

# Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Inquiry into 2020-21 Financial and Performance Outcomes

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# Our vision is to empower communities to build a fairer and safer Victoria

## 2020-21 Victorian Budget highlights



**\$3.92 billion to build over 12,000 new public housing properties across our state**, including 9,300 social housing properties replacing 1,100 old social housing dwellings and 2,900 affordable housing dwellings.



**\$150.8 million to continue much-needed assistance for Victorians experiencing homelessness**, including emergency accommodation for up to 2,000 Victorians while they transition into longer term housing.



**\$1.2 billion to keep children safe and families strong.** This builds on the \$1.4 billion invested in 2019-20, with \$1 billion to increase out-of-home-care placements, trial new support models and fund 246 new child protection practitioners across the state.



**\$87.3 million in additional support for children, young people and adults impacted by family violence**, including 5,700 family violence flexible support packages.



**\$198.5 million for services and programs to support Victorians with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS**, including support for people with psychosocial disability who do not meet the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) threshold for NDIS access.



**\$28.1 million to implement the Gender Equality Act 2020 and gender equality programs**, including establishing the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and implementation of Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy, Safe and Strong.

# The department's performance during COVID-19

In 2020-21, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the department's overall performance achievements, however, the department still achieved positive outcomes:

- 15,637 Victorians were provided with respite and support services, an increase of 18% compared to the 2020-21 target.
- Additional in-reach services were provided to at risk children and families out-of-hours. The workforce also helped children in care to stay connected with family through the pandemic.
- 6,853 more family services provided compared to the 2020-21 target.
- 88.4% of clients were provided or referred to support to sustain housing tenure exceeding the 2020-21 target of 85%.
- 19,404 people participating in funded primary prevention and gender equality programs, compared to a target of 6,800.

# Improving outcomes for children, young people and families in communities across our state

The 2020-21 State Budget invested \$1.2 billion to continue transitioning our child protection system to one focused on earlier intervention and support.

\$335.3 million was provided to support earlier intervention services and improve outcomes including Integrated Family Services, Cradle to Kinder, Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder and other evidence-based programs.

The budget also funded 239 new child protection practitioners across the state, bolstering the workforce to keep more children safe and families strong.

A further \$363.6 million was committed to support landmark reforms so that more children and young people in care have the settled and stable lives that they deserve.

This includes \$39 million over four years and \$13.8 million ongoing to expand the ground-breaking Home Stretch and Better Futures programs, which give all Victorian young people in care a place to call home until they turn 21.

More than 16,300 Child FIRST assessments and interventions were conducted, exceeding the 2020-21 target of 8,064 reflecting the Child FIRST responsiveness to vulnerable families. As such, more than 40,000 family services cases were provided in 2020-21 exceeding the target of 33,235.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic the government invested in services for children and families:

- \$4.456 million to establish the Coronavirus Emergency Response for Children and Young People involved with Child Protection (CERCY) model of care for at-risk children and young people who are unable to quarantine in their usual care arrangements.

# An inclusive Victoria, which supports people with a disability to live satisfying everyday lives

There are now over 108,000 Victorians participating in the NDIS achieving the 2020-21 target set in the State Budget papers. To complement this, the government has:

Provided \$78.9 million in funding for 2020-21 to support a range of services outside the scope of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to assist people with disability in Victoria.

This initiative delivers on the Government's commitment to continue to provide support to existing Victorian disability services' clients who have not been able to transition to the NDIS.

Supported the commencement of a Disability Worker Regulation Scheme, with the establishment of the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria and the Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner.

Provided \$11.7 million in funding to support the new State Disability Plan, including delivery of the dedicated Victorian Autism plan and continual support for people with disability during the pandemic.

More than 2,700 Disability Advocacy clients were supported compared to the 2020-21 target of 2,000, helping Victorians with disability and their families access timely and targeted advocacy support when they need it, reducing disadvantage and ensuring people with disability can fully participate in the community and have their rights upheld.

# Supporting all Victorians into safe and secure housing

Over 31,000 Victorians were provided with accommodation in 2020-21, exceeding the target of 30,000.

Over 75% of homelessness service clients engaged with support services and accessed and or maintained housing compared to the 2020-21 target of 72%.

To address this, the government invested \$3.9 billion to deliver over 12,000 new homes, including 9,300 social housing properties replacing 1,100 old social housing dwellings and to develop 2,900 affordable housing dwellings.

\$18.2 million was provided to enhance family violence refuge responses to enable 24-hour access and implement other recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

\$150.8 million was provided to support people experiencing homelessness requiring emergency hotel accommodation due to COVID-19, including:

- to extend emergency hotel accommodation for up to 2,000 Victorians experiencing homelessness
- enhanced private rental assistance, flexible support and head lease arrangements on more than 1,000 properties from the private rental market, to help people transition from homelessness and emergency accommodation into long-term stable housing.

# Promoting a fairer Victoria with equality, inclusion, and social cohesion

Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner was appointed in September 2020, furthering Victoria's commitment to the Gender Equality Act and supporting public sector entities to undertake workplace gender audits

The Victorian Pride Centre was opened in 2020-21 to support LGBTIQ+ organisations and groups to continue working towards quality.

Sixty organisations were engaged through the establishment of Trans and Gender Diverse Peer Support Program, exceeding the 2020-21 target of 10 organisations.

CALD Communities Taskforce was established in August 2020 to oversee and coordinate engagement and support for CALD Victorians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Public Sector Veterans Employment Strategy was provided \$0.6 million to continue to assist them to transition to the civilian workforce. More than 760 veterans were employed in the Victorian Public Sector, exceeding the target of 750.

The 2020 Victorian Seniors Festival ran for six months online with a Radio Reimagined component including Aboriginal and multicultural content in different languages.

Victorian Youth Week 2021 was held, with more than 2,800 young participants in programs that support them to be involved in community decision making, exceeding the 2020-21 target of 2,300.

# Continue in advancing Aboriginal self-determination

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to advance Aboriginal self-determination by supporting Aboriginal-led reforms and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

The department has also continued improving the cultural safety of our child protection workforce and service delivery through professional development programs to help improve the experience for Aboriginal staff in the workforce and Aboriginal clients.

- More than 75% of Aboriginal children were placed with relatives/kin, other Aboriginal carers or in Aboriginal residential care, achieving the 2020-21 target.
- More than 3,250 family services cases were provided to Aboriginal families, achieving the 2020-21 target.
- The Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund which will provide \$13.8 million to more than 45 Aboriginal-led initiatives and services, supporting Victorian Aboriginal organisations to deliver culturally appropriate, Aboriginal-led tailored responses to victim survivors and people who use violence, including for women, men, children and young people.

# Embedding Family Violence reforms

More than 140,000 Victorians (including more than 55,000 children) were helped through The Orange Door network as of 30 June 2020-21.

We're implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations to support all Victorians experiencing family violence.



## The **Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework**:

- The department published the MARAM victim survivor-focused tools and practice guides.
- The department also commenced the phased rollout of the Tool for Risk Assessment and Management to non-Orange Door providers.
- Approximately 370,000 workers and 5,800 organisations are now prescribed as a result of phase 2 of MARAM and family violence and child information sharing schemes implementation.

The **Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families** 10 year agreement set a foundation for implementing the Nargneit Birrang Aboriginal holistic healing framework for family violence, developed and co-designed by Victorian Aboriginal communities.

The Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund builds on the Victorian Government's commitment to embed Aboriginal self-determination in our family violence service system by supporting Aboriginal organisations and communities to implement Aboriginal-led solutions to address family violence.