

2023/24 BUDGET FACT SHEET

Regional Partnerships



Regional Partnerships bring the voice of regional and rural communities to Government. Through their connections and consultation, Regional Partnerships prioritise local issues and provide advice to inform Government investments and the design of policy, programs and services.

Budget 2023/24:

The 2023-24 budget invests more than \$5 billion in services and projects for rural and regional Victoria. The budget will deliver the services and projects including:

- **\$20 million** to improve the long-term financial and operational sustainability of rural and regional councils through continuing the **Rural Councils Transformation Program**. This program supports councils to share knowledge, costs, and resources to deliver more efficient, effective and sustainable services for communities
- **\$45.2 million** for Making Victoria an Easy Place to do Business through **Regulatory Reform** to prioritise regulatory reform opportunities. Funding is also provided to establish an Economic Growth Commissioner to undertake inquiries into impediments to economic growth and identify opportunities for economic and regulatory reform
- Further funding for the **Business Acceleration Fund** will streamline regulatory processes across the State's regulators and local councils
- Funding to support the **growth of defence and space industries** and associated supply chains, improving capacity of regional Victoria to secure major defence contracts
- Funding to establish a **Manufacturing and Industry Sovereignty Fund** to support the development, expansion and retention of strategic sovereign manufacturing capability in Victoria.
- Funding to **support forestry workers to transition** to into jobs in other sectors including construction and renewable energy.

Victorian Budget initiatives that support Regional Partnership outcomes and priorities:

Education

- **\$912.8 million** to support infrastructure for the Best Start, Best Life initiative, including contributions towards building **50 Government-owned Early Learning Centres** in areas of need
- A share in **\$204.8 million** for targeted initiatives to attract more teachers

Workforce, Skills and Training

- **\$370 million** for TAFEs to continue delivering services for Victorian students, employers and communities, including in regional Victoria
- Allocations from the **\$50 million** TAFE Clean Energy Fund to support three new and upgraded facilities to improve workforce skills and capacity in the clean energy sector
 - Stage 2 of the **Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre** at Federation TAFE
 - Clean Energy Centre in TAFE Gippsland's Morwell Campus
 - Building Innovation and Design Centre at South West TAFE

Health

- **\$320 million** to deliver major investments at 7 hospitals across the state, including a new hospital for **West Gippsland and the Wonthaggi Hospital** redevelopment
- **\$47.8 million** to support the reforms under the new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022*, including continuing the operations of the 8 interim Regional Bodies

- **\$17.7 million** to continue suicide prevention and mental health services, including funding to continue the **Youth Live4Life** program for young people living in rural and regional Victoria.

Transport

- A share in **\$1.25 billion** in capital works and **\$240 million** program costs to undertake road maintenance and renewal in regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne
- Funding under the **\$674 million** road blitz to develop the **Western Highway Business Case** and to undertake **Stage 2 upgrades to Barwon Heads Road at Armstrong Creek**
- A share in **\$219.4 million** to deliver more regional trains, including:
 - Additional weekend return services for the Shepparton, Warrnambool, Ararat and Echuca lines
 - More frequent weekend services on the Geelong, Ballarat, Seymour and Gippsland lines
 - An additional Sunday service between Sale and Bairnsdale
 - Additional Saturday and Sunday night services for Bendigo
 - An additional morning peak service between Castlemaine and Bendigo.

Community and Culture

- **\$21 million** for the redevelopment of the **Bendigo Art Gallery**
- **\$19.3 million** to the Our Place model and place-based education plans, including the Greater **Shepparton Lighthouse Project** and implementation of the Our Place model in Mooroopna
- **\$13.8 million** for VicCoasts to address critical erosion and flood risks, protect marine and coastal assets, and support the adaptation and resilience of coastal communities
- **\$4 million** to implement reforms for the management of coasts and land under the **Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority**

Primary Industries

- **\$200 million** to manage the transition out of native timber harvesting in state forests
- **\$188 million** for targeted timber industry and worker transition support services

Victorian Budget initiatives that support rural and regional Victoria:

Regional Development

- **\$10 million** for the **Tiny Towns Fund** which supports the delivery of community infrastructure, facilities and capacity-building projects
- **\$6 million** for the **Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct**
- **\$7.2 million** to continue the Latrobe Valley Authority's operations

Energy

- **\$20.6 million** for VicGrid to coordinate transmission planning and investment in Victoria via a fit-for-purpose framework that incorporates community and stakeholder engagement
- **\$15.9 million** to establish **two worker training centres** for the offshore and onshore wind industry, and the hydrogen industry

Flood Recovery

- A further **\$76 million** in support, including for mental health, for flood-affected communities
- **\$23.6 million** to repair the **Rochester and Heathcote VICSES Emergency Hub** and **\$1.3 million** to replace the Rochester Police Station

Health

- **\$162.2 million** to build 3 new **aged-care facilities** in Cohuna, Maffra and Numurkah
- **\$153.9 million** to support women and girls via clinics at: Barwon Health (Geelong), Goulburn Valley (Shepparton), Ballarat Bast Hospital, Bendigo Hospital, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Mildura

Base Hospital, Northeast Health (Wangaratta), Warrnambool Base Hospital

- **\$160.1 million** for alcohol and other drug services, including expanding the **U-Turn program** into the Hume region

Education

- **\$372.7 million** to continue delivering **free kindergarten** for 3 and 4-year-olds
- **\$152.9 million** to progressively transition 4-year-old kindergarten to Pre-Prep, providing 30 hours per week of play-based learning by 2032
- **\$168.6 million** for 6 **new Tech Schools** (including Warrnambool and Wangaratta) and establish a Clean Energy Equipment Fund for new and existing Tech Schools
- **\$40 million** for capital upgrades in 43 schools across the state, including 19 regional schools:
 - Beechworth Secondary College
 - Belmont High School
 - Broadford Primary School
 - Camp Hill Primary School
 - Cobden Technical School
 - Colac West Primary School
 - Drouin Secondary College
 - Edenhope College
 - Eildon Primary School
 - Lakes Entrance Primary School
 - Leongatha Secondary College
 - Lismore Primary School
 - Paynesville Primary School
 - San Remo Primary School
 - Stawell West Primary School
 - Swan Hill North Primary School
 - Traralgon (Kosciuszko Street) Primary School
 - Wangaratta High School
 - White Hills Primary School
- **\$450.2 million** for low-fee Catholic and Independent schools, including Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School (Warrnambool), Sacred Heart Primary School (Mildura), St Brigid's College (Horsham) and St Francis Xavier Primary School (Corio)

Planning

- **\$23.4 million** to **planning and legislative reform** to support councils to increase housing supply and density, and continue the Development Facilitation Program
- A share in **\$3.8 million** for the **Central Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage nomination**
- A share in **\$9.1 million** for the **Geelong Authority** to revitalize central Geelong

Community Safety

- **\$26.6 million** for emergency services upgrades including:
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA) stations in Raywood, Yarram and Kinglake West
 - Victoria State Emergency Services (VICSES) facilities at Bannockburn and Kilmore
 - Redevelopment and upgrade of Life Saving Victoria facilities at Bancoora
 - Purchase of a new marine rescue vessel for Queenscliff
- A share in **\$24.2 million** for the **Youth Outreach Program** to Greater Shepparton, a regional hub model for the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services, and the Tarrengower Women's Prison

Environment

- **\$10.9 million** to upgrade visitor facilities and infrastructure at **Serendip Sanctuary** and the **You Yangs (Wurdi Youang)** to enhance and protect the natural and cultural precinct

Primary Industries

- **\$31.1 million** for programs to support the **agriculture, food and beverage industry**
- **\$17.4 million** to manage the increased risk of **biosecurity threats** entering Victoria

Please note: This list is not exhaustive. For further information visit <https://www.budget.vic.gov.au/>