocation of \$15 million will further expand the Crisis and Transitional Housing program, increasing stock numbers by 11% over the two years to June 2001. The growth in community housing stock is indicative of the value placed by the Government on the community housing sector.

Improved Access for People Needing Support or Modified Housing

Capital expenditure of \$20 million of the \$165 million acquisition budget will be provided to 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. These funds will enable the purchase and construction of some 150 properties for housing linked to planned support through other Departmental programs.

Tenants will benefit from the linked specialist support services provided through the Disability, Aged Care and Mental Health programs.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

\$12 million of the acquisition budget will be allocated for new acquisition or replacement of some 90 properties administered by the Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV). This will increase total stock dedicated to Aboriginal housing by almost 10% since June 1999.



Housing Services

Physical Improvements and Redevelopments to Housing Stock

Description

During the last few years, there has been relatively little investment in the inner city high rise estates, while decisions were being made about their future in the face of uncertain Commonwealth funding. Examination of recent Census figures shows that more Victorians are seeking inner suburban accommodation, which is putting pressure upon low cost housing in inner Melbourne.

The Government's policy is to maintain social housing stock in inner Melbourne, and to work with local government and developers to advance and implement affordable housing policies to compensate for losses of low income housing due to gentrification and rising rents.

The next few years will see a focus on redevelopment and improvement of older public housing estates in inner Melbourne and regional Victoria. Stock re-profiling through acquisitions, redevelopments, physical improvements and stock disposals will also be undertaken to better match housing stock to needs.

\$162 Million for Physical Improvements

To implement the Government's policy to improve the quality of social housing and renew and redevelop ageing public housing estates, \$162 million will be allocated for physical improvements and a further \$21 million for redevelopments during the year. These activities form part of a longer term strategy to maintain housing opportunities in inner suburbs for low income Victorians.

All tenants will benefit from the planned physical improvements to public rental and community managed housing, including Aboriginal housing. Such works include fire safety works, disability modifications to improve access for people with disabilities, and upgrading stock condition in the wider stock pool. Also included in planned expenditures are funds to commence necessary upgrade works to inner city high rise estates over the next 10–15 years.

Significant expenditure items for 2000/01 include:

- \$31 million for the upgrade of high rise estates, including emergency lighting, lift upgrades and rooftop railings, with works commencing on the refurbishment of the two remaining towers in Kensington.
- \$12 million for fire safety works, including installation of fire sprinklers in walk up flats and fire audits.
- \$87 million for upgrade and physical improvements to family and older persons units in public housing throughout Victoria. This includes building services on non-high rise estates, physical modifications to improve access for people with disabilities and building additional bedrooms.
- \$20 million for minor capital items including re-roofing, replacement of hot water services and upgrading of spot purchase properties.
- \$12 million for upgrade of community managed housing in metropolitan and rural Victoria.

In addition, more than \$70 million will be spent in 2000–01 on the ongoing general maintenance of properties.

It should be noted that these figures include the additional expenses associated with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

\$21 Million for Redevelopments

Capital expenditure of \$21 million in 2000–01 will be allocated towards redevelopments in inner urban and major regional centres as part of a longer term strategy of improving older estates.

Public housing tenants and households on waiting lists will benefit from redevelopments which will assist in reprofiling housing stock to better meet their requirements and introduce a greater diversity and mix of housing types and sizes. The Government's policy is to maintain the stock of social housing in inner suburbs while these redevelopments take place, and to work with local government to secure more affordable housing.

A number of new redevelopments have been announced that will address the growing need for more one and two-bedroom accommodation for the elderly, singles and smaller households. Links with the community and local government to improve security, recreational and other facilities have been established, and private sector involvement through joint venture arrangements will also be considered.

Advisory Committees are being established to consult with tenants, local government and the wider community and to forward recommendations for consideration by the Government. Overall strategies will be developed for these estates, to provide an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and styles to meet the needs of public housing tenants, and improve the overall standard of accommodation and neighbourhood environment in the area.

Major redevelopment projects include:

- ***Kensington High Rise Estate***
- ***Elizabeth Street, Richmond***
- ***Rathdowne Street, North Carlton***
- ***Raglan Ingles, Port Melbourne***
- ***Victory Boulevard, Ashburton***
- ***Thomson Estate, East Geelong***
- ***Long Gully, Bendigo***