

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Inquiry into 2021-22 and 2022-23 Financial and Performance Outcomes

Peta McCammon

Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

24 November 2023



Families,
Fairness
and Housing

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Responsible for on the ground services for:

- statutory child protection and care services
- families in need of support
- victim-survivors of family violence and sexual assault
- adults using family violence
- prevention of family violence
- delivery of the public housing program
- people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness
- people with disability
- emergency management relief and recovery

Supporting equity and access for Victorian communities including:

- LGBTIQ+ communities
- multicultural communities
- people with disability
- veterans
- women
- youth
- seniors
- carers



Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

The department's mission is to support the wellbeing and safety of all Victorians.

Our objectives

- Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported.
- All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing.
- Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient.



Objective: Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported

The *Roadmap for Reform: Strong families, safe children*, continues to be a focus for supporting Victorian children and families.

Government invested \$271.6 million in 2022-23 across child protection and family services, building on a **\$1.2 billion** boost in 2021-22.

- › Implemented and piloted **new earlier intervention models**, such as Putting Families First, Early Help Family Services and Koorie Supported Playgroups.
- › Launched the **\$5.8 million** care support help desk, helping thousands of carers get critical documents like birth certificates for children in their care.
- › Expanded the Better Futures and Home Stretch programs to be the **first Australian jurisdiction to make extended care universally available** for all eligible young people transitioning from statutory care.



Objective: Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported

The department delivers the statutory child protection and care program alongside key system partners, and continues to strengthen this by:

In 2022-23, there were:

- › **128,705** reports (notifications) to child protection.
- › **39,404** child protection investigations commenced.
- › **9,366** children in care placements (excluding permanent care).
- › **2,520.1** funded Child Protection Practitioner positions.
- › Advancing Aboriginal self-determination:
 - › expanding the **Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care** program
 - › delivering legislative reform with the *Children and Health Legislation Amendment (Statement of Recognition, Aboriginal Self-determination and Other Matters) Act 2023* expanding the role of Aboriginal agencies delivering children and family services.
 - › preparing for commencement of the **Community Protecting Boorais** program (Aboriginal agency-led investigations).
- › Delivering the **Family Preservation and Reunification Response** providing evidence based and intensive supports to help children and families stay together and return home safely.
- › Trialling **Family Group Conferencing** that empowers parents to keep children safe and prevent further entry into the child protection system.
- › Supporting the child protection workforce through recruitment and employment programs such as the **Go Where You're Needed** recruitment campaign, the **Child Protection Employment Program** for social work students, **Child Protection International Recruitment** supporting skilled practitioners to relocate to Victoria and the **Child Protection Wellbeing** program.

Preventing and responding to family and sexual violence

The government has taken action in response to all 227 recommendations from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

This includes the **state-wide rollout of The Orange Door network**. In 2022-23, the network provided family violence support for 190,000 Victorians, including 81,000 children across 18 primary premises, 19 access sites and nine outpost arrangements.

We have also:

- › delivered 95 individual prevention projects in 2022-23.
- › supported young people to understand affirmative consent through 12 projects co-designed with young people.
- › boosted the annual Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund to **\$2.2 million** in 2022–23, funding 31 Aboriginal organisations and community groups to deliver 42 community-led projects.
- › replaced 14 communal refuges with the ‘core and cluster’ design.
- › trained over 107,000 workers in Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.



Objective: All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing

We worked to grow and improve social housing and increase access for key groups of people who need housing most.

In 2022-23, there were:

- › **88,189** social housing homes at 30 June 2023
- › **7,000+** allocations into long term social housing
- › **65,195** applications on the Vic Housing Register (**36,690** priority applications)
- › **98,333** people assisted by homelessness services
- › More than **2,800 new homes** have been completed, and a further **4,800 homes** were underway under the **Big Housing Build** at 30 June 2023.
- › Over **7,000 households** moved into **social housing**, an increase of 29 per cent on 2021-22.
- › Over **2,000 households** experiencing rough sleeping were housed through **From Homelessness to a Home, Home for Families** and **Journey to Social Inclusion**.
- › **Two more supportive housing** facilities opened, supporting over **120** people, and **three more** facilities were in development.
- › More **victim survivors of family violence** received long term housing with **49 per cent growth** in allocations since 2019-20 (1,132 family violence allocations in 2022-23).
- › The **Affordable Rental** housing program started with **201** new homes at June 2023.
- › Over **200 homes** (Big Housing Build) were managed by the Aboriginal housing sector.
- › The **Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program** was expanded to nine locations.
- › There were **2,654** upgrades to public houses to give public renters better homes.

Investing in the future of the community services sector

Supporting innovation in the sector:

- › Consulting with the sector on the **Community Services Fair Jobs Code** – a set of standards that community organisations must comply with, to enhance community services workers' rights and job security.
- › The new *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* will **streamline and simplify regulation of social services**, while bolstering enforcement powers to protect people from harm.
- › Consultations with the sector resulted in annual **indexed funding** – increasing the Government's investment in community services by an additional **\$259 million** over the next 4 years.
- › A suite of workforce **attraction and retention initiatives** have been developed to support more pathways to employment, including:
 - » **\$13.5 million** for Switch to Social Work, encouraging career switchers to move into the child and family services sector.
 - » **\$5 million** for Inclusion Scholarships for Social Work Placements.



Objective: Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient

Increasing community participation, inclusion and connectedness

- › 1,197 multicultural festivals and events supported
- › 125 multicultural seniors' groups supported
- › 60 multicultural community infrastructure projects funded
- › 400+ jobseekers from Victoria's African communities provided training and support through the **Employment Brokers program**
- › 2,100 multicultural students and parents engaged through our **Homework Clubs**.



Objective: Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient

- › 11,000+ downloads following the launch of **Veterans Card - Victoria**
- › 2 new **Foodbank hubs** in creation in Ballarat and Morwell
- › 10,000 **food hampers** delivered (via Foodbank)
- › 99,200 **meals to flood-affected areas** in rural Victoria (via FareShare)
- › 2,570 people attending almost **40 recovery events and workshops** in disaster impacted areas following the June 2021 storms and floods event.
- › 1,000 connections by Australian Red Cross and the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry's **psychosocial outreach programs** to support people after the October 2022 flood event.
- › 214,000+ Victorians participated in **LGBTIQA+ pride events and festivals**
- › 1,883 in-person **Seniors Festival** events
- › 545,000+ **young people** took part in programs providing opportunities for social and economic participation
- › 44 projects funded through the **Investing in Women Grassroots Grant Program**
- › 6 permanent **public artworks celebrating women** developed.



Setting new baselines for equity and access

Our focus is to embed wellbeing and equity in all Government decisions, strategy, policy and programs.

- › We design and deliver bespoke programs to support equity and wellbeing such as the **Changing Places** program providing accessible public toilets.
- › We understand the needs and context of Victorians from a range of backgrounds. We work **across Government** to enhance inclusion and access. This includes:
 - › Victoria's first ever LGBTIQ+ strategy
 - › Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan
 - › Victorian African communities action plan
 - › Victoria's youth strategy 2022-2027
 - › Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026.
- › We allow Government to quickly adapt to emerging issues and new challenges – such as working to address period poverty through the **Free Pads and Tampons in Public Places** initiative.





Accessibility statement and publisher information

To receive this presentation in another format email DFFH PAEC <dffhpaec@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, November 2023.

Except where otherwise indicated, the images in this presentation show models and illustrative settings only, and do not necessarily depict actual services, facilities or recipients of services. This presentation may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this presentation, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.