

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2026-27 Budget Estimates

The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Community Safety

Thursday 21 May 2026



Keeping Victorians safe is our highest priority

2026-27 Budget Overview

Community Safety is a whole of government priority, led by Justice and delivered in partnership with every portfolio.

- The 2026-27 Victorian Budget provides:
 - **\$5.12 million** for the **Youth Crime Prevention Program** (YCPP);
 - **\$2.95 million** for the **Youth Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Program** (YCPEIP);
 - **\$33.45 million** for the **Violence Reduction Unit** (VRU); and
 - **\$9.46 million** for **Blue Light Victoria** to deliver early intervention programs to support young people at risk of offending.
- A further **\$15 million** has been announced to support **real-time CCTV monitoring and security upgrades for hospitality venues**.
- Community safety encompasses a broad range of work and responses across Victoria. Justice responses play an important role, including those from police, youth justice, courts, and corrections.
- Government has a history of significant investment in community safety. The Community Safety Package provides over **\$571 million** for initiatives such as increasing PSO capacity, early intervention programs for young people, legislative and court reforms, and the Violence Reduction Unit – all with the goal of keeping Victorians safe.



We're driving community safety through **early intervention and serious consequences** for offenders

We're investing in early intervention to support Community Safety

Effective responses to youth offending and local partnerships with key organisations are creating safer, more connected communities

- The **Youth Crime Prevention Program** (YCPP) helps young people to build protective factors against offending through intensive case management, coaching and mentoring and prosocial activities.
- The **Violence Reduction Unit** (VRU) is based on the VRU model in Glasgow and London, which successfully reduced violent crime over time by targeting problems early.
- The **Youth Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Program** (YCPEIP), established by Victoria Police and WEstjustice, diverts young people from the criminal justice system and connects them to social, psychological, and legal supports.
- **Blue Light Victoria** is a not-for-profit organisation delivering early intervention and prevention programs for children and young people across Victoria.

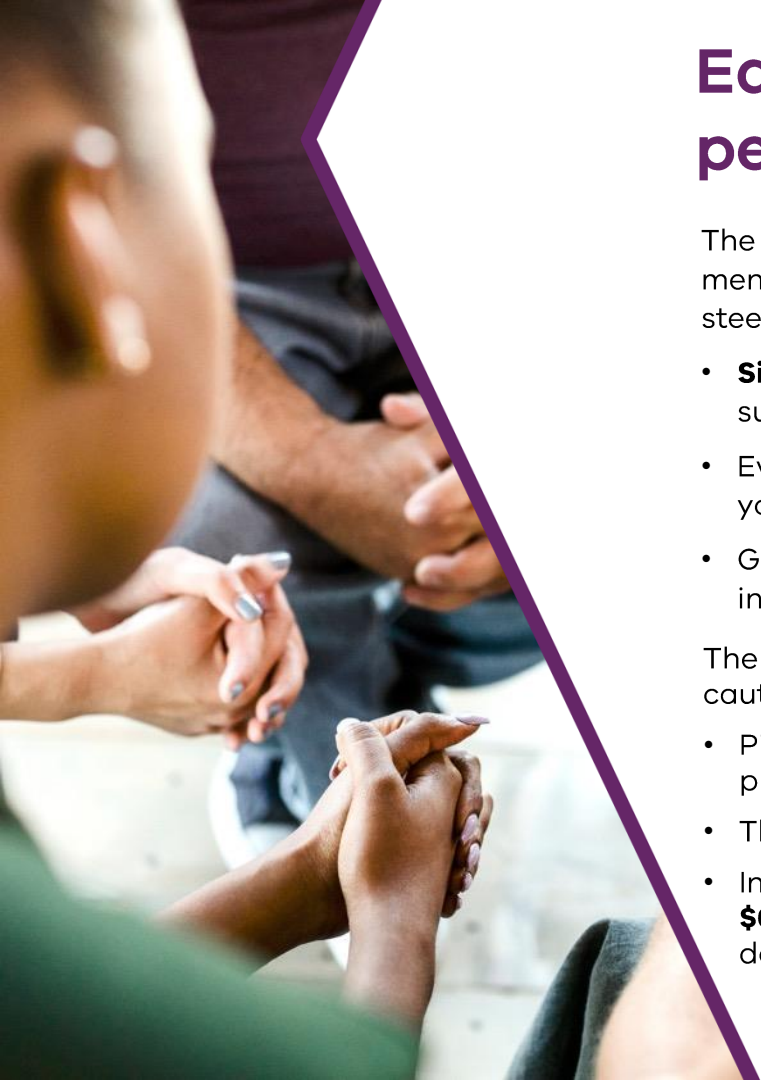


Boosting funding for Victoria's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

\$33.45 million in the 2026-27 Budget will go directly towards VRU programs that identify and disrupt youth crime patterns early

- This includes **\$3.70 million** for a **community-based gang violence intervention program** based on a successful immersive program in New York City
- The VRU's programs involve the whole community, including young people. They work hand-in-hand with police to disrupt and dismantle youth crime and keep kids on track.
- The VRU is an important part of Victoria's approach to reducing violent youth crime with serious consequences and early interventions.





Early intervention helps keep young people out of the justice system

The **Youth Crime Prevention Program** provides one-on-one case management, mentoring and coaching, and prosocial activities to young people aged 10-24 to steer them away from offending.

- **Since 2016**, the program has engaged over 2,700 young people in one-on-one support, and over 5,500 young people in prosocial activities.
- Evaluations have demonstrated that the **YCPP fills a key service gap** for young people and works to address the drivers of their offending.
- Government has committed **over \$45 million** to the program since 2016, including **\$5.12 million** in the current budget.

The **Youth Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Project** increases the use of cautions, warnings and diversion pathways for young offenders (aged 10-24).

- Pilot sites show **reduced reoffending and remand rates**, and increased use of pre-charge options.
- The program is expanding to additional locations across Victoria.
- In addition to the most recent funding allocation of **\$2.95 million over 2 years**, **\$6.63 million over 4 years** was provided under the 2024-25 Budget to support delivery and expansion.

We're preventing crime through community partnerships and safer spaces



Crime Stoppers Victoria

- In 2025-26, Crime Stoppers campaigns focused on motor vehicle theft, child abuse material and youth-related offending.
- In 2024-25, Crime Stoppers received more than 137,000 contacts, leading to almost 1,000 arrests and more than 4,000 charges being laid by police.
- Crime Stoppers continues to receive reports from the public in record numbers, receiving more than 142,000 in 2025.



Neighbourhood Watch 'Safety in Neighbours' campaign

- Neighbourhood Watch currently supports more than 200 local Neighbourhood Watch groups across 54 local government areas.
- The 'Safety in Neighbours' campaign celebrates strength in numbers, encouraging communities to look out for one another and reinforcing that staying safe starts with being connected.



Investment in police and Protective Services Officers

Since 2016, \$5 billion has been invested in the Police portfolio, with a total of \$116.64 million provided to Victoria Police for more PSOs to free up local police to be in the community when and where the problems are.



Police reservist scheme

- **\$62.06m** over 2 years to recruit up to 200 police reservists to service police station front counters and support police officers in administrative tasks
- The recruitment of police reservists will enable the deployment of police officers back to frontline policing activities and free up valuable police resources



Protective Service Officers

- **\$44.80m** to recruit an additional 50 PSOs
- **\$8.84m** for Operation Pulse, allowing the deployment of police and Protective Service Officers (PSOs) at major shopping centres until 31 December 2026
- The 'active PSOs' program redeploys PSOs from low-or-no-crime stations to where they are most needed across the public transport network



More handheld metal detectors to seize knives and machetes

- **\$0.94m** to procure 842 additional hand-held metal detectors, to significantly expand the ability of frontline police to conduct searches and get these dangerous weapons off the street
- More than 12,350 machetes and other knives were collected as part of the Machete Ban Amnesty

We're delivering serious consequences for violent youth offenders

The Adult Time for Violent Crime laws passed Parliament in December 2025 and came into full effect in February 2026.

The 2026-27 Victorian Budget provides **\$571.79 million** over 5 years to support reforms aimed at keeping the community safe and holding perpetrators who harm victims and the community accountable.

If charged with certain serious and violent crimes like home invasion, aggravated home invasion and aggravated carjacking, a child aged over 14 can now:

- be tried in an adult court by a jury
- face longer sentences.

The child can face the same maximum sentence length as an adult, including life imprisonment in some cases.



Thank you.

