

Members briefing note:

2026-27 Victorian Budget summary

Key points

- The Victorian Budget was handed down on 5 May 2026
- This was billed by the Victorian Treasurer as a “low-spend Budget”, reflecting current economic times with global pressures of war in the Middle East, fuel shortages, inflation and government debt
 - The Victorian Government continues to pursue savings in the public service of \$607.5 million over four years, including through back-of-house efficiencies.
- The priority for budget spending is to “take pressure off families”, with measures such as half price transport (free for under 18s) until the end of 2026; a daily cap on maximum fuel prices and mandatory reporting; and investment in frontline services, including police officers.
- There are \$3.9 billion in new investments allocated to the Victorian health system, taking total spending in 2026-27 to a record \$32 billion
 - Focus areas, outlined in further detail below, include hospital services and upgrades; out of hospital care (such as Virtual Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Clinics and Chemist Care Now); women’s health and mental health
- For rural health infrastructure, \$75 million has been allocated to the [Regional Health Infrastructure Fund](#), and investments in hospital upgrades and mental health services include some rural Victorian locations – Ballarat, Barwon, Geelong, Warrnambool, Dandenong, West Gippsland, Wonthaggi, Shepparton and Cowes, Warrnambool, Horsham, Ballarat respectively
- Upgrades for regional schools, transport and roads are also included in this Budget
- The Victorian state government election will be held on 28 November 2026.

Budget highlights

Health

Hospitals and ambulance services

- \$1.6 billion to support existing hospitals, including for more doctors and nurses
 - \$284 million to open and operate hospitals, including support for and expansion of emergency departments (Werribee Mercy Hospital, Angliss Hospital, Cranbourne Community Hospital, Craigieburn Community Hospital, University Hospital Geelong, Pakenham Community Hospital, Goulburn Valley Health - \$7.1 million to operate the new PET scanner, Mernda Community Hospital)
- \$145 million for hospital upgrades, including:
 - \$35 million for new and upgraded medical equipment in operating theatres, emergency departments, surgical wards, intensive care units and neonatal and maternity services
 - \$20 million to continue upgrading and replacing engineering infrastructure at hospitals
 - \$15 million to upgrade equipment and renew, reconfigure and refurbish metropolitan health services' infrastructure
- \$51 million to help paramedics and Triple Zero Victoria triage patients, including how calls are triaged reviewed and classified, support for frequent callers and investment in a pilot to improve ambulance transfer times in peak periods.

Out of hospital care

- \$10 million to support Victoria's 9 state-funded [Urgent Care Clinics](#)
- \$18 million for the Community Pharmacy Program, [Chemist Care Now](#), supporting 850 chemists across the state that are taking part, providing free appointments for health advice
- An extra \$3.1 million for the [Virtual ED program](#), enabling access to emergency department nurses and doctors from home, now including for urgent resupply of ADHD medications
- \$31 million for the Wathaurong Dreaming Project and a purpose-built facility
- \$27 million for the establishment of Endoscopy Access Teams and new equipment
- \$21 million to help patients with chronic disease navigate the health system through community health services
- \$10 million to deliver dialysis services at home
- Expansion of *VicKey*, a digital platform for coordination and communication between clinicians and patients
- \$8 million to establish and pilot *Specialist Advice Now*, enabling GPs and patients to get specialist advice without a referral.

Women's health

- \$249 million for maternity services in Melbourne's western suburbs
- Appointment of a Chief Midwife

- \$10 million in preventative sexual health support, wellbeing services and women’s health organisations
- Funding for 5 new women’s health clinics, to open in the second half of 2026 (in Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Heidelberg, Prahran and Parkville)
- \$6.8 million to support Early Parenting Centres.

Children

- \$109 million for 45,000 additional specialist paediatric appointments and 4,000 additional planned surgeries for children
- \$2.3 million for the Secondary School Immunisation program.

Mental Health

- \$30 million for new and existing mental health Hospital in the Home beds
- \$6.5 million for prevention of suicide initiatives
- \$5.4 million to continue the Youth Outreach and Recovery Service
- \$4.9 million to support Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and Hubs
- \$2 million to support culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide postvention and social and emotional wellbeing initiatives.

Health workforce

- \$76 million allocated to health workforce training including:
 - \$26 million to support 250 nurse graduate positions
 - \$25 million for a dedicated Psychiatry Training pathway
 - \$11 million for a Psychology Registrar program
 - \$8.7 million for a Junior Medical Officer Mental Health Rotations program
 - \$4.4 million for the Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy Student program.

Rural health

- \$75 million for the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund for renewal and upgrades
- Hospital redevelopments and upgrades will take place at regional hospitals including:
 - Ballarat Base Hospital
 - Barwon Women’s and Children’s Hospital
 - Warrnambool Base hospital
 - Dandenong Hospital
 - West Gippsland Hospital
 - Wonthaggi Hospital
- Investment in additional specialist appointments and surgeries for children will be prioritised by need, with extra activity in Barwon Health and Bendigo Health
- \$10 million for Hospital in the Home beds operated by Barwon Health
- \$7.1 million to operate the new PET scanner at Shepparton Hospital

- \$4.2 million to continue eight regional Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services
- \$1.1 million to prevent chronic disease through the Health Loddon Campaspe program
- \$985,000 to continue regional mental health programs (Q*Space and Be Well in the Ranges).

Rural infrastructure

- \$481 million for regional transport services
- \$73 million for regional road, intersection and crossing upgrades
- \$95 million for regional school upgrades (including Ararat Primary School, Bacchus Marsh College, Daylesford Primary College, Eaglehawk Primary School, Maryborough Education Centre, Stawell Primary School, Surfside Primary School, Warragul North Primary School, Yarrawonga College)
- \$23 million for the Future Regions program to boost productivity, liveability and investment.

Of interest to ACRRM members

- Members have previously given consideration to pharmacy prescribing, and is noted that in this Budget announcement *Chemist Care Now* will be expanded to:
 - provide access to the contraceptive pill without a prescription (from 1 July 2026); and,
 - cover treatment for 22 health conditions including asthma, nausea, ear infections, wound management, and cardiovascular conditions such as hypertension (by 30 June 2027)
- Expansion of the Virtual ED program in Victoria will now include emergency resupply of ADHD medications
- Investment in women’s health and maternity services is limited in rural locations
- It is not clear at this stage if any of the additional health workforce training places and programs will have a rural focus, which is particularly important given the investment into infrastructure
- The ACRRM policy team will continue to consider these initiatives and the views of members in in public policy processes and representations to government.

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ACRRM acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the custodians of the lands and waters where our members and staff work and live across Australia. We pay respect to their elders, lores, customs and Dreaming. We recognise these lands and waters have always been a place of teaching, learning, and healing.