

2020-21 Victorian Budget November 2020

On 24 November 2020 Victorian Treasurer the Hon. Tim Pallas MP delivered the Victorian Labor Government's sixth budget.

The 2020-21 Budget is aimed at responding to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, as well as following through on the commitments made by Labor during the 2018 Victorian State Election.

The Victorian Government has made \$24.5 billion in emergency funding available to respond to the economic and health crisis. \$10 billion was to be spent in the 2019-20 financial year and \$14.5 billion in 2020-21 to deal with the pandemic and the economy's recovery.

On Tuesday, Treasurer Pallas laid out the Victorian government plan to spend \$49 billion in the next four years and create 400,000 jobs over the next five years so as to return Victoria to its status as the State with the highest economic and employment growth.

The Budget outlines how the Victorian Government will deliver its record investment in rail and road infrastructure, mental health, general health, education, tourism, housing, and child-care whilst still maintaining a top tier credit rating.

The Budget also makes significant commitments to creative industries and medical research, keeping in line with the Government's vision to sustain significant funding to Victorian industries.

The Treasurer's Budget speech is available [here](#).

The 2020-21 Budget is available in full [here](#).

The Budget Outlook

The outlook for the Budget is projected to be:

- 2019-2020 an estimated operating deficit of \$6.5 billion.
- 2020-2021 an estimated operating deficit of \$23.3 billion.
- 2021-2022 an estimated operating deficit of \$13.1 billion.
- 2022-2023 an estimated operating deficit of \$6.7 billion.
- 2023-2024 an estimated operating deficit of \$5.9 billion

The Victorian economy declined by 0.25% in the 2019-2020 financial year. It expected to decline a further 4% in the 2020-2021 financial year. The 2021-22 financial year is forecast to see a return to economic growth in Victoria, with Gross State Product (**GSP**) estimated to increase 7.25%.

Projections for the 2022-23 financial year show growth at 3.35%, with growth expected to level out in the 2023-2024 financial year at 3%.

The 2019-20 financial year saw Government net debt as a percentage of GSP rise to 9.6%. The ratio is set to rise to 19.5% during the 2020-21 financial year, and continue to rise throughout the forward estimates, peaking at the end of the forward estimates in 2023-2024 at 28.9%. The RBA has backed Victoria’s strategy to increase its spending noting that the deficits were “*entirely manageable and affordable and the ...right thing to do*” in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The deficit will remain relatively low compared to OECD averages, however Victoria’s AAA rating was placed on a negative credit watch in August by S&P, and in November S&P reaffirmed there was a one-in-two chance that Victoria’s rating may be lowered.

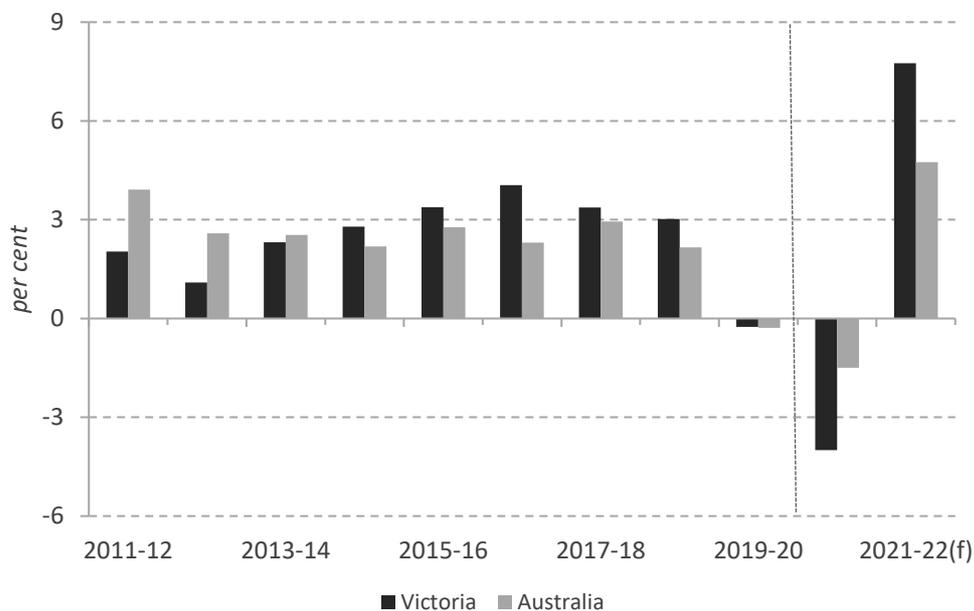
Victoria’s state-wide unemployment rate reached 5.4% during the 2019-20 financial year. The forward estimates project that unemployment will peak during the 2020 December quarter at 8.35%. By 2021-2022, unemployment is expected to fall to 7.00%, with slow yearly declines to reach 5.75% by 2023-2024.

Table 1.1 General government fiscal aggregates

	Unit of measure	2019-20 actual	2020-21 budget	2021-22 estimate	2022-23 estimate	2023-24 estimate
Net result from transactions	\$ billion	(6.5)	(23.3)	(13.1)	(6.7)	(5.9)
Net cash flows from operating activities	\$ billion	(2.9)	(21.8)	(4.0)	(2.6)	(1.8)
Government infrastructure investment ^(b)	\$ billion	12.0	19.4	19.5	20.3	19.2
Net debt	\$ billion	44.3	86.7	109.7	132.9	154.8
Net debt to GSP ^(c)	per cent	9.6	19.5	22.5	26.0	28.9

(Source: Budget Paper No 2: Strategy and Outlook, pg 7.)

Chart 1.2: Real economic growth, Victoria, and Australia



(Source: Budget Paper No 2: Strategy and Outlook, pg 4.)

Jobs

The Victorian Government continues its commitment to a job creation agenda. The 2020-21 budget prioritises direct investment that will create and train for jobs in the health, mental health, care, and construction sectors.

The Jobs Plan is based on four key elements:

1. Training and upskilling pathways and career counselling
2. Significant State Infrastructure spending
3. Incentives, support, and relief for existing business with employees; and
4. Regional investment¹

In an effort to triage Victoria's return to nation leading employment growth, the Victorian Government have made unprecedented investments in training and employment programs. These include:

Recovery Workforce

- \$235 million to build a Recovery Workforce, estimated to create 500 new jobs in the mental health, family violence, health, and child protection sectors. This includes 130 mental health jobs, including additional child and youth psychiatry registrars and positions for people with a personal experience of mental ill-health. As well as accelerated training pathways and internships for around 875 people. The funding package provides for:
 - \$4.3 million for increasing the number of available mental health nurse graduate positions across Victoria.
 - \$4.6 million to support pathways into employment in the community services, disability and aged care sector.
 - \$25.62 million to employ new specialist alcohol and other drug workers.
 - \$8.1 million to build our family violence and sexual assault support workforce, supporting the coordination of up to 240 traineeships across the state.
 - \$40 million will support a service delivery fund for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health organisations.
 - \$3.7 million for a child protection student employment program.
 - \$106.7 million over four years to recruit 239 new child protection practitioners, which will include graduates and experienced professionals.
 - \$22.5 million to employ up to 48 staff to reduce the administrative burden on child protection workers.

The Secure Work Pilot Scheme

- \$5 million for consultation on the design of a Secure Work pilot scheme. The funding is provided to work through issues including documentation required to support payment applications and protections for workers who apply to access the scheme. The Scheme is purposed to provide a model for to five days of sick and carer's pay at the national minimum wage for casual or insecure workers in priority industries.

¹ Budget Paper 2, Chapter 3, Jobs Plan, Pg. 39

Tax Measures

- \$327 million in Payroll tax relief for small and medium businesses
- \$205 million in Targeted JobKeeper exemption from payroll tax
- \$224 million for the *New jobs tax credit*, aimed at supporting SMEs that rehire staff, restore hours or create new jobs. Businesses will get a tax credit of ten cents for every dollar it increases taxable Victorian wages. This emergency tax relief measure will be available for two years.

Regional First Homeowner Grant Extension

- \$23.6 million for an extension to the Regional First Home Buyer Scheme

Transport and infrastructure

A state record of \$10 billion will be spent on roads and public transport in the 2020-21 budget, with substantial spending to follow in the forward estimates. This includes significant works for the first state of the Suburban Rail Loop project, Airport Rail and the Geelong Fast-Rail project. The record spend on infrastructure by the Victorian Government is expected to support more than 200,000 jobs.

The 2020-21 budget measures include:

Roads

- \$411 million to resurface, rebuild and maintain 1700 kilometres of roads
- \$117 million package of road and intersection upgrades across Melbourne
- \$2.5 million in the 'Summer Streets' program to provide traffic management during COVID safe outdoor events.

Rail

- \$2.2 billion is earmarked for Stage One of the Suburban Rail Loop, to run between Cheltenham and Box Hill. Funding is set for early works, relocating utilities, establishing launch sites for TBMs and building new sub-stations. The funding will also be utilized to purchase land, upgrade roads, deliver a power supply, build new sub-stations, relocate and protect gas, water and other utilities, and deliver other vital works to prepare for major construction.

A pre-qualification will go out to the market ahead of Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the Stage One initial and early works package being released by the end of the year.

- \$5 billion has been allocated over the forward estimates for an Airport Rail service. With funding matched by the federal Government. Detailed planning and development work are currently underway, which will inform more detailed cost estimates.
- \$2 billion commitment, matching the Federal Government's contribution, for the first stage of Geelong Fast Rail. The funding includes:
 - \$24 million of upgrades for North Geelong, North Shore and Lara stations

- \$90.5 million for track and level crossing upgrades between the Corio to Waurn Ponds section of the Geelong Line.

Buses

- \$20 million for a statewide trial to investigate the viability of a zero-emission bus fleet.

Trams

- \$1.48 billion will be spent on building 100 new modern accessible trams to retire the ageing A and Z-class trams. an order for new E-Class trams and possibly another variety, as well a new maintenance facility in Melbourne's north-west to support 1900 jobs.

Education

The Budget provides over \$1.9 billion investment in schools. This investment is in addition to the \$3 billion committed in the last budget to be spent over the forward estimates. The additional funding is expected to support more than 6,400 in construction and supply chain jobs, including:

- 4,830 jobs related to projects in metropolitan Melbourne.
- 1,570 jobs related to projects in regional Victoria.

The funding includes:

- \$1.28 billion for 162 school upgrades. Architects to be appointed from January 2021 and construction work on every project is expected to start within 16 months.
- \$388.8 million of this investment will go toward improving facilities at 39 specialist schools
- \$85 million expanding seven existing schools – expected to educated an extra 1,175 students.
- \$147 million has been allocated to acquire land for 11 new schools.
- \$122.4 million for a new vertical primary school in North Melbourne to open in 2023, and deliver a further four stages of new school projects, including:
 - Clyde North Station Primary School,
 - Preston High School,
 - Benalla Campus of Wangaratta District Specialist School,
 - San Remo Campus of Wonthaggi Secondary College.

Disability Student Support

- \$1.6 billion to support students with disability, providing access to students who may have previously been ineligible for targeted support – such as those with autism, dyslexia or complex behaviours. Funding includes:
 - \$102.8 million in new resources and skills training to school staff.

International Student Support

- \$35 million for the International Student Emergency Relief Fund. This fund delivers a range of supports including cash payments of \$1 100 to international students in Victoria experiencing financial hardship as a result of employment loss.

- \$33.4 million for the International Education Sector Recovery Strategy, which provides targeted policies, programs and initiatives that strengthen Victoria’s international education sector, including support the safe return of international students.

Additional support for existing education programs and funds:

- \$70 million for the Planned Maintenance Program for upgrades and improvements at 300* schools.
- \$50 million to fast-track shovel-ready projects at 300* schools through the Minor Capital Works Fund.
- \$20 million to build inclusive learning spaces and accessible playgrounds for students with disabilities through the Inclusive Schools Fund.

Fast-Tracking Professionals Into Teaching Careers

- \$15.49 million initiative to give 500 teaching students and 76 early childhood teachers the opportunity to fast-track their training through accelerated Initial Teacher Education university programs.

Early Childcare Education

Eligible Victorian parents will have access to free child-care services in 2021 as the State tries to encourage people back into the workforce in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The plan is expected to save eligible families up to \$2,000 for every child enrolled. The funding includes:

- \$169.6 million in childcare and kindergarten support and subsidies, of which, \$81.6 million will be allocated to increase the availability of before and after school care. Grants of up to \$75,000 will be available to start new outside school hours care programs at up to 400 government schools.

Additional Support

- \$302 million to continue the roll-out of our landmark three-year-old kinder reform
- \$38.5 million to be invested in the Building Blocks grants program
- \$30 million to the Refurbishment and Minor Works grant program, which supports the delivery of minor capital works projects at Victoria’s kindergartens.
- \$6.2 million for early intervention specialist support.

Skills and Training

- \$630 million for up to 80,000 new student positions in TAFE over the next four years, including 60,000 spots in free courses such as health and community and disability services. The funding includes:
 - \$64.7 million for Frankston's Chisholm Institute’s redevelopment
 - \$40 million will go to Melbourne Polytechnic's Collingwood campus.

Health

In the past six years, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$109 billion into the health system. In recognition of the health impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic the 2020-21 budget commits an additional \$9.0 billion to the Victorian health system.

Highlights on health outputs in the forward estimates are:

- \$120.9 million over three years for the 'Better at Home initiative' to meet growing demand for healthcare through increased delivery of hospital services in patients' homes.
- \$102.6 million to provide a range of different types of care at home, including clinic appointments, chemotherapy, post-surgical care and rehabilitation.
- \$12.5 million investment in virtual care technology to sustain the high rates of telehealth we have achieved during the pandemic.
- \$5.8 million for health services to in transformation of care in Victoria, through training, support, and clinical redesign which will provide more options to receive care at home.
- \$75 million in budget commitment to Melton Hospital*.
- Melton Hospital, allocating \$75m to lay the groundwork for the 24-hour hospital.
- \$10 million investment in health and education precinct in Arden.
- \$200m Metropolitan Health Infrastructure Fund will also be made available for more than 50 city health -services to refurbish or deliver new projects across their networks.
- \$120 million for the existing Regional Health Infrastructure Fund.

Funding set for allocation in the 2020-21 financial year include:

- \$9 million for the Latrobe Regional Hospital redevelopment.
- 1.7 million for the Maryborough Hospital expansion.
- \$3.3 million for the Warrnambool Base Hospital redevelopment (including Warrnambool Logistics Hub).
- \$2.3 million for the Women's and Children's Hospital: University Hospital Geelong.
- \$1.2 million to expand Werribee Mercy Hospital.
- \$43.5 million for the *Better at home: Hospital care in the home* initiative.
- \$500,000 for the first stage of the new Melton Hospital.
- \$862.8 million to maintain hospital capacity.
- \$16.2 to build Frankston Hospital.
- \$100,000 for the first stage of the new Melton Hospital, followed by \$25 million in the 2021-22 financial year.
- \$66.1 million to acquire land in Cranbourne, Pakenham, Torquay, City of Whittlesea, Eltham, Inner South and Point Cook and continue capital planning and design for the community hospitals program.

Healthcare workers

- \$136 million for upgrades Ambulance services. This includes \$10.4 million that will also ensure year-round ambulance services for Nagambie, and a 24-hour service for Diamond Creek.
- \$21.6 million for Victoria's innovative Mobile Stroke Unit and the Victorian Stroke Telemedicine.

Staff to Patient Ratios

- \$40 million will help set staff-to-patient ratios in private aged care homes

Better Homes Initiative

- \$121 million will go to the Better at Home initiative to increase at-home hospital services;

Mental Health

The Victorian 2020/21 Budget delivers more than \$877 million in mental health and rehabilitation programs, including:

- \$870 million in new funding which will support the rollout of the interim recommendations from the Royal Commission into Mental Health including 144 mental health beds. The funding includes:
 - \$492 million to deliver 120 beds across sunshine, Geelong, Epping and Melbourne.
 - \$18 million for 35 acute mental illness beds in private hospitals to public patients.
 - \$21.4 million to complete expansion of hope services – post suicidal services – will cover regional and metro service providers.

Additional Measures

- \$7.3 million towards the creation of the Danny Frawley Centre for Health and Wellbeing at St Kilda's home base.
- \$51.4 million in drug treatment and rehabilitation services and centres including \$3.4 million for 80 new alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation beds in Corio, Wangaratta and Traralgon.

Hospitality

Substantial hospitality support has been provided in the 2020/21 budget. Funding is provided to support the Victorian hospitality industry to manage the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- \$368.7 million Hospitality support program establish a range of measures including:
 - Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund to support liquor licensees
 - Meet business expenses during public health restrictions and perform business continuity planning, through grants of between \$10 000 and \$30 000;
 - Grants of \$5 000 for hospitality businesses to support adaptation to outdoor dining and reopening in a COVID Normal manner,
 - Grants to local councils across Victoria to deliver reduced or waived permit fees for outdoor dining applications and to invest in new community infrastructure enabling outdoor dining; and
 - Targeted support for larger restaurants and hotels to support modified operations during public health restrictions and enable COVID Normal reopening, including funding to re-engage stood down hospitality staff.

Creative Industries

Funding is provided in recognition of the unique contribution the sector makes to the Victorian economy. The aim of the Creative Industries package is to deliver initiatives that will reactivate the local industry. Funding includes:

- \$17.2 million for Activation and programming support. This includes summer activation and safety improvements to enable several State-owned venues to transition to COVID Normal operations.
- \$19.2 million will be allocated to attract international and interstate screen projects through a new Victorian Screen Incentive.
- \$4.7 million for the development and production of local content across film, television, online and games.
- \$8.6 million to continue Film Victoria's local production investment and industry skills development programs.
- \$1.3 million will be allocated to create a trade and technical hub close to the Docklands Studios for screen crews and support businesses.

Justice and Corrections

Funding is provided to equip Victoria's corrections and youth justice operations to respond to coronavirus (COVID-19). Funding is provided for additional coronavirus (COVID-19) testing and services for prisoners.

- \$103.6 million is provided for testing as well for additional personal protective equipment and disinfection products for the youth justice system, prisons, and community correctional services.

Environment

The Victorian 2020/21 budget will make significant investments into state parks and Zoos, as well as provide funding for biodiversity across the state. This includes:

- \$655 million to protect vulnerable wilderness, restore the environment following bushfires, and improve visitor facilities.
- \$52 million for Parks Victoria to upgrade sites at Albert Park, Braeside Park, Brimbank Park, Dandenong Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Organ Pipes, Plenty Gorge, Point Cook, and other locations.
- \$84 million to Werribee Zoo to build a new enclosure for the Asian elephant herds.
- \$16 million to prepare and protect the coast from climate change through research, and policy implementation including local planting and erosion prevention.
- \$41 million to build new recycling facilities in regional Victoria.

Energy

The Victorian Budget 2020/21 will invest \$1.6 billion to create renewable energy hubs across the state, improve crucial grid infrastructure, decarbonise our energy system, drive down emissions and support more Solar Homes

- \$540 million to establish six Renewable Energy Zones.
- \$12.6 million to bring online more than 600 megawatts of new, clean energy through the Victorian Government's [second renewable energy auction](#).
- \$108 million to prepare Victoria for innovative and transformational renewable energy and hydrogen projects.
- \$85 million to build a 300 megawatt/450 megawatt-hour battery, at Moorabool, to be delivered by November 2021.
- \$25.2 million for the acceleration of adoption of zero emissions vehicles.
- \$27 million for local energy projects that increase the use of clean energy – like microgrids, neighbourhood batteries, bushfire resilience programs and community-owned renewable energy projects.
- \$21 million to help community groups install renewable energy systems, storage and energy efficiency improvements at community buildings, and support the ResourceSmart Schools program.

Solar Homes Program Expansion

- \$191 million to expand the 'Solar Homes' program – with an extra 42,000 solar panel rebates over the next two years.

Businesses energy efficiency scheme

- \$40 million in grants and support will be provided to assist businesses install efficient, smart technologies to boost productivity and reduce bills.

Housing, and Households

The Government in recognition of long-term structural challenges in the housing sector, alongside a decline in the private sector construction outlook, has moved to dramatically increase social and affordable housing. The Victorian government is set to deliver \$6 billion to the sector over the forward estimates to upgrade, expand and diversify social and affordable housing across the state.

The program comes with a new government agency, Homes Victoria, and the promise of a ten-year policy and funding framework.

Big Housing Build package

- Victoria's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build will construct more than 12,000 homes across metropolitan and regional areas for social housing.
 - More than 9000 new homes will be built, including replacing 1100 old public housing units.
 - Almost 2900 more homes will be built for low- to moderate income households in the inner-city
 - A quarter of the \$5.3 billion will be allocated to regional Victoria, where there is high demand for priority access to social housing in areas such as Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat.
 - \$532 million to build on public land, including six "fast start" sites, resulting in 500 social housing homes and 540 affordable and market homes.

- \$948 million to spot-purchase homes, projects in progress or ready-to-build dwellings from the private sector, adding 1,600 social housing and 200 affordable homes.
- \$1.38 billion for community housing projects to build up to 4,200 homes.
- \$2.14 billion for “new opportunities” with private sector and community housing providers, producing up to 5,200 homes.

COVID-Safe Social Housing

- \$155 million to implement coronavirus preparation and prevention measures in public housing – this includes testing, cleaning, security, food and material aid, and community services for residents.
- \$11 million will fund extra support staff at hotels for the homeless, and the Pathway to Recovery project for residents at North Melbourne and Flemington will receive \$7 million.

Tenant Support

- \$6 million, for Consumer Affairs Victoria to provide support through the Residential Tenancies Dispute Resolution Scheme and the Residential Tenancy Relief Scheme.

Stamp-Duty Relief

- Waivers of up to 50 per cent on stamp duty for homes valued at up to \$1 million for contracts entered into from 25 November 2020 until 30 June 2021.
- Existing homes will be eligible for a 25 per cent waiver.

Household energy efficiency package

- \$797 million to help Victorians cover the cost of their power bills and make homes more energy efficient.
 - \$335 million to replace old wood, electric or gas fired heaters with new energy-efficient systems.
 - \$112 million to seal windows and doors, and upgrade heating, cooling and hot water in 35,000 social housing properties.
 - \$14 million expansion of the existing Victorian Energy Upgrades program.
 - \$8.9 million is allocated for servicing and replacing gas heaters in public housing.
 - A one-off \$250 payment for eligible concession card holders, including anyone receiving JobSeeker, youth allowance or pension payments.

Build-to- Rent Incentives

- \$59 million over the next four years in Land-Tax subsidies (50%), offered to developers of Build-to-Rent projects. The land-tax discount will be available from 2022-2040.

Planning

The Victorian Government has noted that improving the efficiency of the State’s planning system is important to ensure the State’s recovery is not slowed by bureaucratic red tape or unnecessary delays. The Government has provided funding to streamline the planning process, in particular for large projects:

- \$111 million to unlock Victoria’s planning system, speeding up delivery of vital major projects and boosting construction of social and affordable housing.
- \$38 million to improve planning processes, as recommended by the Commissioner for Better Regulation, streamlining decision-making and giving the private sector greater certainty to invest, create jobs and bring their business to Victoria.
 - This includes the creation of a new assessment model for development proposals greater than \$50 million. This model will make the approvals process simpler and quicker for these developments, aimed at giving investors more confidence to build more projects here in Victoria.
- \$3.86 million to streamline the approval pathway, making it easier for private builders to include social and affordable housing in their developments.
- \$15.7 million to maintain and improve on digital systems for permit and planning scheme amendments services.
- \$4 million to help councils upgrade their digital planning permit systems.
- \$14 million to the Victorian Planning Authority, including funding the *Streamlining for Growth* program. The program provides support to local councils.
- \$4.45 million will expand the Victorian Building Authority’s proactive building inspection program.
- \$3.2 million will continue the implementation of *Plan Melbourne* – the blueprint guiding Melbourne’s growth.

Tourism and the Arts

Regional restaurants, pubs, hotels, wineries and small businesses are at the centre of the Government’s tourism and arts recovery plan.

Victorian Tourism Recovery Package

- \$465 million Victorian Tourism Recovery Package includes:
 - \$28 million for up to 120,000 vouchers each worth \$200 available for tourism in regional Victoria.
 - \$149 million to build new visitor accommodation, improve major tourist trails.
 - \$47.5 million will build better visitor infrastructure along the Great Ocean Road, including a signature coastal walking trail along the coastline and hinterland from Fairhaven to Grey River, including up to five new swing suspension bridges.
 - \$2 million of the allocation will be used to build more campsites along the Surf Coast.
 - \$15 million towards works on the popular Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing hiking trail, with;
 - \$13 million to for trail heads on the Grampians Peak Trail and visitor upgrades at Mackenzie Falls,
 - \$4.3 million to enable the continued growth of the Prosecco Road winery district including helping to establish accommodation at Dal Zotto Wines.
 - \$150 million Regional Tourism Investment Fund for nature based, First Nations, arts and culture, and food and wine tourism projects
 - \$1.6 million to support First Peoples tourism businesses through advisory services, mentoring and digital skills development.
 - \$106.5 million in tourism industry support which will include:

- \$58 million marketing boost for Visit Victoria to promote the state's appeal to Victorians and, interstate Australians and international tourists.
- \$20 million in renewed investment into the Regional Events Fund supporting events outside Melbourne.

Gippsland Tourism Recovery Package

- \$18.5 million Gippsland Tourism Recovery Package will build new accommodation, upgrade the East Gippsland Rail Trail, including:
 - \$3.5 million to build 10 eco-pods at Cape Conran Coastal Park,
 - \$2 million for more campsites,
 - \$2.5 million to help establish the Metung Hot Springs and the Nunduk Spa and Eco-Resort,
 - \$3.85 million to provide better access to Point Hicks Lighthouse.

Business Events Program

- \$9.7 million boost to the Business Events Program, to continue to attract a strong pipeline of business events to Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Biodiversity sanctuary

- \$23 million investment that will create an internationally significant biodiversity sanctuary and build a new visitor centre. The Funding includes:
 - \$6 million to erect a predator exclusion fence spanning more than 10-kilometres from coast to coast with double barriers at shoreline boundaries to keep out foxes, cats, deer and rabbits.
 - \$6 million for Gippsland to continue the Wild Dog control program.
 - \$6.7 million to upgrade visitor facilities at the Mallacoota Inlet and Point Hicks Lighthouse in East Gippsland.
 - \$3.5 million to build accommodation at Cape Conran Coastal Park.
 - \$2 million to create more camping spots in East Gippsland.
 - \$350,000 to help the koala trail at Raymond Island accommodate more visitors.

Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program

- \$29 million will be spent continuing the critical work of the Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program

Victoria's Great Outdoors Program

- \$105.6 million over four years will be spent on *Victoria's Great Outdoors* program to halve camping fees and develop new camping grounds, 4WD and walking tracks.

Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail

- \$44.1 million to build the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail and provide improved visitor facilities. This funding includes:
 - \$23.8 million allocated towards the extension of the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail from Fairhaven to Grey River.

- \$2 million to build five swing bridges and upgraded facilities increasing the capacity for camping on the Surf Coast.
- \$18.3 million over two years to upgrade visitor facilities and infrastructure such as toilets, viewing platforms, trails, beach access and car parking. The works will also include the installation of smart nodes at key locations along the Great Ocean Road to provide free public Wi-Fi, and sensors for the efficient management of energy and waste collection.

Murray River Adventure Trail

- \$10.3 million to upgrade walking and cycling tracks and river infrastructure along the Murray River Adventure Trail.

National Centre for Photography

- \$6.7 million to create National Centre for Photography in Ballarat and provide opportunities for community artists to exhibit and a dedicated photobook library.

Mallee Silo Art Trail

- \$4.9 million to upgrade the Mallee Silo Art Trail.

NGV Contemporary

- \$1.46 billion to build Australia's largest contemporary art and design gallery, NGV Contemporary. Estimated to support more than 5000 jobs during construction and the gallery.

Regional Victoria

In recognition of the acute impact of the past year on Regional Victoria, the Victorian Government has committed \$8 billion of investment over the forward estimates to help the regions recover from the 2019/20 bushfire season and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Funding measures includes:

- \$500 million to taking out internet blackspots and improving the overall quality of connectivity services.
- \$203 million for new infrastructure and technology that can assist farmers.
- \$2.8 billion for regional healthcare.
- \$65 million for improving infrastructure in the agricultural supply chain, energy efficiency on farms, and developing new technology.
- \$92 million to encourage plantings and native vegetation restoration.
- \$40 million for stage five of Kardinia Park's redevelopment.
- \$39.6 million from a 50% stamp duty concession on the purchase of commercial and industrial properties brought forward to January 2021.

Research and Development

The 2020/21 Victorian Budget makes way for a \$2 billion '*Breakthrough Victoria Fund*', to investment in research, innovation and growth in key industry sectors, including health and life-sciences, agri-food, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and digital technologies. The fund is to be delivered over a ten-year period and centred in emerging '*innovation*' precincts across Victoria.



Immediate funding for Research and Development in Victoria include:

- \$155 million to set up a National Centre for Infectious Diseases
- \$50 million for R&D business loans.

Administration

- \$195.9 million to establish Digital Victoria to centralise and simplify the Victorian Government's IT services.

Further information

For more information, please contact your Hawker Britton consultant, Victorian Director, JP Blandthorn on +61 407 366 304 or Policy and Business Analyst, Raphael Mengem at rmengem@hawkerbritton.com.

Further Hawker Britton Occasional Papers on the activities of the Victorian Government are available [here](#). For further coverage of Labor Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic see Hawker Britton Briefs [here](#). For further coverage of Liberal Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic see Barton Deakin Briefs [here](#).