

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee



# **2026–27 Budget Estimates questionnaire**

**Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action**

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## Questionnaire information

The Committee's Inquiry into the 2026–27 Budget Estimates examines the Government's expenditure and revenue raising plan.

The Committee's Budget Estimates inquiry aims to benefit the Parliament and the community by:

- promoting the accountability, transparency and integrity of the executive and the public sector
- encouraging effective and efficient delivery of public services and assets
- enhancing understanding of the budget estimates and the wider economic environment
- assisting members of Parliament in their deliberation on the appropriation bills.

This questionnaire seeks information about how the budget affects each department, including how budget allocations are connected to service delivery, infrastructure projects and assets, and other key economic, financial management and emerging issues.

### Timeline and format

Responses to this questionnaire are due by **5.00pm on 8 May 2026**.

It is essential that the Committee receive responses by this date to allow sufficient time to consider them before the budget estimates hearings.

The completed questionnaire and Excel worksheet in response to Question 10 should be sent (in the format received) to: [paec@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:paec@parliament.vic.gov.au).

### Consistency with the budget papers

Wherever referring to an initiative (including output, asset and savings initiatives) that is also referred to in the budget papers, please use the name used in the budget papers. This ensures that the Committee can correlate the information provided by the department with the information in the budget papers.

Wherever providing details about the department (including amounts of funding, anticipated expenditure and revenue and savings targets) please provide figures for the department on the same basis of consolidation as is used in the budget papers, unless otherwise specified.

### Machinery of government changes

For initiatives (including output, asset and savings initiatives) that have been subject to any prior machinery of government changes, the department with responsibility for the initiative at the time of the 2026–27 Budget is the relevant reporting department for this inquiry.

### Specific guidance

Additional guidance is provided for particular questions in the questionnaire.

For any inquiries about this questionnaire, please contact the Committee secretariat:

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## Major initiatives

### Question 1

What progress has been made in implementing the major initiatives/programs identified in the 2025–26 Budget for the department. Please identify a minimum of five initiatives/programs.

### Response

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
1.	Power Saving Bonus for vulnerable consumers	Funding was provided for a one-off \$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible Victorian concession card households that use the Victorian Energy Compare website to search for the cheapest electricity deal. Funding was also provided to expand the services of the Energy Assistance Program in response to increasing demand, ensuring tailored assistance for vulnerable and hard-to-reach consumers is preserved.	Energy output.	Both the Power Saving Bonus and Energy Assistance programs address cost-of-living challenges Victorian Concession Card households are facing, whilst also encouraging those households to find and switch to a better energy deal for further energy savings.  The Government committed to a fifth round of the Power Saving Bonus program, which provided a \$100 payment to eligible	The performance measures relating to this initiative are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Vulnerable Victorian energy consumers supported to navigate the energy market by the Energy Assistance Program.</i> The 2025-26 target is 3,000 households. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 4,000; and</li> <li><i>Users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report they are likely to recommend the website to others.</i> The 2025-26 target is 70 per cent.</li> </ul>	The progress achieved against key Government outcomes in 2025-26 includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 44,000 Power Saving Bonus applications were received through the community outreach program, supporting vulnerable and hard to reach consumers.</li> <li>During the term of this Power Saving Bonus program, the expanded Energy Assistance Program ensured more households experiencing vulnerability had access to energy bill support, including over 4,300 households supported to apply and over 3,900 participants provided with tailored</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				<p>Victorian concession card households that used Victorian Energy Compare to search for the cheapest electricity deal. Between 25 August 2025 to 31 March 2026, it received more than 280,000 applications.</p> <p>The Energy Assistance Program is a free over-the-phone service designed to support Victorians who are having trouble paying their energy bills. Activities undertaken include providing Victorian households assistance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help navigate the energy market and access critical energy</li> </ul>	<p>The 2025-26 expected outcomes is 80 per cent.</p>	<p>energy bill support.</p>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				affordability supports; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage the rising cost of living by saving money on energy bills; and</li> <li>• better understand consumer rights and protections and have the confidence to take part in the energy market more often.</li> </ul>		
2.	Enhancing core energy functions	Funding was provided to strengthen the department's core energy functions and help ensure safe, reliable and affordable energy is maintained throughout the energy transition.	Energy output.	The funding from this initiative supports Victoria in meeting the following renewable energy targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• renewable energy targets of 65 per cent by 2030 and 95 per cent by 2035; and</li> <li>• energy storage targets of at least 2.6GW by</li> </ul>	There are no Department Performance Statement (DPS) measures directly related to this initiative for this period.  Renewable energy generation was 44.6 per cent in 2025, achieving Victoria's 2025 renewable energy target of 40 per cent.	The progress achieved against key Government objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging Commonwealth support for new renewable energy and storage capacity by 2030 through the Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS).</li> <li>• Entering a Renewable Energy Transformation Agreement (RETA) with the Commonwealth for at least 11 TWh (5 GW) of renewable energy and 1.7</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				2030 and at least 6.3GW by 2035.	3.96 GW of battery storage was operating or under construction (as at March 2026).	GW of four hour storage for Victoria under the CIS.
3.	Sustaining the EPA's strengthened regulatory functions	Funding was provided for the Environment Protection Authority to ensure it can continue to protect Victoria's environment from pollution and waste and fulfil its obligations under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> .	Statutory Activities and Environment Protection output.	<p>Activities undertaken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspections of business sites or premises to prevent and respond to risks of harm to human health and the environment;</li> <li>• Remedial notices, official warnings and infringement notices were issued in relation to environmental pollution or waste, litter, noisy and smoky vehicles.</li> <li>• Completed prosecutions of which 98 per cent resulted in a finding of guilt or</li> </ul>	<p>The performance measures relating to this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Environment condition notifications provided to Victorians</i>. The 2025-26 target is greater than 800. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 950.</li> <li>• <i>Total inspections of business sites or premises conducted to prevent and respond to risks of harm to human health and the environment</i>. The 2025-26 target is 4,000. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 4,200.</li> <li>• <i>Victorian community trust in EPA</i>. The</li> </ul>	<p>The progress achieved includes increasing community understanding of the general environmental duty and by building the confidence of business and industry in managing environmental risks.</p> <p>Examples of EPA's impact include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Soft Plastics Recycling Facility Gains EPA Development Licence</a> (September 2025).</li> <li>• <a href="#">West Gate Tunnel Operating Licence</a> (November 2025).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Snap inspections in South Metro area</a> (November 2025).</li> <li>• <a href="#">EPA takes strong action to ban Kealba operations and notifies Barro of suspension process</a> (December 2025).</li> </ul> <p>EPA publications include:</p>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				<p>a clarification of the law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issued licences and permits.</li> <li>• Provided environment condition notifications to Victorians.</li> </ul>	<p>2025-26 target is 70 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 60 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is lower than the 2025-26 target, consistent with 'trust' scores for similar organisations in other jurisdictions. EPA Victoria continues to focus on building community trust through communications, engagement, visible action on major topics and focused management of ongoing issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Applications for internal review of remedial notices completed within statutory timeframes.</i> The 2025-26 target is 100 per cent. The</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Contaminated land clean up guideline released.</a> Guideline to create a cleanup plan for contaminated land including EPA minimum expectations (August 2025).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Fit and proper person questionnaire.</a> The <i>Environment Protection Act 2017 (the Act)</i> requires that persons have been assessed as being fit and proper to conduct certain activities regulated by EPA Victoria. This questionnaire sets out the principal factors that will be considered by EPA (September 2025).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Civil construction, building and demolition guide.</a> This guide supports the civil construction, building and demolition industries to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment through good</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
					<p>2025-26 expected outcome is 100 per cent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Applications for licences and permits completed within statutory timelines.</i> The 2025-26 target is 50 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 80 per cent.</li> <li>• <i>Environmental audits and preliminary risk screening assessment reports are reviewed to ensure administrative compliance with legislation and guidelines within 14 days of submission.</i> The 2025-26 target is 80 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 85 per cent.</li> <li>• <i>EPA advice on planning matters is</i></li> </ul>	<p>environmental practice (September 2025).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues.</u> This document provides a protocol for determining noise limits for new and existing commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues. It also sets the methodology for assessing the effective noise level to determine unreasonable noise under the proposed Environment Protection Regulations (September 2025).</li> <li>• <u>Vehicle guidance: Tanker/tanker trailer and Vehicle guidance: Non-tanker vehicles/trailers.</u> These guides describe the requirements for tanker/tanker trailer vehicles and non-tanker/tanker trailer</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
					<p><i>provided within required timeframes. The 2025-26 target is 65 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 80 per cent.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>EPA confirms duty holder compliance with remedial notice requirements, or escalates for further action, within 17 days of the compliance due date. The 2025-26 target is 80 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 90 per cent.</i></li> <li><i>EPA provides technical advice to lead agencies within required timelines during emergency incidents. The 2025-26 target is 90 per cent. The 2025-26 expected</i></li> </ul>	<p>vehicles that transport reportable priority waste. It is a condition of waste transport permissions that the vehicle to which the permission applies is fit for the purpose of transporting the reportable priority waste (July 2025).</p> <p><u>Bushfires 2026</u> EPA worked closely with Emergency Management Victoria, Forest Fire Management Victoria, the Bureau of Meteorology, water authorities and local government to support the 2026 Victorian bushfire response and recovery efforts through the lens of protecting human health and the environment from risks arising from pollution and waste. EPA monitored and reported on air quality impacts from bushfire smoke, including deploying additional monitoring when requested by incident controllers to Yea, Alexandra</p>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
					<p>outcome is 100 per cent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>EPA responds to priority waste incidents within 15 hours of notification.</i> The 2025-26 target is 90 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 100 per cent.</li> <li>• <i>Pollution reporters requesting follow up by EPA receive contact within five working days.</i> The 2025-26 target is 75 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 75 per cent.</li> </ul>	<p>and Dargo. It also utilised its statewide air monitoring network to provide regular air quality updates, including public reporting on changing conditions in affected regions. EPA provided technical environmental advice to emergency management agencies, including advice on smoke impacts, water quality risks and the use of fire retardants near waterways.</p> <p>Additional examples of EPA strengthening regulatory functions and demonstrating leadership on climate action and environmental justice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New environmental auditor appointments.</b> EPA made ongoing appointments of environmental auditors under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> (the Act) expanding the register to 77 auditors across 3 categories: contaminated land, industrial facilities,</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
						<p>and natural resources. These appointees are independent experts who are engaged by business, industry, and government to carry out statutory duties under the Act. Once appointed, each new auditor's contact details are available on <a href="#">EPA's appointments register</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First Nations Relationships.</b> To further focus on recognising Traditional Owner knowledge and expertise and their role in informing our regulatory decisions and decision-making processes, EPA has established a First Nations Relationships Branch.</li> </ul>
4.	Efficient and strengthened earth resources regulation	Funding was provided to Resources Victoria to support a sustainable mining and quarrying sector through strong regulations and timely decision making.	Resources output.	The funding from this initiative supports the licensing and regulation of the State's resources sector including facilitating earth resources projects in	The performance measures relating to this initiative are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Extractive Industries Work Authority work plans processed within regulatory timeframes.</i> The</li> </ul>	The progress achieved against key Government objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracting investment to develop economic growth – new projects are being approved including the following examples: a mining work plan for the</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				<p>a timely and transparent way that safeguards public safety, human health, infrastructure and the environment.</p> <p>Activities undertaken included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources Victoria continued to progress a major rapid inspection campaign as part of a broad program across the State to ensure licensees and authority holders are meeting their work plan obligations and are addressing key risks at their sites. A total of 396 inspections have been completed to</li> </ul>	<p>2025-26 target is 95 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 95 per cent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mineral licence applications processed within regulatory timeframes.</i> The 2025-26 target is 95 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 95 per cent.</li> <li><i>Mineral work plans processed within regulatory timeframes.</i> The 2025-26 target is 95 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 95 per cent.</li> <li><i>Earth resources regulatory audits completed in line with the agreed compliance work program.</i> The 2025-26 target is</li> </ul>	<p>VHM Limited's Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project, approval of an exploration tunnel for Southern Cross Gold's Sunday Creek Project, and approval for the construction of a new tailings storage facility at the Fosterville Gold Mine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated guidelines released to help applicants prepare mineralisation reports and more easily describe the resources they intend to target. This makes it easier for those applying for mining and retention licences.</li> <li>Environmental Sustainability and community safety – Resources Victoria issued Infringement Notices to Victory Minerals after a site inspection identified unauthorised construction, changed infrastructure and vegetation removal at Ballarat Gold Mine.</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				<p>date. This is crucial to protecting nearby communities, infrastructure and the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 7 November 2025, Resources Victoria approved the construction of a new tailings storage facility at the Fosterville Gold Mine, located 20 kilometres east of Bendigo. The facility will be built within an existing tailings area to help address storage constraints and ensure the mine can continue operating safely.</li> <li>Resources Victoria</li> </ul>	<p>277 audits. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 677 audits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Site rehabilitation bonds processed within 90 days from issue of bond notice for work plans expanding access to resource.</i> The 2025-26 target is 95 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 95 per cent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rapid inspection campaign is helping to ensure licensees and authority holders are meeting their work plan obligations and are addressing key risks at their sites including environmental risks.</li> <li>Resources Victoria has released new guidelines to assist Declared Mine operators with their rehabilitation planning.</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				approved a mining work plan for VHM Limited's Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project in north-west Victoria on 28 November 2025.		
5.	Safeguarding the future of Victoria's agricultural sector and supporting animal welfare	<p>Funding was provided to safeguard Victoria's agriculture sector from biosecurity threats including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining biosecurity surveillance, specialist technical capability and rapid response diagnostic capability;</li> <li>supporting the Varroa mite and avian influenza biosecurity response in Victoria and for the State's contribution to national biosecurity and response agreements; and</li> </ul>	Agriculture output.	<p>DEECA, through Agriculture Victoria, has delivered a biosecurity program under four streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness.</li> <li>Emergency Plant Pest Preparedness.</li> <li>Systems</li> <li>Coordination and evaluation.</li> </ul> <p>Through this program DEECA has delivered work programs to:</p>	The performance measure relating to this initiative is <i>Preparedness activities implemented, in line with agreed plans, to ensure response readiness for emergency animal and plant pest, disease and natural disaster incidents</i> . The 2025-26 target is 90 per cent. The 2025-26 expected outcome is 88 per cent.	<p>The program is on track. The progress achieved against key Government outcomes includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a continued focus on H5N1 avian influenza preparedness (including refresh of 'Day 1 stand up plan' and associated communication materials, input into national policy reviews and identifying priority at risk wildlife populations and species).</li> <li>Support for Victoria's transition to Varroa management through sustained industry partnerships and practical support, with Agriculture</li> </ul>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting existing regional fruit fly governance groups in the Goulburn Murray Valley Sunraysia and the Yarra Valley.</li> </ul> <p>Funding was also provided to enable RSPCA Victoria to continue to deliver essential animal welfare regulatory services on behalf of the Victorian Government, including responding to cruelty and welfare complaints, caring and rehabilitating animals seized or surrendered and delivering community outreach activities. Funding was also provided to a number of volunteer animal welfare organisations delivering animal care and rehabilitation.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain biosecurity surveillance, specialist technical capability to support regulatory responsibility and emergency readiness, and rapid response diagnostic capability;</li> <li>• support the Varroa mite and avian influenza biosecurity response in Victoria and for the State's contribution to national biosecurity and response agreements; and</li> <li>• support existing regional fruit fly governance groups in the Goulburn</li> </ul>		<p>Victoria staff delivering capability building, economic analysis and targeted engagement, including events, on-farm visits and direct support to over 100 beekeepers in 2026.</p>

	Major initiatives/programs	Objectives	Output	Activities undertaken	Progress against performance measures as at 30 April 2026	Progress achieved against key Government objectives
				<p>Murray Valley, Greater Sunraysia (now Murray Valley) and the Yarra Valley.</p> <p>RSPCA Victoria continued to deliver essential animal welfare regulatory services on behalf of the Victorian Government. This includes responding to animal cruelty complaints, caring for and rehabilitating animals seized by or surrendered to its Inspectorate, prosecuting animal cruelty, and engaging with animal owners on how to comply with animal cruelty and domestic animals legislation.</p>		

**Question 2**

What initiatives or programs have been streamlined or eliminated from the 2025–26 and 2026–27 Budget in line with the Government’s response to the Independent Review of the Victorian Public Service?<sup>1</sup>

**Response**

DEECA will deliver the required workforce reforms to implement the Government Response to the Independent Review of the Public Service (Silver Review) as required. This involves reducing executive roles by July 2026 and imposing elevated recruitment controls and workforce measures designed to use attrition to deliver the rebalancing of VPS5 and VPS6 positions, whilst continuing to deliver on Government's priorities. DEECA will continue to manage its resources to have minimal, if any, impact on service delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Government, *Ensuring the public sector is focussed on what matters most*, Melbourne, 2025.

### Question 3

For each of the output initiatives detailed in the 2022 Victorian Economic and Fiscal Update, 2023–24 Budget, 2023–24 Budget Update, 2024–25 Budget, 2024–25 Budget Update, 2025–26 Budget and the 2025–26 Budget Update that have allocated funding in 2025–26 and 2026–27,<sup>2</sup> please detail (on the same basis of consolidation as the budget papers):

- the original funding allocation for 2025–26 and 2026–27
- the current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 and 2026–27
- an explanation for any variances between the current funding and what was originally published in the budget papers when the initiative was announced. If machinery of government changes affected the implementation of these initiatives, please detail how.

### Response

	Output initiative	Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)	Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)
2022 Victorian Economic and Fiscal Update	Additional resources for energy projects	0.4	0.4	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
2022 Victorian Economic and Fiscal Update	Unlocking offshore wind	5.0	5.0	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
2022 Victorian Economic and Fiscal Update	Victorian Renewable Energy Target 2	1.7	0.0	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative 'Enhancing core energy functions'.	1.7	0.0	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative 'Enhancing core energy functions'.

<sup>2</sup> Please include any programs that originally had funding allocated for 2025–26 and 2026–27 but no longer have funding.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2022 Victorian Economic and Fiscal Update</b>	Joint management arrangements	2.9	2.9	Not applicable.	2.8	2.8	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Backing Victoria’s world class producers to grow	8.5	9.5	The revised position incorporates efficiency measures and rephased funding to better align to project deliverables.	3.4	1.5	The revised position incorporates efficiency measures and rephased funding to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Implementing animal welfare commitments	1.8	1.8	Not applicable.	1.8	1.8	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Timber Harvesting Transition Support	50.0	11.1	On 23 May 2023, it was announced that the end of native timber harvesting would be brought forward to 1 January 2024. Funding was rephased to better align the funding needs to the new end date, and to align to current grant programs providing support to businesses.	50.0	6.0	On 23 May 2023, it was announced that the end of native timber harvesting would be brought forward to 1 January 2024. Funding was rephased to better align the funding needs to the new end date, and to align to current grant programs providing support to businesses.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Delivering climate action	5.0	5.5	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	5.0	5.0	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Activating Tarago Reservoir for on water recreation	0.4	1.0	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Protecting waterways so our wildlife can thrive	1.0	2.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	A safe and just community transition to renewable energy	4.1	2.4	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>'Enhancing core energy functions'</i> .	4.1	2.7	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>'Enhancing core energy functions'</i> .
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Clean Energy Worker Training Centres	7.0	8.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	2.0	0.0	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2026-27 Budget initiative Energy Assistance Program and other initiatives across DEECA's portfolios.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Driving down bills with 100 neighbourhood batteries	12.4	16.4	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	12.4	6.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Driving down gas bills for businesses and households	1.3	0.1	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>'Enhancing core energy functions'</i> .	1.3	0.1	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>'Enhancing core energy functions'</i> .

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	SEC Centre of Training Excellence	2.0	0.0	Funding was transferred to the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to deliver the Centre of Training Excellence.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Protecting our parks, pets and wildlife – animal welfare	0.9	0.9	Not applicable.	0.9	0.9	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Bolstering the forest firefighting workforce	7.3	7.3	Not applicable.	7.5	7.5	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Maintaining strategic fuel breaks	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Implementing Great Ocean Road Management reforms	1.1	1.1	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2023–24 Budget</b>	Enabling a more streamlined approach to resources decision making	0.9	2.0	Funding was realigned to better support reforms for the transition to a new duties-based framework.	0.5	0.0	Funding was realigned to better support reforms for the transition to a new duties-based framework.
<b>2023–24 Budget Update</b>	Forestry Transition Program	20.2	19.1	Funding was rephased to align to revised delivery timelines of worker,	4.1	46.1	Funding was rephased to align to revised delivery timelines of worker, community and business

	Output initiative	Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)	Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)
				community and business support payments.			support payments. Some funding from this program has also been reprioritised. \$4.0 million in 2026-27 will be used to fund the 2026-27 Budget initiative Safeguarding the future of Victoria’s agriculture sector and supporting animal welfare.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Collaborative vertebrate pest animal management	0.4	0.4	Not applicable.	0.4	0.4	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Food safety of Victoria’s horticulture industry	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.	0.9	0.9	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Future Drought Fund	4.0	1.1	Funding has been rephased to align to updated Commonwealth funding arrangements and project deliverables.	1.8	0.6	Funding has been rephased to align to updated Commonwealth funding arrangements and project deliverables.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Protecting Victoria from biosecurity threats	28.5	28.6	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	22.1	22.1	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Rural Financial Counselling Service	2.1	2.1	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Supporting pets and animal welfare	5.2	5.5	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	2.6	3.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	ResourceSmart Schools	3.0	3.0	Not applicable.	3.0	3.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Bendigo mining rehabilitation treatment plant	To be confirmed <sup>3</sup>	4.0	Funding was provided to secure the delivery and the ongoing operations of the rehabilitation treatment plant to manage mine-impacted ground water in central Bendigo.	To be confirmed <sup>4</sup>	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Improving Victoria’s water resources knowledge and access	34.5	31.0	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	34.5	38.8	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Maintaining the health, resilience and enjoyment of Victoria’s waterways,	77.2	74.0	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	77.0	74.4	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.

<sup>3</sup> “tbc” was published in the 2024-25 Budget Papers. Funding was not reported at the time as commercial arrangements were still to be finalised.

<sup>4</sup> “tbc” was published in the 2024-25 Budget Papers. Funding was not reported at the time as commercial arrangements were still to be finalised.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
	catchments and Country						
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Maintaining water cycle climate action: Becoming net-zero and disaster ready	3.2	1.9	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	2.8	2.5	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Reducing the risks of floods in a changing climate	9.5	8.4	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	9.5	8.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Water efficiency and diverse water supplies for water security, resilience and liveability	31.2	14.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	26.0	29.3	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Water planning for a resilient and secure future	6.6	5.9	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.	5.8	5.9	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables and reflect program efficiencies.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Water wise and resilient rural communities	15.3	14.2	Funding reflects program efficiencies.	15.3	14.4	Funding reflects program efficiencies.

	Output initiative	Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)	Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Accelerating energy project delivery and mitigating biodiversity impacts	0.5	0.2	Funding reflects program efficiencies.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Delivering the offshore wind program	9.2	9.8	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	3.0	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Energy affordability and protecting consumers	3.9	1.5	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>‘Enhancing core energy functions’</i> .	2.1	0.3	Funding was reallocated to fund the 2025-26 Budget initiative <i>‘Enhancing core energy functions’</i> .
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Improving Victorian Energy Upgrades	3.0	1.4	Funding was rephased from 2025-26 into 2026-27 to finalise implementation of the review.	0.0	1.6	Funding was rephased from 2025-26 into 2026-27 to finalise implementation of the review.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Small-scale back-up generators program	0.1	0.1	Not applicable.	0.1	0.1	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	State funding commitments to national energy market bodies	11.1	11.1	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Securing the forest firefighting workforce	8.8	8.8	Not applicable.	9.0	9.0	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Forestry contractor strategy	72.5	82.1	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	72.5	72.5	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Future Forests program	41.4	35.5	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	14.7	31.2	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Ninety Mile Beach – growing the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Supporting the resources sector to achieve Net Zero and the Big Build	11.1	11.1	Not applicable.	11.1	11.1	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Preventing waste crime	11.1	11.1	Not applicable.	11.1	11.1	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Charitable recycler grants	1.9	1.9	Not applicable.	1.9	1.9	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Supporting a circular economy	3.1	4.4	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	3.1	3.1	Not applicable.
<b>2024–25 Budget</b>	Increased Traditional Owner access to water and decision making in water management	10.6	12.6	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	10.6	10.6	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2024–25 Budget Update</b>	Delivering the offshore wind program	11.2	11.8	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	20.0	17.9	Funding reflects program efficiencies.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	A skilled and healthy farming workforce	1.2	1.2	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Delivering agriculture sector emissions reductions	3.1	3.1	Not applicable.	3.0	3.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Growing the industrial hemp sector	0.4	0.2	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	0.2	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Managing the impacts of livestock predation – Fox Bounty	2.1	2.1	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Safeguarding the future of Victoria’s agricultural sector and supporting animal welfare	7.3	11.7	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	9.4	7.9	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Broken reconfiguration project	1.7	6.2	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	0.7	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Implementing Water Reform in the Murray Darling Basin	5.7	7.7	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	4.8	6.8	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Improving compliance in the Murray Darling Basin	0.7	0.7	Not applicable.	0.9	0.9	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Protecting Victoria’s water security	3.8	3.8	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Victorian led domestic and stock feasibility projects	0.3	0.0	The project was completed under budget and the final milestone payment of \$0.3 million was not required.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Continuing to meet Victoria’s Marinus Link shareholder responsibilities	2.5	2.5	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Enhancing core energy functions	34.4	34.4	Not applicable.	32.3	32.3	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Industrial Renewable Gas Guarantee	1.5	0.2	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.8	2.1	Funding has been rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Offshore Wind Program	10.0	2.9	The original \$10 million allocation reflected early	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.

	Output initiative	Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)	Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)	Explanation of variance (if any)
				cost estimates. This was subsequently revised to \$2.9 million to reflect actual costs incurred.			
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Power Saving Bonus for vulnerable consumers	50.6	40.6	More funding was provided for the Power Saving Bonus program than was needed, based on uptake.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Victorian Energy Upgrades Program – Insulation upgrades	4.6	3.5	Funding was rephased to better align to project deliverables.	4.6	4.9	Funding was rephased to better align to project deliverables.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Addressing recovery needs from the Western Victoria Bushfires	23.2	31.8	Funding was transferred from capital to output, in line with the expenditure profile of the program. Funding was rephased to better align to project deliverables.	13.0	0.0	Funds are being held in central contingency and will be called upon as needed to fund the program.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Efficient and timely environmental assessments	1.9	1.9	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Enabling collaborative wildlife management	1.1	1.1	Not applicable.	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Pest animal management	1.9	1.9	Not applicable.	2.2	2.2	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Supporting Landcare and Coastcare volunteers	8.7	8.7	Not applicable.	8.6	8.6	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Continue the establishment of Liwik Barring conservation area and protect Victoria’s faunal emblems	1.5	1.5	Not applicable.	1.5	1.5	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Delivering outdoor recreation and tourism	0.4	0.4	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Half-price camping fees	5.2	5.2	Not applicable.	5.3	0.0	Funds are being held in central contingency and will be called upon as needed to fund the program.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Kangaroo Harvesting Program	0.2	0.2	Not applicable.	0.6	0.6	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Protecting public land	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Supporting nature based tourism and the environment along the Great Ocean Road	3.7	3.7	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Zoos Victoria Kids Go Free	15.3	15.3	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Efficient and strengthened earth resources regulation	6.7	6.3	Funding reflects program efficiencies.	9.8	9.8	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Safeguarding Victoria from former mines and quarries	1.7	1.7	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Solar Homes Program – Hot water rebates	29.7	32.0	Funding was rephased to better align to project deliverables.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Sustaining the EPA’s strengthened regulatory functions	23.7	23.7	Not applicable.	23.7	23.7	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Joint Management of Barmah National Park	2.1	2.1	Not applicable.	2.1	2.1	Not applicable.

DEECA

	<b>Output initiative</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2025–26 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>	<b>Original funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Current expected funding allocation for 2026–27 (\$m)</b>	<b>Explanation of variance (if any)</b>
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Incorporating renewable energy zones to the State Planning Policy Framework	5.0	5.0	Not applicable.	5.0	5.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget</b>	Supporting investment in the resources sector	3.6	4.6	The reinstatement of unspent 2024-25 funds to align with the revised work program for the critical minerals roadmap.	1.0	1.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget Update</b>	Emergency Preparedness Package	65.8 <sup>5</sup>	65.8	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.
<b>2025–26 Budget Update</b>	Drought support package	96.5	96.5	Not applicable.	0.0	0.0	Not applicable.

<sup>5</sup> Reflects DEECA component only.

## Strategic issues

### Question 4

In order of priority, please list the five most significant strategic issues that influenced the development of the department's estimates for the 2026-27 financial year. Please describe how the department will address these issues in 2026–27.

### Response

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
1.	Driving Victoria's economic growth sustainably	<p>In 2026-27, the Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver on commitments in the Government's Economic Growth Statement, including increasing the waste to energy cap, implementing Victoria's Critical Minerals Roadmap, releasing a Renewable Gas Directions Paper, enabling faster planning approvals for projects in Victoria's renewable energy zones, progressing food safety regulator reforms aligned with the commitment to halve the number of business regulators by 2030, and delivering actions in support of the agribusiness priority sector, including the development of agricultural applications of RNA technology.</li> <li>• Ensure Victoria's extractive resources sector supplies the raw materials required to support the state's growth, including delivery of Big Build projects and achievement of housing targets.</li> <li>• Promote new resources development opportunities across the state through the release of new geoscience information.</li> <li>• Finalise and implement the state's approach to managing byproducts and Forest Produce Licences,</li> </ul>	<p>Progress achieved as at 30 April 2026 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the development of critical minerals through new mining Work Plan approvals for the Goschen and Donald mineral sands projects in western Victoria, approval of the Sunday Creek gold and antimony exploration decline in central Victoria, and approval for Gippsland Critical Minerals to undertake a mining and rehabilitation trial in east Gippsland.</li> <li>• Approval of 90 million tonnes of new quarry resources to support future infrastructure delivery, including Big Build projects and the government's housing targets.</li> <li>• Progressed a pre-feasibility study for Victoria's first rare earth element processing facility, and announced a \$1 million grant program to advance antimony processing in Victoria, supporting domestic supply chains for clean energy technologies.</li> <li>• Resources Victoria promoted the state's critical minerals potential at major mining conferences including the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada event in March 2026 held in Toronto.</li> <li>• Supporting regional jobs and economic transition through the Forestry Transition Program.</li> <li>• As of 31 March 2026, awarded 50 business and community grants under the Transition Fund, Victorian Timber Innovation Fund, and</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<p>delivering economic benefits to local communities, businesses, and Traditional Owners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and enhance Victoria’s distillery industry in partnership with industry, including the launch of the Victorian Distilled Spirits Strategy.</li> <li>• Continue to support Victoria’s producers by growing industry capability, developing a skilled workforce, and expanding domestic and international markets.</li> <li>• Continue to deliver and demonstrate cutting edge research to industry through the five regional Agriculture Victoria Smart Farms.</li> <li>• Facilitate increased investment in the agriculture sector to grow productivity and competitiveness by supporting investors and local government to navigate planning schemes and approvals.</li> <li>• Support the Forestry Transition Plan through delivery of community and business grant programs.</li> <li>• Promote sustainable forestry practices by investing in the Gippsland Plantations Investment Program as part of Victoria’s transition away from reliance on native forest fibre.</li> <li>• Support the economic recovery of Victorian communities and the environment impacted by natural disasters in 2025–26, including bushfires and severe weather events.</li> <li>• Consolidate food safety regulators into a single new entity Safe Food Victoria.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development Fund as part of the Forestry Transition Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging Commonwealth co-investment to grow infrastructure delivery and regional economies.</li> <li>• Delivery of the Rural Women’s Network and Farming Safe and Well programs, as well as providing 13 Young Farmers Scholarships to build capability, confidence and skills across the sector.</li> <li>• Safe Food Victoria Bill 2026 passed Parliament on 2 April 2026 – allowing for the establishment of Safe Food Victoria by 1 July 2026.</li> <li>• Agriculture Victoria was the Host State Sponsor for Asia-Pacific’s premier AgTech innovation conference (Evoke Ag) held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) on 17–18 February, which attracted more than 1,500 domestic and international delegates.</li> <li>• Safeguarding and promoting standards of care for livestock to support community, consumer and global trading partner confidence in animal welfare standards. By example, as of 31 March, over 1,500 livestock welfare reports have been received, requiring triage to assess the most appropriate regulatory approach.</li> <li>• The Victorian Land Use Information System (VLUIS) continues to provide a comprehensive spatial dataset that provides detailed information on land tenure, land use and land cover across Victoria, informing climate adaptation decision-making and the assessments of land use change and competition.</li> <li>• Increasing Victoria’s waste to energy cap to 2.5 million tonnes per annum and issuing seven cap licences to enable significant new investment in Victoria.</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide regional economic development opportunities and jobs through the delivery of renewable energy projects in regional Victoria, supporting resilience to early coal closures and other grid disruptions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENGIE and Energy Australia submitted Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plans for the Hazlewood and Yallourn coal mines respectively to Resources Victoria by the statutory deadline of 1 October 2025.</li> </ul>
2.	Emergency preparedness and recovery from natural disasters	<p>In 2026-27, the Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigate the risks and impacts of bushfires and other emergencies on communities, the environment, critical infrastructure, essential assets, and local economies through the Joint Fuel Management Program and other bushfire risk reduction initiatives.</li> <li>Manage and deliver maintenance works across DEECA’s fire access road network and the fuel breaks network.</li> <li>Reduce the risks associated with flood emergencies in a changing climate.</li> <li>Respond effectively to emergencies across Victoria, including biosecurity outbreaks, bushfires, floods, and other disaster events.</li> <li>Continue to support preparedness for and response to dry seasonal conditions and drought, noting that drought is not formally classified as an emergency or natural disaster.</li> <li>Coordinate the delivery of recovery services following emergencies, including capital works repairs, recovery grants, and environmental remediation.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress achieved as at 30 April 2026 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a new risk-based flood hazard rating system, adapted from the successful bushfire rating system, to provide better flood information for local communities.</li> <li>Delivered recovery programs following major bushfires, including biodiversity, cultural heritage, public asset, primary producers (grants and concessional loans under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements), roading and catchment recovery related to the Western Victoria Bushfires and the January 2026 bushfires.</li> <li>Provided additional recovery support to farmers impacted by the January 2026 bushfires through delivering technical information and events on topics such as grazing, cropping and pasture management, land management, animal health and nutrition, water quality and biosecurity management.</li> <li>Deployed 71 individuals to manage wildlife welfare impacts from eight bushfire events; over 1,000 animals were assessed by welfare teams.</li> <li>Continued to undertake long-term planning, preparation and response for water emergencies.</li> <li>Coordinated the processing of Emergency Relief Drinking Water Program applications for eligible communities impacted by the January 2026 bushfires.</li> <li>Strengthened bushfire preparedness through strategic fire access programs.</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect Victoria from biosecurity threats by strengthening biosecurity systems and preparedness for biosecurity emergencies.</li> <li>• Support primary producers to recover from natural disasters.</li> <li>• Partner with the Grains Research Development Corporation (GRDC), as part of the National Grains Diagnostic and Surveillance initiative that will improve biosecurity preparedness by modernising diagnostic and related surveillance activities.</li> <li>• Agriculture Victoria will continue implementing Victoria’s Drought Preparedness and Response Framework that guides government’s response to drought as well as longer-term resilience building such as through Regional Drought Resilience Planning.</li> <li>• Agriculture Victoria will continue to provide support to primary producers from the impacts of natural disasters including by activation of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements when appropriate.</li> <li>• Coordinating long-term land and ecosystem recovery after floods, storms and bushfires.</li> <li>• Integrating Traditional Owner knowledge into emergency recovery and healing Country activities.</li> <li>• Addressing increased emergency frequency through system-level preparedness and resilience planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed the portfolio of aviation, fleet, plant, equipment and technology assets and resources that support forest and fire preparedness and response.</li> <li>• Delivered the first Bushfire Management Snapshot, providing information on how Victoria’s land and fire agencies work together to manage bushfire risk and work done ahead of the 2025-26 high risk weather season.</li> <li>• Supported emergency response capability for biosecurity threats such as avian influenza and published and communicated the Guidelines for managing wildlife in an H5 bird flu outbreak.</li> <li>• Delivered drought support to farmers with more than 5,400 Farm Drought Support Grants committed, more than 510 Household Financial Relief Payment applications paid via the Country Women’s Association (at December 2025) and provided technical advisory services through engagement with farmers.</li> <li>• Released 14 new or revised trade arrangements, accredited over 600 Victorian businesses, and protected nursery, vegetable and fruit trade in response to the trade pest Tomato potato psyllid.</li> <li>• Expanded biosecurity training and preparedness programs in the South Pacific through funding provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which supports implementation of Australia’s National Biosecurity Strategy and protects Victoria's plant and animal industries from new incursions.</li> </ul>
3.	Supporting Victoria’s energy transition	<p>In 2026-27, the Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program by enabling the storage of cheap, local solar generation to help lower energy bills.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress achieved as at 30 April 2026 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program installed 25 neighbourhood batteries statewide in the first half of 2025–26.</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
	towards renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the growth of Victoria’s offshore wind industry to create jobs, attract investment, and expand the state’s renewable energy capacity.</li> <li>• Upskill the workforce and strengthen clean energy supply chains through worker training centres, the National Training Centre for New Energy Skills, and the Victorian Energy Jobs Plan.</li> <li>• Assist households and businesses by delivering energy affordability services that increase awareness, understanding, and engagement in the Victorian energy market.</li> <li>• Develop policies to deliver Victoria’s energy storage targets and progress regulatory reforms to support investment in energy storage.</li> <li>• Support Victorian households and businesses to reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency upgrades under the Victorian Energy Upgrades program.</li> <li>• Continue to ensure security of Victoria’s gas supply while promoting an orderly energy transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved Victoria’s 2025 target of 40 per cent renewable electricity generation, reaching 44.6 per cent.</li> <li>• Announcement of new renewable generation and storage projects to be supported through the Commonwealth Capacity Investment Scheme.</li> <li>• Strengthened electricity system security through updates to the emergency backstop mechanism for rooftop solar and upgraded real-time monitoring to respond faster to outages and security risks.</li> <li>• Advanced gas transition and supply security, releasing the Gas Substitution Roadmap update and progressing the <i>National Gas (Victoria) Amendment Bill 2025</i>.</li> <li>• Completion of comprehensive port analysis, confirming the Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal at the Port of Hastings as the preferred construction port.</li> <li>• Solar Victoria continued to deliver Solar Home rebates, with 26,200 applications approved for Solar PV and 22,351 for hot water electrification this financial year as of 2 April 2026.</li> <li>• Delivered over 340,000 discounted energy efficient upgrades through the Victorian Energy Upgrades program for Victorian households and businesses in 2025.</li> <li>• Expanded activities under the Victorian Energy Upgrades program, including the introduction of a new Commercial and Industrial solar PV activity, and ceiling insulation activity.</li> </ul>
4.	Building Climate-Resilient Land, Water and Natural Systems	<p>In 2026-27, the Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce emissions and improve energy productivity through the Victorian Energy Upgrades Program.</li> <li>• Continue to enhance Victoria’s water planning to increase water efficiency and diversify water supplies for water security, resilience and liveability.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress achieved as at 30 April 2026 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered over 340,000 discounted energy efficient upgrades through the Victorian Energy Upgrades program, cutting Victoria’s emissions by 6.9 million tonnes.</li> <li>• Released the Water Security Plan that provides a long-term framework to secure water supplies in a changing climate.</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain climate action across Victoria’s water cycle to support a healthy environment, a prosperous economy, and resilient communities under a changing climate.</li> <li>• Maintain the health of Victoria’s waterways and catchments in the face of escalating climate change impacts.</li> <li>• Monitor the impact of bushfire and emergency management activities on threatened species.</li> <li>• Complete post-timber harvesting regeneration works and support seed collection and management for restoration following major disturbance.</li> <li>• Continue to partner with the agriculture sector to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change through priority actions, as well as with universities and industry through the Co-operative Research Centre for Zero Net Emissions in Agriculture (ZNE-CRC).</li> <li>• Continue to support Victoria’s agriculture, fisheries and plantation forestry sectors to prepare for and adapt to a rapidly changing climate through the release of the second Primary Production Adaptation Action Plan for the 2027-2031 cycle.</li> <li>• Support climate-based land use decisions through provision of improved data by delivering initiatives such as Strategic Agricultural Land and Development 2.0.</li> <li>• Deliver funding programs that achieve biodiversity and carbon policy outcomes through the BushBank program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the Integrated Water Management Grant Program (2025-2028) and supported 577 households in hardship (to Nov 2025) to improve water efficiency through the Community Rebate Program.</li> <li>• Secured Commonwealth investment for Murray Darling Basin Plan water recovery projects, consistent with Victoria’s Planning our Basin future together prospectus.</li> <li>• Strengthened water sector climate resilience strengthened, including progress toward net zero emissions, secure supplies (including desalination), and implementing sector wide resilience planning for drought, floods and bushfires.</li> <li>• Progressed regeneration of ex-VicForests sites requiring further works (on track for over 80 per cent) and strengthened seed storage and regeneration activities through seed collection.</li> <li>• National Soil Strategy and National Soil Action Plan manages and protects soils in Victoria, increasing productivity and drought resilience.</li> <li>• Released Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy 2026–30 and seven emissions reduction pledges in November 2025, including the Agriculture Sector Emissions Reduction Pledge, and published the Victorian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2023, showing a 31.4 per cent reduction below 2005 levels, within the 2025 target range.</li> <li>• Commenced key actions under the Agriculture Sector Emissions Reduction Pledge 2026-2030, including trials at the DEECA Ellinbank Smartfarm and scoping commercialisation pathways for low emissions solutions for Victorian farmers.</li> <li>• Release of the second whole-of-government Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement in October 2025.</li> <li>• The Container Deposit Scheme has recovered over 1 billion containers (July 2025 to April 2026) and reduced eligible container</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Divert waste from landfill and reduce the volume of waste requiring management by supporting the Container Deposit Scheme.</li> <li>Create new outdoor open spaces and upgrade existing parks for Victorians through the Suburban Parks Program and the Better Parks and Playgrounds Program, with all Better Parks and Playgrounds projects to be completed by December 2026.</li> <li>Implement the Marine and Coastal Strategy to support a healthy, dynamic and biodiverse marine and coastal environment.</li> </ul>	<p>litter by 71%. The scheme has also generated over \$300 million in refunds and \$3 million in donations since scheme commencement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported fuel management, forest management and climate adapted land management decisions through biodiversity surveys.</li> <li>Delivered large-scale habitat protection and restoration on private land, with new permanently protected native vegetation that contributes to biodiversity resilience and carbon storage.</li> <li>As part of the Suburban Parks Program, 14 new off-leash dog parks, 29 new pocket parks, 41 park revitalisation projects, and 6 new recreational cycling and walking trails across northern metropolitan Melbourne have been delivered. A total of 477 hectares of land has been acquired to enable the future establishment of four new large regional parks for Melbourne’s growing communities in Deanside, Werribee, Clyde and Heatherton.</li> <li>Delivered the final years of actions under the Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022, supporting Traditional Owner self-determination through the Salt Water Council and Sea Country Partnership, and streamlined the Marine and Coastal Act consent processes and policy advice on strategic marine spatial planning.</li> </ul>
5.	Advancing Aboriginal self-determination	<p>In 2026-27, the Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate and support the implementation of Traditional Owner Country Plans to restore and heal Country, including promoting cultural fire practices on public land and supporting biosecurity management on privately managed land by Traditional Owners.</li> <li>Continue to support implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy and Cultural Landscapes Strategy, working with the Cultural Fire Leadership Group and supporting the Cultural Fire Grants Program.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress achieved as at 30 April 2026 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing development of the refreshed Pupangarli Marnmarnepu Self-Determination Strategy, to prioritise and bring alignment to DEECA’s commitments to First Peoples Self-Determination within the current policy environment.</li> <li>Delivery of the Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum 14, co-chaired and hosted by Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation.</li> <li>Assisting Traditional Owners to strengthen sustainable economic activity on privately owned land through best practice food and</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support Traditional Owner Land Management Boards to ensure the knowledge, culture, and decision making of Traditional Owner groups are recognised in land management.</li> <li>• Develop a benefit sharing model in partnership with Traditional Owners as part of the Critical Minerals Roadmap.</li> <li>• Continue to collaborate with Traditional Owners and the water sector to implement Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap.</li> <li>• Continue to advance employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within DEECA and to strategically prioritise procurement from Aboriginal-controlled suppliers in line with DEECA’s Social Procurement Strategy.</li> <li>• Actively respond to the Yoorrook Justice Commission and support the advancement of Treaty, while delivering renewed commitments under a refreshed Pupangarli Marnmarnepu, DEECA’s Self-Determination Reform Strategy.</li> <li>• Continue to strengthen Aboriginal cultural capability across DEECA and deliver priority actions under the new First Peoples Workforce Strategy 2026-31.</li> <li>• Continue input to the development of a National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry led by the Commonwealth through the Agriculture Ministers Meeting (AMM) forum.</li> <li>• Include a Traditional Owner group in the seed collection and services contract panel, based on</li> </ul>	<p>fibre production and contemporary land and biodiversity management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to deliver actions under the <i>Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap</i> that sets out the Victorian Government’s commitments and policy pathways to increase decision-making and resources for Traditional Owners in the management of water landscapes, as well as increasing Traditional Owner access to water.</li> <li>• Continued to support the Traditional Owner led Native Food and Botanical Strategy (TONFABS) related work including the Djakitjuk Djanga Community of Practice, First Nations Digital-Handshake Pilot and the Medicinal Agriculture Project.</li> <li>• Supported Traditional Owner participation in land, catchment and biodiversity management and continued delivery of funding reform opportunities for Traditional Owners.</li> <li>• Worked with Traditional Owners on recovery planning following natural disasters.</li> <li>• Continued to strengthen Aboriginal cultural capability across DEECA, with Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training delivered to 92 per cent of DEECA staff.</li> <li>• Continuing to support the Cultural Fire Grants Program, to enable Traditional Owner cultural fire practices and the implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy.</li> <li>• Provided post-harvest regeneration works including seedling production, planting, and weed control to Traditional Owner groups.</li> <li>• Established a Country Advisor pilot program to embed Traditional Owners in emergency management incident management teams to support self-determination and improve outcomes for Country.</li> </ul>

	Strategic issue	How the department will address the issue in 2026–27	What progress, if any, has been made as at 30 April 2026, if applicable?
		<p>interest and capacity. Traditional Owner groups on the panel have first right of refusal of seed collection work on-Country and are given priority to obtain a place on the contract panel at any time with appropriate capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice in state forest planning and management through the cultural landscape pilot projects, developed as part of the Great Outdoors Taskforce and Eminent Panel for Community Engagement reviews of state forests in the Central Highlands, North East and Gippsland.</li> </ul>

## Revenue and expenditure – variances

### Question 5

*Budget Paper No. 5: Statement of Finances* provides a comprehensive operating statement that details each department's revenue and expenses on an accrual basis reflecting the cost of providing its output.

For each line item of the comprehensive operating statement if there is a variance greater than 10 per cent (positive or negative) or greater than \$100 million (positive or negative) please explain the reason for the variance between the budget for 2025–26, the revised estimate for 2025–26 and the budget for 2026–27.

#### *Guidance*

Where the variance is in 'Other operating expenses', please supply the relevant expense category.

### Response

Line item	2025–26 Budget (\$ million)	2025–26 Revised estimate (\$ million)	Explanation for any variances greater than ±10% (or greater than \$100 million) 2025–26 Budget vs. 2025–26 Revised estimate
Output appropriations	1,654	2,199	The variance primarily reflects additional government funding provided for response and recovery initiatives associated with bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies year-to-year depending on their timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the year. The variance is also attributable to the release of contingency funding for the Forestry Contractor Strategy and the Power Saving Bonus for Vulnerable Consumers initiatives, as well as supplementary funding for energy initiatives.
Special appropriations	0	5	The variance primarily reflects the recognition of prior-year Commonwealth revenue in 2025–26 for onshore species-specific research and guidance to support the onshore renewable energy industry, as well as the Solar for Apartments initiative.
Interest income	49	49	Not applicable.
Sales of goods and services	131	207	The variance relates to higher revenue from tripartite contracts administered by the department on behalf of local councils, the Arthur

			Rylah Institute, the Native Vegetation Landowner Fund; repayments from VicGrid associated with the bringing forward of resources to support critical preparatory and development activities ahead of VicGrid obtaining legislative powers as a State Business Corporation; and to meet VicGrid establishment costs in 2025-26.
Grants	33	62	The variance is primarily attributable to additional grant funding received in 2025–26 for the Addressing Recovery Needs from the Western Victoria Bushfires initiative. This funding was provided by the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS).
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	20	20	Not applicable.
Other revenue and income	822	817	Not applicable.
Employee benefits	755	946	The variance is primarily driven by additional expenditure associated with the department’s response to 2025-26 bushfire events, drought support and biosecurity emergencies. The movement also reflects expenditure related to a range of other initiatives, including implementing water reform in the Murray-Darling Basin, the Future Forest and Forestry Contractor Strategy programs, and VicGrid 2025–26 operations and project delivery. In addition, the variance also relates to the reprofiling of the departments estimates between employee benefits and other operating expenses to better align estimates with program delivery.
Depreciation	126	125	Not applicable.
Interest expense	35	31	The variance is primarily attributable to a reduction in interest expense associated with interest-free loans provided through the Solar Homes initiative.
Grants expense	1,056	1,409	The variance primarily reflects increased expenditure associated with the department’s response to 2025-26 bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impacts of these events varies year to year depending on timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the year. The variance also reflects grants expenditure associated with the Power Saving Bonus for Vulnerable Consumers, Renewable Energy Transition and VicGrid operations and project delivery initiatives, contributions for the Albert Park Pit Building Redevelopment and Western Grassland Reserves, and for the detailed assessments under the Restoring Flows to the Mallee Floodplain project.

Other operating expenses	679	842	<p>The variance primarily reflects expenditure associated with the department's response to 2025-26 bushfire events, drought support and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies year to year depending on their timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the financial.</p> <p>The variance also reflects expenditure associated with the Forestry Contractor Strategy, VicGrid operations and project delivery, a range of initiatives to improve outdoor recreation activities on public land and the Western Grassland Reserves.</p> <p>The increase is partially offset by the reprofiling of the departments estimates between employee benefits and other operating expenses to better align estimates with program delivery.</p>
<b>Line item</b>	<b>2025–26 Budget (\$ million)</b>	<b>2026–27 Budget (\$ million)</b>	<b>Explanation for any variances greater than ±10% (or greater than \$100 million) 2025–26 Budget vs. 2026–27 Budget</b>
Output appropriations	1,654	1,671	Not applicable.
Special appropriations	0	2	The variance primarily reflects the recognition of prior-year Commonwealth revenue in 2026-27 for Implementing water reform in the Murray-Darling Basin initiative.
Interest income	49	49	Not applicable.
Sales of goods and services	131	174	The variance is primarily attributable to additional revenue in 2026-27 from tripartite contracts administered by the department on behalf of local councils and the Native Vegetation Landowner Fund.
Grants	33	32	Not applicable.
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	20	20	Not applicable.
Other revenue and income	822	877	Not applicable.
Employee benefits	755	842	The variance primarily reflects higher employee expenditure associated with 2026-27 Budget initiatives. The variance also relates to higher employee costs resulting from Enterprise Bargaining Agreement increments.
Depreciation	126	119	Not applicable.
Interest expense	35	32	Not applicable.

Grants expense	1,056	1,076	Not applicable.
Other operating expenses	679	683	Not applicable.
<b>Line item</b>	<b>2025–26 Revised estimate (\$ million)</b>	<b>2026–27 Budget (\$ million)</b>	<b>Explanation for any variances greater than ±10% (or greater than \$100 million) 2025–26 Revised estimate vs. 2026–27 Budget</b>
Output appropriations	2,199	1,671	The variance is primarily attributable to additional government funding received in 2025–26 for response and recovery initiatives associated with bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies year to year depending on timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the year. The variance also reflects the release of contingency funding for the Power Saving Bonus for Vulnerable Consumers initiative, additional government funding for Renewable Energy Transition and VicGrid operations and project delivery initiatives in 2025-26. This has been partially offset by new funding announced in the 2026-27 State Budget.
Special appropriations	5	2	The variance primarily reflects the recognition of prior-year Commonwealth revenue in 2025–26 for onshore species-specific research and guidance to support the onshore renewable energy industry, as well as the Solar for Apartments initiative.
Interest income	49	49	Not applicable.
Sales of goods and services	207	174	The movement reflects repayments from VicGrid associated with the bringing forward of resources to support critical preparatory and development activities ahead of VicGrid obtaining legislative powers as a State Business Corporation, and to meet VicGrid establishment costs in 2025-26.
Grants	62	32	The variance reflects additional government funding received in 2025-26 for the Addressing Recovery Needs from the Western Victoria Bushfires initiative, following additional support provided by the Department of Justice and Community Safety. This funding was specific to recovery activities undertaken in 2025-26. The impact of these events varies year to

			year depending on timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the financial year.
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	20	20	Not applicable.
Other revenue and income	817	877	Not applicable.
Employee benefits	946	842	The variance reflects additional government funding provided in 2025-26 for response and recovery initiatives associated with bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies from year to year depending on timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the start of the financial year. The 2026-27 estimate returns to a level consistent with approved government policy decisions, incorporating the impact of recent Silver Review recommendations.
Depreciation	125	119	Not applicable.
Interest expense	31	32	Not applicable.
Grants expense	1,409	1,076	The variance is primarily attributable to additional government funding in 2025-26 for response and recovery initiatives associated with bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies year to year depending on their timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the year. The variance also reflects the release of contingency funding for the Power Saving Bonus for Vulnerable Consumers initiative, as well as additional government funding provided for the Renewable Energy Transition and VicGrid operations and project delivery initiatives in 2025-26.
Other operating expenses	842	683	The variance is primarily attributable to additional funding in 2025–26 for response and recovery initiatives associated with bushfire events, drought support, and biosecurity emergencies. The financial impact of these events varies year-to-year depending on their timing, scale and severity, and cannot be reliably forecast at the commencement of the year. The variance is also attributable to the Forestry Contractor Strategy and VicGrid operations and project delivery, which were transferred to VicGrid effective, from 1 November 2025.

## Revenue initiatives – new and changed

### Question 6

For all new revenue initiatives in the 2026–27 budget papers and for all existing revenue initiatives that have changed in the 2026–27 budget papers as compared to the previous financial year, please provide the:

- a) name of the initiative in the 2026–27 budget papers
- b) objective/s of the initiative
- c) reason for the new initiative or change to the initiative
- d) expected outcome/benefit for the Victorian community of the new initiative/change to the initiative
- e) anticipated revenue in the financial year 2026–27 and over the forward estimates gained or foregone as a result of the new initiative/change to the initiative.

### Response

Name of the initiative in the 2026–27 budget papers	Not applicable.
Objective/s of the initiative	
Reason for new initiative or change	
Expected outcome/benefit for the Victorian community of the new initiative/change to the initiative	
Anticipated revenue in financial year 2026–27 gained or foregone	
Anticipated revenue in financial year 2027–28 gained or foregone	
Anticipated revenue in financial year 2028–29 gained or foregone	
Anticipated revenue in financial year 2029–30 gained or foregone	

## Expenditure – new programs and initiatives (output and asset)

### Question 7

For all new programs and initiatives (output and asset) in the 2026–27 budget papers, please provide the:

- name of the program/initiative
- objective(s) of the program
- factors that have driven the creation of the initiative (including social, environmental or economic factors)
- budgeted expenditure in financial year 2026–27 on the program/initiative
- how it will be funded (i.e. through new output appropriation, Commonwealth funding, internal reprioritisation etc.)
- how the outcomes and impacts will be measured (such as relevant indicators, evaluations, routine monitoring).

### Response

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
Safeguarding the future of Victoria's agriculture sector and supporting animal welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is provided to continue protecting Victoria's agriculture sector from biosecurity threats. This includes maintaining surveillance and early detection specialist expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong biosecurity is critical to the strength of Victoria's agriculture sector. As biosecurity and natural disaster threats continue to increase in number, complexity and scale, Agriculture Victoria (Class 2 Control Agency) must maintain its capability and continue</li> </ul>	16.8	Appropriation / Internal reprioritisation	<u>Protecting Victoria's agriculture sector from biosecurity threats</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework will be developed to ensure the objectives, outputs and indicators of actions are regularly and robustly monitored. This will include:</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	<p>and emergency response capability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is also provided to enable RSPCA Victoria to continue to deliver essential animal welfare regulatory services on behalf of the Victorian Government, including responding to cruelty and welfare complaints, caring for and rehabilitating animals seized or surrendered and delivering community outreach activities.</li> <li>Funding is also provided to a number of volunteer animal</li> </ul>	<p>to invest in new and emerging policies and systems that increase Victoria’s capacity to prevent incursions, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of responses, and minimise economic impact to the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising cost-of-living pressures and community expectations have increased demand for Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Victoria for services delivered on behalf of government with increased operating costs. RSPCA Victoria is responsible for animal welfare and management of domestic animals and horses under the</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent benchmarking of biosecurity preparedness.</li> <li>Delivery of biosecurity exercise program and after-action reviews.</li> <li>Independent assessment of DEECA’s progress against Victoria’s Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan’s biosecurity Action 4.1</li> <li>The initiative also incorporates funding to undertake evaluation activities in Year 2 and a lapsing evaluation in Year 4 to determine overall program effectiveness and impact in line with DTF lapsing funding requirements.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	welfare organisations delivering animal care and rehabilitation.	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Domestic Animals Act.			<p><u>RSPCA Victoria to continue to deliver essential animal welfare regulatory services on behalf of the Victorian Government</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional operational data will be included in quarterly updates provided to the department as part of existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reporting, against key performance indicators for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ staff safety (employment of 2-up model);</li> <li>○ enforcement activities and outcomes (animal cruelty investigations and prosecutions); and</li> <li>○ animal welfare and horse outcomes (number surrendered/seized, rehabilitated/rehomed).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
Investment in people in agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is provided to support the health, safety and wellbeing of agricultural communities. This includes funding for the National Centre for Farmer Health, the Rural Women’s Network, and for the first phase of the Bendigo Livestock Exchange roof project.</li> <li>Funding is also provided for the Rural Financial Counselling Service in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. This will enable the Rural Financial Counselling Service to continue to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting a diverse, healthy workforce in agriculture delivers economy-wide benefits and helps unlock the multi-industry productivity growth and development opportunities identified in the Economic Growth Statement. People and communities are key enabling components of an economically productive, inclusive and resilient society.</li> <li>Farm businesses need to manage and respond to a highly volatile operating environment relative to other business sectors, including exposure to increasing climate variation, fluctuating commodity markets,</li> </ul>	7.4	Community Support Fund / Appropriation / Internal reprioritisation	<p><u>Support the health, safety and wellbeing of agricultural communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program effectiveness will be monitored throughout the implementation period. Progress, achievements and data will be reported through the Commonwealth Government reporting system and shared directly with states. The National Centre for Farmer Health funding agreement will include evaluation measures within milestone deliverables.</li> </ul> <p><u>Rural Financial Counselling Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Financial Counselling Services providers will be required to submit quarterly reports to the Victorian Government and</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	<p>provide free financial counselling to Victorian farmers, fishers, foresters and related small businesses experiencing or at risk of financial hardship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is also provided to continue the Drink Victoria program, driving growth in local production through education and marketing, and to support the development of a Victorian Craft Beer and Cider Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>high input costs, labour shortages, disease outbreaks, and ongoing adjustment pressures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additionally, Victorian farmers have experienced bushfires, storms and floods, drought and fuel shortages recently and over the past few years which have impacted profitability.</li> <li>The Rural Financial Counselling Service assists farmers to understand their financial position, identify options and make decisions to improve their business viability. It helps viable farm businesses to become more productive and profitable, and non-</li> </ul>			<p>attend quarterly meetings with the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to discuss issues and recommendations for continuous improvement.</p> <p><u>Drink Victoria program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program reports on progress each year against key indicators, using an independent monitoring and evaluation consultancy.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
		<p>viable farm businesses to exit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumption of Victorian beverages as a proportion of beverages consumed is low compared to other states. Across all drink categories, Victorian drinks make up around 16 per cent of the drinks offered at Victorian hospitality venues.</li> <li>• There is a significant opportunity to ‘win at home’ by increasing local consumption through education and awareness of the outstanding quality of Victorian beverages.</li> </ul>			
Managing the impacts of livestock predation – Victorian Fox Bounty	Funding is provided to extend the Fox Bounty program to help manage the impacts of livestock predation.	Foxes are present in all parts of Victoria, causing impacts across urban, regional and remote areas. Coordinated management approaches	2.2	Appropriation	<p>During the collection period, quantitative data collected from participants is used to monitor fox bounty delivery, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of participants.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
		<p>involving all landholders in affected areas are central to successful fox control. The fox bounty program helps address demand from rural and regional communities for government support to assist with pest management. There is also a strong desire among hunting and farming organisations to reward hunters for their efforts to reduce livestock predation.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of fox scalps presented for reward payment.</li> <li>• Geographic distribution, by collection centre, where the fox scalps were submitted.</li> </ul>
Activating Healthy Forests	Funding is provided to continue the Future Forests program to assist in the management of over 1.8 million hectares of state forest where timber harvesting no longer occurs due to the transition out of native timber	Funding supports the care of healthy forests, reduces the risk of bushfires on public land, and enables effective response when fires occur. It also improves outdoor recreation and supports an integrated land and fire management approach that helps make public land in Victoria safer, more productive, and more	9.9	Sustainability Fund / Appropriation	<p>The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity and threatened species surveys completed.</li> <li>• Productive and biodiverse forests.</li> <li>• Reduced bushfire risk, and greater community access.</li> <li>• Government meeting its legislative and strategic commitments.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	harvesting. This includes funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continued work to regenerate former logging coupes to their natural forested state, including eucalypt seed collection;</li> <li>• ecosystem data and modelling, which underpins forest and fire management planning on public land;</li> <li>• forest management monitoring and reporting;</li> <li>• on-ground targeted surveys of biodiversity and threatened species;</li> <li>• research to inform bushfire</li> </ul>	biodiverse, while ensuring land and fire are managed in a coordinated, cost-effective way.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of priority works at project sites.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	<p>preparedness activities; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supporting wildlife rescue organisations.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, funding is provided to assess Forest Produce Licence applications. These license small-scale, sustainable use of state forests and enable forest produce-based industries such as eucalyptus oil and niche specialty timber use.</p>				
Maintaining critical assets for emergency and land management	Funding is provided to replace and operationalise critical fire and emergency vehicle fleet to support Forest Fire Management Victoria's preventative bushfire	Funding is required to support the maintenance and upgrade of critical firefighting assets to ensure their safe and continued operation.	44.5	Appropriation	<p>The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fires contained at less than five hectares to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	service and rapid response to emergency events.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target.</li> <li>• Improved fleet capability and reliability through the replacement of aged fire and emergency assets.</li> <li>• Enhanced firefighter safety and risk reduction that will reduce exposure to operational hazards, measured through increased compliance with safety standards and reduced safety incidents.</li> <li>• Sustained operational readiness and cost control through ongoing maintenance, servicing, and operation of firefighting vehicles, including radio communications licence fees, which will maintain emergency response readiness while managing</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
					whole of life vehicle and communications costs.
Securing critical aviation fire services	Funding is provided for firefighting aviation resources to support the State’s firefighting capability for the upcoming and future bushfire seasons. Victoria’s aviation program includes a fleet of specialised aircraft, airbases, a highly skilled workforce, technology and other enabling resources to enable a rapid response to emergency events.	Funding is required for firefighting aviation resources to support the State’s firefighting capability.	34.2	Appropriation / Internal reprioritisation / Aviation Trust	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fires contained at less than five hectares to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact.</li> <li>• Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target.</li> </ul>
State funding commitments to national energy market bodies	Funding is provided to contribute towards national energy market bodies, including the Australian Energy Market Commission and the Energy and	Funding is required to contribute towards national energy market bodies to meet Victoria’s ongoing obligations in relation to national energy market reforms.	14.7	Appropriation / Internal reprioritisation	There are no performance measures for this initiative. Delivery of funding under this initiative will be reported for each financial year, as has been done in previous years.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	Climate Change Ministerial Council, to meet Victoria’s ongoing obligations to national energy market reforms.				
Energy Assistance Program	Funding is provided to extend the Energy Assistance Program, a one-on-one service that supports vulnerable and hard-to-reach consumers to maximise their energy bill savings.	The Energy Assistance Program helps address barriers that negatively impact vulnerable households' ability to engage in the energy market to improve the affordability of their bills and manage cost-of-living challenges.	1.1	Internal reprioritisation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the number of households who receive tailored energy bill support.
Data centres project team	Funding is provided to design and implement a framework for data centre investment and risk management to ensure energy security and reliability as well as to minimise the impacts on energy prices for households and businesses.	Funding is required to support the delivery of the whole of Victorian Government approved actions plan to attract sustainable data centre investment to Victoria, and to consider and control for implementation risks.	1.6	Internal reprioritisation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the extent of reform undertaken, supported by DEECA, to support sustainable data centre entry, including state level and national reforms.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
Marinus Link oversight	Funding is provided to oversee the State’s interest in the Marinus Link interconnector between the Victorian and Tasmanian electricity networks.	Funding to support Victoria’s shareholding interests will expire in 2025-26. As a Shareholder in Marinus Link Pty Ltd, Victoria has obligations, decisions and monitoring requirements to support delivery of the Marinus Link project.	1.8	Internal reprioritisation	<p>The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased energy affordability, consumer control and access to energy services (target to be measured: Victorian household bill savings as a result of Marinus Link).</li> <li>Improved reliability, security and stability of the energy system (target to be measured: Victoria’s energy reliability with Marinus Link in place).</li> <li>Reduced emissions from Victoria’s energy system (target to be measured: Renewable energy generated in either Tasmania or Victoria is utilised in the national electricity grid).</li> </ul>
Improving water quality in our alpine resorts	Funding is provided to invest in the upgrade of assets controlled by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A need for investment was identified through Alpine Resorts Victoria’s</li> </ul>	5.0	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	<p>Alpine Resorts Victoria to improve water quality in alpine resorts at Mount Buller, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham.</p>	<p>(ARV) Asset Management Strategy, particularly for essential water infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Safe Drinking Water Regulations (2025) require upgrades to water treatment facilities at Mt Buller, Mt Hotham and Falls Creek to meet revised health-based targets.</li> <li>• The importance of the alpine resorts to regional economies, supporting jobs and generating economic activity.</li> <li>• The need to maintain safe, compliant service delivery and protect public health, business continuity and visitor confidence while long-term reform options are considered.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of priority water infrastructure projects on time and within budget.</li> <li>• Compliance with Safe Drinking Water Regulations, including achievement of required health-based targets and reduced water quality risks.</li> <li>• Progress toward Asset Management Accountability Framework benchmarks.</li> <li>• Maintenance of visitation, employment and economic contribution associated with the alpine resorts.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
State land management agency resourcing to support Traditional Owner agreements	Funding is provided to ensure the State continues to meet its legal obligations and accountabilities under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (the Act) and to support implementation of Recognition and Settlement Agreements under the Act.	To support the ongoing role of DEECA and Parks Victoria in the negotiation and implementation of Recognition and Settlement Agreements.	1.5	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through combining quantitative reporting (counts of agreements, plans, training and products) with qualitative evidence (case studies, governance records and feedback) to demonstrate both delivery and impact.
Critical asset renewals within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks	Funding is provided to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority for critical asset renewal works. This includes works for the Cape Otway Lightstation heritage restoration, asset renewal within the Twelve Apostles Precinct and other asset maintenance and	The required renewal of existing visitor facilities and infrastructure.	7.9	Community Support Fund	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the delivery of critical asset renewals within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	upgrades within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks area.				
Detox your home	Funding is provided to continue the Household Chemical Collection Program for safe disposal of household hazardous chemicals and hard-to-recycle products.	Hazardous household chemicals are toxic to the environment and human health if disposed of incorrectly. The Detox your home program is a pathway for households to dispose of chemicals safely and conveniently, preventing disposal of chemicals in a manner that impacts waterways and our environment.	1.9	Sustainability Fund	<p>The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Detox your home events held.</li> <li>• Number of households registering and attending events.</li> <li>• Total volume of hazardous materials collected through events.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
Faster, fit for purpose environmental assessments and approvals for renewable energy and affordable housing	Funding is provided to enable timely and fit for purpose environmental impact assessments and advice to support renewable energy and affordable housing projects. This initiative will support the development of critical infrastructure for Victoria’s energy transition and housing delivery.	Since the release of the Victorian Government’s Housing Statement, the pipeline of large housing developments requiring environmental assessments has increased and the pipeline of new renewable energy generation, storage and transmission projects is growing to meet emissions reduction and renewable energy targets. This initiative will fast-track advice into planning processes, increase investor confidence, deliver better environmental outcomes and support the government’s economic growth objectives.	2.1	Sustainability Fund / Internal reprioritisation	Benefits of this model have been proven with on-time responses increasing from 54 per cent to 89 per cent, hitting 97 per cent in August 2025 despite a 364 per cent surge in case volumes over a two-year period. This funding provides continuity of resources to maintain these fast approval processing timelines with a target of greater than 90 per cent priority cases of state significance responded to in full and on time.
Zoos Victoria Kids Go Free	Funding is provided to continue to provide children under 16 years of age free admission to Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary,	Provide zoo access to more Victorians who otherwise would not be able to visit our world class zoos, connect people with wildlife, and inspire them to take	15.5	Parks and Reserves Trust Account	The outcomes will be measured through the Department Performance Statement measure ‘Annual visitation to Zoos Victoria’.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	Kyabram Fauna Park and Werribee Open Range Zoo on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays.	conservation actions that make a measurable and positive difference.			
Developing Victoria’s critical minerals industry	Funding is provided to continue initiatives to develop the critical minerals industry in Victoria including implementing actions under the Critical Minerals Roadmap to unlock Victoria’s critical mineral resources, strengthen domestic manufacturing and support the global net-zero energy transition.	This initiative aims to continue implementing the government’s objective to develop, accelerate and capitalise on the critical minerals industry in regional Victoria including implementation of the Critical Minerals Roadmap released December 2024. Key drivers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unlocking Victoria’s critical mineral resources;</li> <li>• supporting the global net-zero transition and domestic manufacturing;</li> <li>• establishing a new, sustainable revenue stream;</li> </ul>	2.1	Internal reprioritisation	Success in this initiative will be demonstrated through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approval of new critical minerals projects;</li> <li>• the generation of new royalty streams; and</li> <li>• increased investment in the State.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• driving regional economic development and job creation; and</li> <li>• delivering high-impact geoscience data to catalyse investment.</li> </ul>			
Modernising and mainstreaming the Victorian Energy Upgrades Program	Funding is provided to continue the implementation of the Victorian Energy Upgrades Strategic Review reforms that will deliver a modernised Victorian Energy Upgrades program. These reforms will ensure the program continues to align with key government objectives including electrification, energy affordability, emissions reduction targets, and reliability.	Resourcing the actioning and finalisation of recommendations within the <i>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment (Strategic Review) Bill 2026</i> (the Bill) that is currently being developed for consideration. The Bill will amend the <i>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2005</i> to modernise the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) legal framework to ensure the program can best support Victoria's energy needs and deliver on Victoria's energy and emission reduction	0.9	Internal reprioritisation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the passing of the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment (Strategic Review) Bill 2026 and the implementation of approved recommendations.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
		targets until the program's scheduled end in 2045.			
Solar Homes program – hot water rebates	Funding is provided to extend the Solar Victoria hot water rebate program to enable more eligible households to install energy efficient electric heat pumps and solar hot water systems in their homes.	Funding is provided for rebates that will partially offset the upfront costs of installing residential energy efficient electric hot water systems. This will promote electrification, lower emissions and assist with cost-of-living pressures for Victorian households.	28.1	Sustainability Fund	The outcomes will be measured through the number of hot water rebates approved.
Murray-Darling Basin Joint Programs	Funding is provided for an additional contribution from Victoria to Joint Programs for the River Murray catchment area that are administered by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and funded proportionally by all Basin jurisdictions in accordance with their share of water	This initiative requires co-investment by Commonwealth Government and the Basin States (Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory) for joint management of the upgrade, operation and maintenance of River Murray assets as specified in the Murray Darling Basin Agreement.	6.1	Environmental Contributions	Each year, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council (MinCo) is required to approve the Joint Programs budget and workplan. This provides strong accountability and oversight, and ensures that Victoria is receiving value-for-money from its Joint Programs investment. Ongoing overall oversight of Murray-Darling Basin Authority performance in the delivery of jointly agreed policy and

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	resources. The additional contribution supports critical asset maintenance and renewal of water infrastructure assets upon which northern Victorian communities and the River Murray depend.	Without this contribution, there will be an escalating risk of critical infrastructure asset failure.			program initiatives is performed through quarterly performance reports to the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council (MinCo), the Basin Officials Committee and a group of high-level committees (with jurisdictional representation) like the Joint Venture Budget and Performance Committee (JVBPC). The Murray-Darling Basin Authority reports on its activities each year in its Annual Report which includes delivery of the Joint Programs. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority also commissions regular independent audits of the Joint Programs management, expenditure and asset management activities. The next triennial cost review of the Joint Programs is due in 2026-27.
Better community facilities	Funding is provided to improve outdoor	Well maintained and accessible community	1.7	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	spaces and facilities for Victorian communities.	facilities are essential to support Victorian communities engage in outdoor spaces and parks.			number of projects delivered in 2026-27.
Enabling the processing of recreationally harvested wild venison	Funding is provided to develop policy and regulation, including exploring a dual-licensed butcher model, to enable the processing of recreationally harvested wild venison in Victoria. This builds on the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan to safely allow for the processing and distribution of wild venison sourced from recreational hunters through commercial butchers.	Recreationally caught wild venison can generally only be harvested for personal consumption under current regulatory settings. This initiative will support the exploration and development of relevant policy and regulations to enable processing of recreationally harvested wild venison for broader consumption and via a licenced processing facility.	0.2	Internal reprioritisation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through an evaluation of the initiative.
Establishing VicGrid	Funding is provided to finalise the establishment of	Funding is provided to enable VicGrid to continue to deliver its critical work	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through:

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	VicGrid as Victoria's transmission planner and to support transmission project delivery.	program while establishing capacity, capability, systems and processes in readiness for the transfer of functions and establishment of VicGrid as a state business corporation.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful establishment of VicGrid as a state business corporation on 1 November 2025, including establishing capacity, capability, systems and processes.</li> <li>• Commencement of electricity transmission network planning and procurement functions; responsibilities for network access arrangements and delivering community benefits; and commercial functions such as setting and recovering Transmission Use of System (TUoS) charges.</li> </ul>
Agricultural sector electrification and emissions reduction	Funding is provided to deliver on-farm activities relating to climate and energy to support lower energy costs and emissions reductions, including providing incentives for	Opportunity to support on-farm electrification to both reduce agriculture sector fossil fuel reliance and reduce agriculture emissions profile by funding practical, cost-effective electrification upgrades.	4.9	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through an evaluation of the initiative to be undertaken.

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	farmers to undertake electrification and energy efficiency activities on farm.				
Energy efficiency in community housing	Funding is provided to support action on energy efficiency by the community housing sector, including direct funding for electrification upgrades and dedicated support to assess community housing retrofit viability to meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards.	New minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) for rental homes will be phased in from 1 March 2027. An exemption to the new standards for the community housing organisations was provided in response to concerns from the sector regarding costs of compliance, to be reviewed within 18 months. This initiative supports the community housing sector to undertake sector-wide analysis of property condition and to access grant funding to help the sector improve energy performance and affordability outcomes for tenants before a decision on	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through final reports from community housing organisations on upgrade impacts.

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		the removal of the MEES exemption.			
Food manufacturing sector electrification	Funding is provided for electrification of the food manufacturing sector, enabling round three of the Energy Innovation Fund aimed at supporting industrial electrification with a focus on food processing and manufacturing.	Victoria is Australia’s largest food and beverage manufacturing State. It is also one of the most emissions-intensive sectors in the State primarily due to its reliance on fossil gas for high-temperature and continuous operations. Given the importance of industrial food and beverage production in Victoria’s economy there are opportunities to improve the support to transition away from gas, which has seen significant price increases in Australia and internationally. Food and beverage businesses often depend on fossil gas for industrial process heat, continuous operations and maintaining product quality. To support	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of projects being supported.</li> <li>• Each successful project will use relevant metrics to measure emission reductions of which will be outlined as part of their knowledge sharing components at project completion.</li> </ul>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
		business competitiveness and meet Victoria’s net-zero targets viable, scalable zero-emission alternatives are important.			
Industry energy diversification	Funding is provided to deliver an industry program that helps businesses in the gas appliance manufacturing supply chain to diversify and to support an expansion of the local electric appliance supply chain.	Supporting industry to meet the increased demand for electric hot water and heating systems following the government’s announcement requiring new residential and most commercial buildings to be built all-electric as well as the end-of-life replacement of gas hot water and heating systems (with the latter only required for rental properties).	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through an evaluation of the program to measure the program impact and the activities undertaken by program recipients to ensure compliance with Eligibility Criteria.
National Training Centre in New Energy Skills	Funding is provided for Victoria’s contribution to the Commonwealth co-funded National Training Centre in New Energy Skills. The centre will upskill	The National Training Centre in New Energy Skills is a federal election commitment and a joint initiative between the Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government and	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The Federal Funding Agreement Schedule with the Commonwealth Government and an agreement with the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre is being negotiated. This will include

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	workers for the renewable energy transition in partnership with the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre.	the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre.			performance milestones that will be monitored as the project progresses.
Electrification training program	Funding is provided for Solar Victoria to extend the electrification training program for plumbers and other tradespeople over three years.	The Electrification training program has been created to provide the specific training and mentoring that upskills electricians and plumbers to work in the renewables industry. The program also delivers information webinars on key industry developments, and builds partnerships with Traditional Owner Groups to support career pathways for First Nations people. The program incorporates mandatory training requirements to ensure the safety and quality of installations conducted	1.7	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the number of participants upskilled through this training.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
		under the Solar Homes program.			
Bushfire prevention	Funding is provided to complete additional planned burns and other fuel management activities across autumn 2026. Locations will be guided by the Joint Fuel Management Program, prioritising high-risk areas.	To complete additional planned burns and other fuel management activities across autumn 2026.	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target.</li> <li>Delivery of all seasonally available burns and non-fuel treatments.</li> <li>Reduction in the number of districts above residual bushfire risk targets.</li> </ul>
Climate action awareness	Funding is provided to assist community organisations in promoting awareness and educating Victorians on climate action.	To support households to make informed decisions to electrify homes.	0.0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	Appropriation	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through a program evaluation which will analyse final reports from community organisations on engagement approaches and impacts.
Delivering on the Victorian commitment under the Renewable	Funding is provided to support Victoria’s commitment under the bilateral Renewable	The Commonwealth Capacity Investment Scheme supports investment in new renewable energy and	To be confirmed <sup>6</sup>	To be confirmed	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the capacity of new Victorian renewable energy and storage

<sup>6</sup> Funding is not reported at this time as commercial arrangements are still to be finalised.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
Energy Transformation Agreement	Energy Transformation Agreement with the Commonwealth Government and support renewable energy generation.	dispatchable capacity. Victoria’s Renewable Energy Transformation Agreement with the Commonwealth promotes investment to meet Victoria’s reliability needs, contribute to targets, and deliver significant value to the State through support for Victorian renewable energy and storage projects.			projects supported via the Commonwealth Capacity Investment Scheme.
Restoring flows to the Mallee Floodplain	Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment to complete the Restoring Flows to the Mallee Floodplain program. The program will upgrade existing environmental watering sites to efficiently return wet and dry cycles to 16 of	Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment. It is a new supply measure under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan’s Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) and is estimated to deliver up to 2 GL towards the 605 GL offset.	23.7	Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through milestone activities, funding, and associated timing as set out in the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment. The program’s contribution to the 605 GL offset will be confirmed via modelling by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority in 2026. Ecological outcomes will be monitored and reported on as part of Victoria’s Basin Plan reporting obligations.

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	the region’s most ecologically and culturally significant wetlands and floodplains from Bridge Creek near Swan Hill to Scotties Billabong close to the South Australian border. This will enable Basin Plan environmental outcomes to be achieved with less water recovery.				
Victorian-led Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project	Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment to jointly fund the Victorian-led Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project. The Project, led by Coliban Water, will replace and upgrade the	This project is funded under Stream A of the Commonwealth Government’s Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program (RRWIP). The project was also assessed against the socio-economic criteria for efficiency measures agreed by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in 2018.	40.0	Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment	The outcomes and impacts with defined measurable KPIs will be assessed through benefits realisation frameworks focused on water efficiency, service reliability, water quality, agricultural productivity and urban water security outcomes.  Water savings will be measured against defined targets through reduction in conveyance losses,

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	unmodernised sections of the Coliban rural supply system around Bendigo. This will improve efficiency, reduce water losses, secure supply, and support the long-term sustainability of rural water services.				<p>entitlement downsizing, license acquisition and customer transition to recycled water.</p> <p>Environmental and cultural outcomes, including the transfer of agreed volumes to the Federal Government and Traditional Owners will be assessed using evaluation approaches. This includes tracking delivery of agreed volumes with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Economic and socio-economic impacts will be evaluated using cost-benefit analysis and qualitative assessment, supported by established governance arrangements, milestone reporting and post-implementation review.</p>
Victorian Constraints Measures Program	Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government through	This project is funded as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan’s Sustainable Diversion	7.9	Commonwealth Government through the	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the delivery of approved outputs in

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	<p>the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment to investigate the cost-benefits and broader merits of the Victorian Constraints Measures Program Stage 1B and to undertake a small, localised construction activity at Ryans Lagoon in North-East Victoria.</p> <p>The project brings together a coordinated package of technical investigations, Traditional Owner engagement, planning, governance and targeted infrastructure delivery designed to enhance capacity to deliver environmental water to high-value floodplain and wetland</p>	<p>Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) and contributes to Victoria’s commitments under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.</p>		<p>Federation Funding Agreement – Environment</p>	<p>line with agreed timeframes and budgets, as set out in funding agreements with regional project partners, such as catchment management authorities, water corporations and First Nations groups.</p> <p>Project coordination and milestone reporting arrangements are either in place or being developed. The initiative aims to improve the health and resilience of priority waterways and catchments mainly through investigations of works that aim to improve the efficient and effective use of existing environmental water.</p> <p>Funding through this initiative also supports interjurisdictional activities such as supporting the Constraints Independent Advisory Panel and how they may influence the 2026 Basin</p>

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	sites and inform future investment decisions at both the State and Commonwealth level.				Plan review. The initiative’s impact will be measured by the successful input of Victoria’s balanced, community-centric perspectives into these processes. Post-completion reviews will confirm the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved.
Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Stage 2	Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment to complete the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Stage 2. This project will provide much needed water onto high value floodplains along the Murray River using infrastructure such as regulators, pumps and culverts to	This project is funded as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan’s Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) and contributes to Victoria’s commitments under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.	19.1	Commonwealth Government through the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment	The outcomes and impacts will be measured through the delivery of operable infrastructure for three sites – Hattah Lakes North, Nyah, and Vinifera. Approved outputs are measured through milestone activities, funding, and associated timing as set out in the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment Schedule executed with the Commonwealth Government. The initiative’s impacts will be demonstrated in the operation of the constructed infrastructure to efficiently

Name of the program/initiative	Objective(s) of the program	Factors driving creation of the initiative	Budgeted expenditure in FY 2026–27 on the program/initiative (\$ million)	How it will be funded	How the outcomes and impacts will be measured
	provide environmental water deep into the floodplain and efficiently return wet and dry cycles. This will deliver offsets to Basin Plan water recovery and leave more water in the system for regional communities.				distribute environmental water, even in a dry climate, to deliver environmental outcomes (such as improving and restoring the condition of floodplain and wetland vegetation).

## Expenditure – lapsing programs (output initiatives, including grants)

### Question 8

For all programs (output initiatives, including grants) with total funding of equal to or greater than \$5 million that were to lapse in the financial year 2025–26, where funding is to be extended in the 2026–27 Budget, please provide the:

- a) name of the program
- b) objective(s) of the program
- c) expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and where relevant, future years)
- d) details of how the program will be funded (i.e. through new output appropriation, Commonwealth funding, internal reprioritisation etc.)
- e) confirmation that an evaluation of the program has been conducted as per *Section 6.1 Evaluating lapsing programs* of the Resource Management Framework (RMF). Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation in the questionnaire response. If ‘appropriate evidence’ or annual outcomes reporting was provided in lieu of an evaluation report (as permitted under the RMF for lapsing programs with less than \$20 million in funding), please briefly describe the evidence provided.<sup>7</sup>
- f) evidence of the continued need for the program, and Government’s role in delivering it
- g) evidence of the program’s progress towards its stated objectives and expected outcomes, including the alignment between the program, its output (as outlined in *Budget Paper No. 3: Service Delivery*), departmental objectives and any Government priorities
- h) evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices
- i) extent and level of efficiencies realised in the delivery of the program
- j) information about the nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts
- k) evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program.

#### *Guidance*

Lapsing program—the Committee uses the definition of lapsing program as set out in the Department of Treasury and Finance, *Resource Management Framework*: A lapsing program is a program to deliver services (output-related) that is funded for a specified time period only (and not ongoing in nature). Programs of a ‘one-off’ or a time-specific nature (e.g. funding provided for specific events) are considered ‘fixed-term’ and do not fall under the definition of a ‘lapsing program’.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, *The Resource Management Framework Part 1 of 2 – Main document*, Melbourne, 2026, p. 137

## Response

Name of the program	State funding commitments to national energy market bodies	
Objective(s) of the program	Funding is provided to contribute towards national energy market bodies, including the Australian Energy Market Commission, to meet Victoria's ongoing obligations in relation to national energy market reforms.	
Expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and, where relevant, future years) (\$ million)	2025–26	2026–27
	11.1	14.7
Details of how the program will be funded	Appropriation	
Confirmation that an evaluation for the program has been conducted. Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation	An evaluation for this program was not conducted as funding was provided as POBOS appropriation. POBOS appropriation is provided to enable a department to make non-discretionary payments. All expenses and obligations to which any POBOS is applied must be reported in the financial year in which the advance was made.	
Evidence of the continued need for the program and the Government's role in delivering it	This funding ensures the government meets its ongoing obligations to fund the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) and the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) workplan under its existing national funding agreements and arrangements. It also enables the government to meet its ongoing commitment to national energy market reforms. Ensuring timely payment of Victoria's share of national energy market costs provides Victoria with continued opportunity to influence national reforms in Victoria's favour.	
Evidence of the program's progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes	Delivery of funding obligations. If funding ceased, there would be a failure to comply with Victoria's national funding agreements which would hinder the progress of key national reforms that are crucial to the transition of Australia's energy system while minimising the impacts to households and businesses. Victoria would also risk damaging its reputation on the ECMC and its ability to influence national reforms to ensure the best outcomes for Victorians. Victoria has no direct control over the quantum of its required contributions, which are specified in funding agreements based on and are not subject to negotiation. This funding ensures the government meets its obligations to fund the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), and the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) workplan.	
Evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices		
Nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts		
Evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program		

Name of the program	Zoos Victoria Kids Go Free	
Objective(s) of the program	Funding is provided to continue to allow children under 16 years of age to enjoy free admission to Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary, Kyabram Fauna Park and Werribee Open Range Zoo on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays.	
Expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and, where relevant, future years) (\$ million)	2025–26	2026–27
	15.3	15.5
Details of how the program will be funded	Parks and Reserves Trust Account	
Confirmation that an evaluation for the program has been conducted. Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation	An evaluation of this program was included as part of the business case submitted for consideration in the 2026-27 budget process. This is Cabinet in Confidence and unable to be provided.	
Evidence of the continued need for the program and the Government's role in delivering it	The policy has been consistently promoted as a key visitation driver throughout its advertising campaigns. The policy has provided Zoos Victoria direct engagement with the community, a positive education outcome for children and their families, and improved environmental and conservation understanding and behavioural change throughout the community. Introduction of the policy has also coincided with increased uptake of Zoos Victoria memberships, while providing valuable cost of living relief to families and the broader community	
Evidence of the program's progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes	Prior to the introduction of the Kids Go Free policy, Zoos Victoria was experiencing a declining visitation trend. The aim of the policy was to create a more equitable model for all Victorians to take advantage of the community assets across all Zoos and increase overall visitation. Total visitation has increased 57 per cent and the average number of kids visiting the zoos has increased by 48 per cent since the introduction of the Kids Go Free policy.	
Evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices	Zoos Victoria has continued to allow children under 16 years of age to enjoy free admission to Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary, Kyabram Fauna Park and Werribee Open Range Zoo on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays throughout the length of the program.	
Nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts	Zoos Victoria would not be able to provide free access to families for recreational and educational activities, enabling valuable opportunities to enjoy community assets across all Zoos Victoria sites. Additional funding has been provided to continue the program.	
Evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program	The funding reflects the cost to deliver the program, being the foregone admission revenue from the implementation of the Kids Free policy.	

Name of the program	Developing Victoria’s critical minerals	
Objective(s) of the program	This initiative aims to continue implementing the government’s objective to develop, accelerate and capitalise on the critical minerals industry in regional Victoria, including implementation of the Critical Minerals Roadmap which was released in December 2024.	
Expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and, where relevant, future years) (\$ million)	2025–26	2026–27
	0.9	2.1
Details of how the program will be funded	Internal reprioritisation	
Confirmation that an evaluation for the program has been conducted. Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation	Not applicable. The Critical Minerals Roadmap has only been in place for a short period, which is too early to conduct a meaningful program evaluation.	
Evidence of the continued need for the program and the Government’s role in delivering it	<p>This initiative aims to continue implementing the government’s agenda to develop, accelerate and capitalise on the critical minerals industry in regional Victoria including implementation of the Critical Minerals Roadmap released in December 2024. Key drivers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlocking Victoria’s critical mineral resources.</li> <li>• Supporting the global net-zero transition and domestic manufacturing.</li> <li>• Establishing a new, sustainable revenue stream.</li> <li>• Driving regional economic development and job creation.</li> <li>• Delivering high-impact geoscience data to catalyse investment.</li> </ul>	
Evidence of the program’s progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes	Attracting investment to develop economic growth – new projects are being approved including the following examples: a mining Work Plan for VHM Limited’s Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project and the Donald Mineral Sands Project Mining Work Plan.	
Evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices	The budget for this program remains within the original allocation. The funding allocated in 2026-27 marks a transition from policy development to implementation, accelerating industry growth, attracting investment, and delivering tangible benefits to communities across Victoria. The funding will cover the cost of staffing for the critical minerals work program, including five project team resources plus four geoscience officers.	
Nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts		
Evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program		

Name of the program	Improving Victorian Energy Upgrades	
Objective(s) of the program	Deliver a strategic review of the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program (the Review) to recommend changes and improvements, and to modernise its legal framework to ensure the program can best support Victoria's energy needs and delivery of Victoria's energy and emission reduction targets for the current life of the program out to 2045.	
Expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and, where relevant, future years) (\$ million)	2025–26 3.0	2026–27 0.9
Details of how the program will be funded	Internal reprioritisation	
Confirmation that an evaluation for the program has been conducted. Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation	Not applicable. Total funding approved for this initiative was less than \$20 million. As per Section 6.1 (evaluating lapsing programs) of the Resource Management Framework, a lapsing program evaluation is not required for initiatives with total funding of less than \$20 million.	
Evidence of the continued need for the program and the Government's role in delivering it	<p>The Strategic Review of the VEU program's initial funding allowed establishment of a dedicated team of nine staff within Solar Victoria to deliver the Review, along with co-funding of resources within DEECA's Legal and Legislation, and Strategic Communications Divisions.</p> <p>Due to some delay in recruitment, the Review funding was not fully utilised across 2024-25 and 2025-26, and funding has been provided to finalise delivery in 2026-27.</p> <p>This will fund the finalisation and actioning of recommendations within the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment (Strategic Review) Bill 2026 (the Bill) that is in development. The Bill will amend the <i>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2005</i> (the Act) to modernise the VEU's legal framework to ensure the VEU program can best support Victoria's energy needs and deliver on Victoria's energy and emission reduction targets until the program's scheduled end in 2045. Once the Bill is approved and receives Royal Assent, the recommended actions will be implemented by government across 2026-27.</p>	
Evidence of the program's progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes	<p>The evidence of the program's progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review completed, with the findings adopted by Government.</li> <li>• Completion of stakeholder engagement across government to refine policy measures.</li> <li>• Completion and approval of a comprehensive Legislative Impact Assessment.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative reforms on track for completion in 2026-27.</li> </ul>
Evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices	The project is on track to deliver within its scope and budget. Timelines have had to be extended. The Bill is currently in development. Implementation of recommendations arising from the Review will move into 2026-27.
Nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts	The project is overseen by a Project Control Board in line with appropriate governance processes, and risks have been managed within appropriate risk appetite. The Review will deliver what was intended – within scope and budget, with the extended timeline only in relation to implementation of recommendations arising from the Review – this will be achieved at no extra cost to government.
Evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program	Should funding have not been approved in 2026-27, there would have been a risk to the timely passage of the Bill, and to having the appropriate resourcing (amount and expertise) available to implement the ultimate recommendations arising from the Review.

Name of the program	Solar Homes Program – Hot water rebates					
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for the Solar Victoria Hot water rebate program to enable more eligible households to install energy efficient electric heat pumps and solar hot water systems in their homes.					
Expenditure in the financial years 2025–26 and 2026–27 (and, where relevant, future years) (\$ million)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2025–26</td> <td>2026–27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>32.0</td> <td>28.1</td> </tr> </table>	2025–26	2026–27	32.0	28.1	
2025–26	2026–27					
32.0	28.1					
Details of how the program will be funded	Sustainability Fund					
Confirmation that an evaluation for the program has been conducted. Please advise who undertook the evaluation and attach a copy of the executive summary of the evaluation	An evaluation of this program was included as part of the business case submitted for consideration in the 2026-27 budget process. This is Cabinet in Confidence and unable to be provided.					
Evidence of the continued need for the program and the Government’s role in delivering it	<p>Hot water heating comprises approximately 20 per cent of household energy bills. To assist in addressing cost-of-living relief for Victorians, there continues to be significant opportunity to reduce these household hot water heating costs by installing an efficient heat pump or solar hot water system. The Solar Homes rebate reduces the upfront costs to support uptake of these lower cost, lower emissions and highly efficient systems.</p> <p>The Solar Homes Hot Water Program also supports household electrification, and the Gas Substitution roadmap by continuing to reduce residential gas use and reduce emissions.</p>					

	<p>Customer research indicates that the availability of a rebate was instrumental in the decision to upgrade to a more efficient electric hot water heating system. Incentives continue to be needed to support Victorians to replace their gas or inefficient hot water systems with more energy efficient alternatives. Government will support this through the continued provision of a rebate, ensuring that quality systems are installed by approved retailers and installers.</p>
<p>Evidence of the program’s progress toward its stated objectives and expected outcomes</p>	<p>The Victorian Government originally committed to approving 60,000 hot water rebates when the Solar Homes Program commenced in 2018. There has now been over 85,000 approved applications, and demand continues to be very strong.</p>
<p>Evidence of the program being delivered within its scope, budget, expected timeframe and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices</p>	<p>The program is on track to exceed its target, and demand continues to be strong. This program assists in facilitating the transition of homes to renewable energy, contributing to reduced energy costs for consumers, and reduced emissions for the environment. Customer research undertaken by the department indicates that the availability of a rebate was instrumental in the decision to upgrade to a more efficient electric hot water heating system.</p>
<p>Nature of the impact of the program ceasing and what strategies have been identified to minimise any negative impacts</p>	<p>As this technology is still relatively new and evolving, removal of the rebate program at this point would remove the customer incentivisation to invest in a key cost-of-living relief measure for Victorian households, and put the government’s emissions targets at risk.</p>
<p>Evidence that the further funding reflects the actual cost required to deliver the program</p>	<p>The Solar Homes program is governed by a stringent quality and safety framework comprising core requirements and provisions for industry, a rigorous audit regime and consumer protections, in conjunction with regulators and safety bodies such as WorkSafe, Energy Safe Victoria and the Essential Services Commission.</p> <p>The funding of \$28.1 million in 2026-27 will allow for 27,000 approved rebates to be provided to Victorian households to install electric energy efficient hot water heating systems, as well as to administer the program, including providing the assessment of applications, direct customer support, and ensuring installations are safe and compliant.</p>

**Question 9**

For all programs (output initiatives, including grants) with total funding of equal to or greater than \$5 million that are to lapse in 2025-26, please provide the:

- a) name of the program
- b) objective(s) of the program
- c) expenditure in the financial year 2025–26
- d) reasons why the program was established
- e) details of who (describe the type of users, for example, health care providers, families, volunteers etc.) and how many used the program, and evidence of the outcomes achieved
- f) reasons why further funding is not being sought
- g) impact of ceasing the program
- h) strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts.

**Response**

Name of the program	Emergency Preparedness Package
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for the maintenance of the firefighting fleet, upgrades to fire towers, airbases, fire access roads and bridges, and base camp equipment. In addition, this program included funding to boost Victoria’s aerial firefighting capability and fire readiness, and for Victoria’s Emergency Services Organisations ahead of the upcoming high-risk weather season.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	65.8 <sup>8</sup>
Reasons why the program was established	The 2025-26 bushfire season in Victoria was anticipated to be exceptionally severe due to ongoing drought conditions, record low rainfall, and higher-than-usual temperatures across the western half and southern parts of Victoria. Funding for this program was sought to support additional emergency preparedness activities for the 2025-26 summer season. This funding was split between aviation resources and enhanced preparedness activities.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	DEECA sought additional funding to enhance existing base-funded activities to cover an extended bushfire season, while other activities were additional requirements in the circumstances to prepare for the potential scale of the season. This funding also ensured specialist resources, such as firefighting and detection aircraft, were

<sup>8</sup> Reflects DEECA component only.

	<p>available earlier than usual, securing aerial suppression capacity for early-onset bushfires. Details from the programs support for enhancing DEECA’s readiness for a forecasted severe bushfire season are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced firefighter availability and capacity.</li> <li>• Strengthened Rappel Program.</li> <li>• Enhanced capacity and readiness of the firefighting fleet.</li> <li>• Enhanced detection and compliance.</li> <li>• Intelligence Services to support systems and early readiness for bushfire risk.</li> <li>• Fire Readiness Activities to respond to a prolonged and above-average bushfire season.</li> </ul> <p>DEECA is responsible for the annual delivery of aviation capability and resources on behalf of the State and has a demonstrated history of delivering its aviation program, including coordination of a fleet of specialised aircraft, airbases, a highly skilled workforce, technology, and other resources to enable a rapid response to emergency events. The program scope and budget reflect the costs associated with delivering DEECA’s aviation program, which has governance committees, reporting and risk management practices in place.</p>
<p>Reasons why further funding is not being sought</p>	<p>Funding for bushfire and emergency management functions is funded under DEECA’s Fire and Emergency Management output. Supplementary funding is only sought for an above-average risk for the upcoming bushfire season. Further funding was sought and provided for the aviation services component of this program in the 2026-27 Budget.</p>
<p>Impact of ceasing the program</p>	<p>DEECA receives base funding to support standby costs for Class 1 emergencies and preparedness activities for an average fire season. When the forecasts suggest an above-average level of risk for the upcoming bushfire season, enhanced funding is sought. Aviation services that support Victoria’s bushfire capability are critical to the effective suppression of bushfires and the protection of life and property. Additional funding was provided for the aviation services component of this program in the 2026-27 Budget. Where further unforeseen and unfunded costs arise within this program, additional funding will be requested.</p>
<p>Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts</p>	<p>As noted above, DEECA receives base funding for an average fire season. When forecasts indicate an above-average risk for the upcoming bushfire season,</p>

	supplementary funding is sought. These forecasts are not known until late winter, early spring.
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Name of the program	Improving Energy Safety and Skills
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for mandatory skills maintenance training to ensure continuing professional development and improved safety skills for electrical workers.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	1.9
Reasons why the program was established	The program was established to minimise the cost impact on electrical workers undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which is a requirement for license renewal. The program funds a grant from DEECA.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	Under the current arrangement, the grant funds 50 per cent of participation costs, with the remaining 50 per cent funded through regulated Certificate of Electrical Safety (COES) fee increases approved until 30 June 2028. Work on this program is complete. From project commencement on 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025, 17,256 Licensed Electrical Workers completed the CPD program.
Reasons why further funding is not being sought	
Impact of ceasing the program	
Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts	

Name of the program	Offshore Wind Program
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided to progress planning and undertake activities to deliver the first 2 gigawatts of offshore wind energy capacity in Victoria.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	2.9
Reasons why the program was established	To support the delivery of enabling infrastructure for offshore wind energy.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	The program does not have direct external users. Offshore Wind Energy Victoria has made significant progress towards the first offshore Wind auction.
Reasons why further funding is not being sought	The program was funded for a finite period of time and is concluding on 30 June 2026, in line with its scheduled timeframe for delivery. Work on this program is complete. There is no impact of ceasing this program.
Impact of ceasing the program	
Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts	

Name of the program	Power Saving Bonus for vulnerable consumers
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for a one-off \$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible Victorian concession card households that use the Victorian Energy Compare website to search for the cheapest electricity deal.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	40.6
Reasons why the program was established	The program was established to provide energy bill support, drive down the cost of living and encourage Victorians to visit the Victorian Energy Compare website to shop around for better priced energy offers.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	Over 44,000 Power Saving Bonus applications were received through the community outreach program, supporting vulnerable and hard to reach consumers.
Reasons why further funding is not being sought	The program provided for a one-off \$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible Victorian concession card households and closed on 31 March 2026. Strong community awareness and trust in the Victorian Energy Compare website, in addition to financial benefits of shopping around, will support ongoing visitation and use of the service.
Impact of ceasing the program	
Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts	

Name of the program	Activating Tarago Reservoir for on-water recreation
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for water treatment capacity upgrades at the Tarago, Neerim South and Warragul treatment plants to enable the Tarago Reservoir to open to recreational angling and boating.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	1.0
Reasons why the program was established	To deliver the election commitment to open Tarago Reservoir to on-water recreation whilst preserving the storage's primary purpose as a drinking water storage.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	The water treatment upgrades were completed in November 2025. The on-water recreation facility has an anticipated opening date of November 2026.
Reasons why further funding is not being sought	This initiative received once off funding to deliver a commitment. Further funding is not required.
Impact of ceasing the program	
Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts	

Name of the program	Protecting waterways so our wildlife can thrive
Objective(s) of the program	Funding was provided for the Green Links program for grants supporting revegetation and regeneration of waterways.
Expenditure in the financial year 2025–26 (\$ million)	2.3
Reasons why the program was established	Increasing urban land use, development growth pressures, and climate change pose an increasing risk to the condition of urban waterways and their corridors, the biodiversity they support, and the value to community from healthy waterways and landscapes. Works to improve habitat along urban waterways can strengthen the role of urban waterways as biodiversity refuges. This can also provide green space for recreation and connection to nature for urban communities.
Details of who and how many used the program and evidence of the outcomes achieved	Across the state, 33 projects were funded, with funding provided to city and shire councils, community environment groups, water corporations and an Aboriginal cooperative. As of March 2026, outputs include more than 25,000 volunteer hours, 150 hectares of weed control and 40,000 native plants planted. These have contributed to improved biodiversity and habitat along urban waterways, and greater community engagement with their local waterways. The program is set to exceed the original target for revegetation of 200 hectares. When completed, the projects will collectively deliver over 230 hectares of revegetation and habitat improvement.
Reasons why further funding is not being sought	This was an election commitment that is expected to achieve the announced objectives by the conclusion of the program in 2026-27.
Impact of ceasing the program	This initiative received once off funding to deliver a commitment. Melbourne Water will continue investing in urban water revegetation programs.
Strategies that are being implemented to minimise any negative impacts	Stakeholders are being informed of alternative sources of funding.

## Capital asset expenditure

### Question 10

*Budget Paper No. 5: Statement of Finances* provides cash flow statements for departments.

*Budget Paper No. 4: State Capital Program* provides the capital projects undertaken by departments.

For the 'Payments for nonfinancial assets' line item in the 2026–27 budget cash flow statement, please provide a breakdown of these costs and indicate which capital project they relate to.

If any other line items in the cash flow statement comprises expenditure on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), please list the PPP it relates to and the cost.

#### *Guidance*

Capital projects extracted from the cash flow statements are expected to correspond to capital projects listed in *Budget Paper No. 4: State Capital Program* as 'New projects', 'Existing projects', or 'Completed projects'.

### Response

Please see [Excel Worksheet](#) for response

## Public Private Partnerships – expenditure

### Question 11

*Budget Paper No. 5: Statement of Finances* provides a comprehensive operating statement that details each department's revenue and expenses on an accrual basis reflecting the cost of providing its output.

- a) In the 2026–27 comprehensive operating statement please identify all expenditure on Public Private Partnerships (PPP) by line item and provide a breakdown of these costs and indicate to which project they relate.

#### *Guidance*

If the line item 'Other operating expenses' in the comprehensive operating statement comprises expenditure on PPPs, please also list the PPP it relates to and the cost.

- b) Please also provide the estimated/forecast expenditure for all PPPs across forward estimates.

### Response

a)

Line item	2024–25 Actual (\$ million)	2025–26 revised Budget (\$ million)	2026–27 Budget (\$ million)	Related project(s)
Employee benefits	0.1	0.1	0.1	Biosciences Research Centre Project
Interest expense	20.6	19.9	19.2	Biosciences Research Centre Project
Other operating expenses	13.3	29.6	22.0	Biosciences Research Centre Project
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>41.4</b>	

Line item	2024–25 Actual (\$ million)	2025–26 revised Budget (\$ million)	2026–27 Budget (\$ million)	Related project(s)
Employee benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0	Showground Redevelopment Project
Interest expense	2.8	3.0	0.0	Showground Redevelopment Project
Other operating expenses	0.7	1.7	0.0	Showground Redevelopment Project
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	

Line item	2024–25 Actual (\$ million)	2025–26 revised Budget (\$ million)	2026–27 Budget (\$ million)	Related project(s)
Expenses on behalf of the State (Administered items statement)	168.4	204.5	290.4	Victorian Desalination Project
Interest and depreciation expense (Administered items statement)	348.3	341.5	333.4	Victorian Desalination Project
<b>Total</b>	<b>516.7</b>	<b>546.0</b>	<b>623.8</b>	

b)

PPPs	2024–25 Actual (\$ million)	2025-26 revised Budget (\$ million)	2026-27 Budget (\$ million)	2027-28 Estimated/Forecast (\$ million)	2028-29 Estimated/Forecast (\$ million)	2029-30 Estimated/Forecast (\$ million)
Biosciences Research Centre Project	34.0	49.6	41.4	37.9	41.0	36.7
Showgrounds Redevelopment Project	3.5	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Victorian Desalination Project	516.7	546.0	623.8	630.3	658.8	657.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>554.2</b>	<b>600.4</b>	<b>665.2</b>	<b>668.1</b>	<b>699.8</b>	<b>694.4</b>

## Public Private Partnerships – expected and actual benefits

### Question 12

For Public Private Partnerships (PPP) projects in operation and in procurement and delivery, please provide detail on:

- the expected benefits of the PPP project in the uncommissioned (planning and construction) stages
- the value to the State of the expected benefits of the PPP project in the uncommissioned stages
- the actual/existing benefits of the PPP project in its commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage
- the value of the actual/existing benefits of the PPP project in its commissioned stage per year
- how benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported.

### Response:

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
Biosciences Research Centre	<p>The PPP contracting model delivers the following benefits to the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced operational exposure and obtaining increased certainty of outcome, due to the efficient allocation of risks;</li> <li>competition and performance-based contracts with measures for poor or non-delivery;</li> <li>sustainable infrastructure by focusing on asset value</li> </ul>	<p>The value of actual/existing benefits per year is difficult to determine given both the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the project, and would require detailed modelling. The department has not undertaken this modelling and does not have this information on hand.</p>	<p>The benefits of using the PPP Contracting Model for the Biosciences Research Centre Project to date have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a fully operational world class scientific research facility;</li> <li>an optimal risk allocation between the Joint Venture participants and the private sector based on the Partnerships Victoria principles;</li> <li>a facility that, through its state-of-the-art high</li> </ul>	<p>There are no measures in place to quantify in dollar terms the resultant benefits of the outputs and outcomes to the State of using the PPP contracting model for this Project. The value (\$m) resulting from agricultural research and innovation programs would require complex modelling to evaluate the quantitative benefits resulting from the investment over</p>	<p>There is currently no public reporting relating to this project, nor have benefit measures been established for this to occur.</p>

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
	<p>maintenance, ensuring long- term viability; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced financial commitments at the delivery stage of the project by leveraging private capital, reducing reliance on public funds.</li> </ul> <p>The PPP model has the flexibility to drive both competition as well as meeting affordability requirements using tools such as the Public Sector Comparator (PSC), financial liability impacts and a scope ladder. A scope ladder can be used where appropriate to add or remove scope from the project depending on the financial impact. As the State provides an output specification, it is up to the private sector to develop a design which not only meets the minimum requirements or the facility but also best achieves the other project requirements such as functionality and</p>		<p>design standard, has become a centre for internationally recognised primary industries orientated research, diagnostic capacity and educational activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a facility that complies with all applicable national and international statutory and regulatory requirements, including all applicable accreditation requirements;</li> <li>enhancing the scientific research programs of the Joint Venture participants and their associates by enabling these parties to be better positioned to deliver on their strategic plans; and</li> <li>attracting national and international scientists, improving research capability and promoting</li> </ul>	<p>time. The department has not undertaken this modelling and does not have this information on hand.</p> <p>Qualitative economic benefits to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stimulating economic activity in Victoria through investment in biosciences and biotechnology;</li> <li>growing Victoria’s agricultural biosciences and biotechnology profile as a place to do business;</li> <li>minimising geographic separation of some of DEECA’s metropolitan research and development facilities, replacing facilities that were approaching the</li> </ul>	

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
	<p>operational outcomes. A key benefit of the PPP model is that the private sector is incentivised to provide an optimised and innovative design within the affordability constraints, which often results in greater qualitative benefits than if only the scope under the PSC was delivered.</p> <p><u>Biosciences Research Centre Project Vision</u></p> <p>The Project’s vision is to generate reputational, economic, social and environmental benefits for Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by focusing new generation biosciences research on threats such as climate change and biosecurity preparedness;</li> <li>• by enhancing capacity for preparedness, rapid detection, response and management of plant and animal pest and disease outbreaks, to</li> </ul>		<p>collaborative research resulting in better biosciences research and educational outcomes.</p>	<p>end of their useful lives; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhancing commercial opportunities by encouraging the private sector to undertake scientific research that is synergistic and complementary to the operating objectives of the Joint Venture participants.</li> </ul>	

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
	<p>reassure trading partners and protect Victoria’s agricultural sector;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by improving the efficiency of research and development programs and services;</li> <li>• by improving the returns to the community from research and development investment;</li> <li>• by providing linkages to commercial partners to increase opportunities for research investment and commercialisation;</li> <li>• by improving Victoria’s competitiveness by facilitating the development of new generation crops and animals focused on drought tolerance and bio-energy; and</li> <li>• by leveraging the co-location between DEECA and La Trobe University to access new</li> </ul>				

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
	research and development funding.				
Showgrounds Redevelopment	<p>The PPP contracting model delivers the following benefits to the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced operational exposure and obtaining increased certainty of outcome, due to the efficient allocation of risks;</li> <li>competition and performance-based contracts with measures for poor or non-delivery;</li> <li>sustainable infrastructure by focusing on asset value maintenance, ensuring long-term viability; and</li> <li>reduced financial commitments at the delivery stage of the project by leveraging private capital and reducing reliance on public funds.</li> </ul>	<p>The value of actual/existing benefits per year is difficult to determine given both the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the project, which would require detailed modelling. The department has not undertaken this modelling and does not have this information on hand.</p>	<p>The Showgrounds PPP has delivered a range of general benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring continuity of the Melbourne Show at the Melbourne Showgrounds site in Ascot Vale;</li> <li>providing facilities for the purpose of delivering the Melbourne Show and other events that have a design life of 40 years; and</li> <li>maintaining the Showgrounds (including all improvements on the Showgrounds plant, machinery and equipment) in accordance with the asset management plan.</li> </ul>	<p>We are unable to quantify in dollar terms the resultant benefits of the outputs and outcomes to the State of using the PPP contracting model for this Project.</p>	<p>There is currently no public reporting relating to this project, nor have benefit measures been established for this to occur.</p>
Victorian Desalination Plant	Desalination Plant commissioned in 2012.	The Project is unique both in its scale and in the supply side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides water security to Melbourne, Geelong, parts of East Gippsland</li> </ul>	The Victorian Desalination Plant provides the	The annual volume of water required and the volume

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
		<p>issues it addresses. This uniqueness rendered any quantitative analysis of the associated costs and benefits highly unreliable. Consequently, a qualitative approach to assessing the associated costs and benefits was adopted. Analysis undertaken in 2007-08 identified the primary benefit from the Project was to avoid the risk of level 4 restrictions and the requirement to put in place emergency procedures. The costs associated with level 4 restrictions or any further restrictions resulting from emergency arrangements being put in place would be very large for the</p>	<p>and surrounding regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 gigalitres of water has been ordered for the 2026–27 financial year, as storage levels particularly in Melbourne and Geelong have experienced a significant decline over the past two years.</li> <li>• At the completion of this order, the plant has contributed 655 gigalitres of water to the Melbourne supply since 2016-17.</li> </ul>	<p>Melbourne system, including Geelong, parts of East Gippsland and surrounding regions, with long term water security and acts as an insurance mechanism to avoid the need for water restrictions which can have significant economic and social impacts. While annual production varies based on need, the plant has contributed 505 gigalitres of water to the Melbourne system (including Geelong) since 2016-17 (equating to approximately one year of Melbourne’s water supply). These qualitative and quantitative benefits accrue over the life of the operation of the plant and therefore an annual value is not appropriate.</p>	<p>delivered is reported on the <a href="http://water.vic.gov.au">water.vic.gov.au</a> website. The Metropolitan Urban Water Strategies and the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (updated five-yearly) includes assessment of the need for the desalination plant in the overall water supply system.</p>

PPP	Expected benefits in uncommissioned (planning and construction) phases	Value of expected benefits to the State (\$ million)	Actual/existing benefits of commissioned (operations and maintenance) stage	Value of actual/existing benefits per year (\$ million)	How benefits are monitored, measured and publicly reported
		community and on commercial operations, both in the short term and in the long run. Based on this qualitative analysis it was considered, at the time, highly likely that the benefits associated with this project outweighed its costs.			

## Major project contracting – DTP only

### Question 13

Not applicable – DTP only.

## Savings initiatives

### Question 14

For each of the savings initiatives detailed in the 2025–26 Budget,<sup>9</sup> please detail:

- the department's saving target for 2025–26 and 2026–27
- a breakdown of how the department will meet the savings targets in 2025–26 and 2026–27
- the impact that these actions will have on the delivery of services and assets/infrastructure during 2025–26 and 2026–27.

### Response

Initiative	2025–26			2026–27		
	Savings target for (\$ million)	Breakdown of how the department met savings targets	Impact these actions had on the delivery of services and assets/infrastructure	Savings target (\$ million)	How the department will meet savings targets	Impact these actions will have on delivery of services and assets/infrastructure
Whole of Government savings and efficiencies	42.914	The target will be met by measures that do not materially impact frontline services including corporate savings from non-frontline functions, consolidation of duplicate functions and ceasing or scaling back activities and functions where original aims have been achieved.	No anticipated material impacts on frontline service delivery or asset / infrastructure projects.	41.325	The target is expected to be met through general savings and efficiencies measures across the department, including corporate savings from non-frontline functions, consolidation of duplicate functions and ceasing or scaling back activities and functions where original aims have been achieved.	The Department will continue to prioritise front line service delivery and infrastructure when implementing the savings.

<sup>9</sup> Department of Treasury and Finance, *Budget Paper No. 3: 2024–25 Service Delivery*, Melbourne, 2024, p. 92.

**Question 15**

For each of the savings initiatives detailed in the 2026–27 Budget, please detail (on the same basis of consolidation as the budget papers):

- a) the department's saving target for 2026–27
- b) how the department will meet the various savings targets in 2026–27
- c) the impact that these actions will have on the delivery of services and assets/infrastructure during 2026–27.

**Response**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Savings target for 2026–27 (\$ million)</b>	<b>Savings target for 2027–28 (\$ million)</b>	<b>Savings target for 2028–29 (\$ million)</b>	<b>Savings target for 2029–30 (\$ million)</b>	<b>How the department will meet various savings targets</b>	<b>Impact these actions will have on delivery of services and assets/infrastructure</b>
Whole of Government savings and efficiencies – see 2026–27 Budget, Paper 3, Chapter 1, page 102.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Data cannot be provided at this stage, as details of individual savings initiatives are subject to the final whole of government implementation approach and consultation with impacted staff.	Data cannot be provided at this stage, as details of individual savings initiatives are subject to the final whole of government implementation approach and consultation with impacted staff.

## Use of funds saved from other programs or initiatives

### Question 16

In relation to any programs or initiatives that have been reprioritised, curtailed or reduced for 2026–27, please identify:

- the amount expected to be spent under the program or initiative during 2026–27 at the time of the 2025–26 Budget
- the amount currently to be spent under the program or initiative during 2026–27
- the use to which the funds realised by this reduction will be put. Please include the name(s) of any program or initiative that will be funded or partially funded.

### Response

Program/initiative that has been reprioritised, curtailed or reduced	The amount expected to be spent under the program or initiative during 2026–27 (\$ million)		The use to which the funds will be put
	At the time of the 2025–26 Budget	At the time of the 2026–27 Budget	
Forestry Transition Program	29.6	46.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The increase in budget in 2026-27 reflects the rephrasing of funds between years to ensure closer alignment with anticipated project milestones.</li> <li>Some funding from this program has been reprioritised.</li> <li>\$4.0 million in 2026-27 will be used to fund the 2026-27 Budget initiative Safeguarding the future of Victoria's agriculture sector and supporting animal welfare.</li> </ul>
Wind worker training centre	1.5	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.12 million will be used to fund the 2026-27 Budget</li> </ul>

Program/initiative that has been reprioritised, curtailed or reduced	The amount expected to be spent under the program or initiative during 2026–27 (\$ million)		The use to which the funds will be put
	At the time of the 2025–26 Budget	At the time of the 2026–27 Budget	
			initiative Energy Assistance Program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The balance will be used to fund other initiatives across DEECA’s portfolios.</li> </ul>
Forest Contractor Program	72.5	70.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.7 million in 2026-27 will be used to fund the 2026-27 Budget initiative Securing critical aviation fire services.</li> </ul>

## Service delivery

### Question 17

a) Please provide the total estimated cost to the department (if any) of the machinery of government changes made since July 2025.

#### Response

Not applicable. The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has had no Machinery of Government changes since July 2025.

b) Please complete the table below detailing the impacts on the department of any machinery of government changes since July 2025.

#### Response

Impact on the department	Not applicable.
Impact on departmental outputs	Not applicable.
Impact on departmental agencies	Not applicable.
Impact on portfolios	Not applicable.
Impact on statutory authorities	Not applicable.

Estimated cost and date changes are anticipated to be fully implemented	Not applicable.
New portfolio responsibilities and/or how responsibilities are shared, if relevant	Not applicable.
* Where the machinery of government change has no impact on the department, please type N/A where appropriate in the table above.	

## Question 18

*Department Performance Statement* presents departmental performance statements that state the department's outputs by departmental objectives.

Please provide, by ministerial portfolio, the relevant objective(s), objective indicator(s), output(s) and performance measure(s) as provided in the 2026-27 Budget. Where responsibility for outputs, initiatives or performance measures is shared, please clearly outline what is shared and how responsibility is divided between Ministers or portfolios.

Please use a separate table for each portfolio.

Please use one line per output and ensure that outputs align with the relevant objective and indicator/s.

### Response

<b>Minister*</b>	Minister for Agriculture		
<b>Portfolio</b>	Agriculture		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Objective indicator/s</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
Objective 1: Productive and sustainably used agricultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of Victorian agriculture production</li> <li>Value of Victorian food and fibre exports.</li> </ul>	Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom presentations of the Responsible Pet Ownership program delivered to Victorian kindergartens and primary schools</li> <li>Farmers and related small business operators supported by the Rural Financial Counselling Service to manage financial hardship</li> <li>Young farmer scholarships awarded</li> <li>Agreements finalised with industry partners to commercialise intellectual property</li> <li>Intellectual property protection disclosures accepted</li> <li>Postgraduate-level/PhD students in training</li> <li>Ratio of external funds co-invested in agriculture research and development projects</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction rating of external co-investors in agriculture research and development</li> <li>• Scientific and technical publications accepted for publication following independent peer review</li> <li>• Pest and disease diagnostic test results provided to industry and government within agreed timeframes</li> <li>• Research project milestones and reports completed on time</li> <li>• Animal disease, welfare and product integrity control programs maintained to ensure Victorian agricultural produce complies with food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity standards required to access markets</li> <li>• Client interactions with land health services</li> <li>• Clients engaged with agriculture productivity services</li> <li>• Inspections or audits of scientific establishments undertaken to provide assurance of compliance with relevant industry standards for animal welfare</li> <li>• Known state prohibited weed sites monitored and treated in line with the relevant weed action plan</li> <li>• Plant pest, disease and residue control programs maintained to ensure Victorian agricultural produce complies with food safety and biosecurity standards required to access markets</li> <li>• Properties inspected for invasive plant and animal priority species</li> <li>• Client satisfaction rating of agricultural services</li> <li>• National biosecurity, agriculture/veterinary chemical use and animal welfare programs implemented in accordance with agreed plans</li> <li>• Preparedness activities implemented, in line with agreed plans, to ensure response readiness for emergency animal and plant pest, disease and natural disaster incidents</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development or update of market access arrangements completed within specified timeframes to facilitate interstate trade for Victorian plants and plant products</li> <li>• Actions commenced within specified timeframes to respond to reported emergency animal and plant pest, disease and natural disaster incidents complies with national and state agreements and obligations</li> <li>• Animal health certificates issued within specified timeframes to support international market access</li> <li>• Plant health certificates issued within specified timeframes at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market to support domestic market access</li> <li>• Number of grants awarded through forestry programs</li> <li>• Number of trees planted under the Gippsland Plantation Investment Program</li> <li>• Number of worker support payments finalised under the Victorian Forestry Transition Program</li> <li>• Value of co-investment from external (non-state) funding sources attracted to the Department’s programs that support the growth of Victoria’s plantation estate</li> </ul>
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<b>Minister*</b>	Minister for Environment		
<b>Portfolio</b>	Environment		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Objective indicator/s</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
Objective 4: Reduced impact of major bushfires and other emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of bushfires contained at first attack and/or under five hectares to suppress bushfires promptly, keep bushfires small and minimise loss</li> <li>• Area treated through planned burning and other treatments to maintain the statewide bushfire risk at or below 70 per cent</li> </ul>	Fire and Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 per cent of burns identified in the current year of the Joint Fuel Management Program ready for on ground delivery</li> <li>• Personnel with accreditation in a fire and emergency management role</li> <li>• Stakeholder and community forums on bushfire management and planned burning held</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of agreed departmental fire emergency management obligations met on time and to standard</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State forests roads (Category 1) and bridges (on Category 1 roads) with documented inspections and/or maintenance programs to meet regulatory obligations</li> <li>Statewide bushfire risk is maintained at or below the target</li> <li>Strategic fire access roads maintained and improved</li> <li>Strategic fuel breaks maintained</li> <li>Fires contained at less than five hectares to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact</li> <li>Personnel accredited to serve in a senior capacity (level 2 or 3) in a fire and emergency management role</li> <li>Assessment of Standard of cover completed to assess resource requirements and availability</li> <li>Fires contained at first attack to suppress fires before they become established, minimising impact</li> <li>Readiness and response plans completed prior to the upcoming fire season</li> </ul>
<p>Objective 6: Healthy, resilient and biodiverse environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement in Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management</li> <li>Reduction in pollutants from priority hotspots</li> <li>Environment Protection Authority prosecutions result in a finding of guilt or a clarification of the law</li> <li>Reduction in waste generation per person</li> <li>Increase in diversion of waste from landfill</li> </ul>	<p>Environment and Biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity and threatened species surveys completed on forest, fire management activities</li> <li>Environmental volunteer hours contributing to the health of Victoria’s biodiversity</li> <li>Habitat restored and enhanced to benefit biodiversity and store carbon</li> <li>New permanently protected native vegetation on private land</li> <li>On-ground action to support local environmental outcomes</li> <li>Pest herbivore control in priority locations</li> <li>Pest predator control in priority locations</li> <li>Weed control in priority locations</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Arthur Rylah (ARI) Institute Client Survey respondents rank the level of overall satisfaction with ARI’s research as good, very good or excellent</li> <li>• Presentations made and scientific publications in peer reviewed journals</li> <li>• Proportion of weed and pest animal control targeted towards priority locations</li> <li>• Traditional Owner groups whose Country plans, cultural values and practices are enabled by biodiversity policies and programs</li> <li>• Native Vegetation Credit Extracts processed within 10 days</li> <li>• Planning referrals relating to native vegetation processed within statutory timeframes</li> <li>• Wildlife Licence renewals processed by target dates</li> </ul>
		<p>Statutory Activities and Environment Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment condition notifications provided to Victorians</li> <li>• Total inspections of business sites or premises conducted to prevent and respond to risks of harm to human health and the environment</li> <li>• Victorian community trust in EPA</li> <li>• Applications for internal review of remedial notices completed within statutory timeframes</li> <li>• Applications for licences and permits completed within statutory timelines</li> <li>• Environmental audits and preliminary risk screening assessment reports are reviewed to ensure administrative compliance with legislation and guidelines within 14 days of submission</li> <li>• EPA advice on planning matters is provided within required timeframes</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA confirms duty holder compliance with remedial notice requirements, or escalates for further action, within 17 days of the compliance due date</li> <li>EPA provides technical advice to lead agencies within required timelines during emergency incidents</li> <li>EPA responds to priority waste incidents within 15 hours of notification</li> <li>Pollution reporters requesting follow up by EPA receive contact within five working days</li> </ul>
		Circular Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers</li> <li>Proportion of Victorian households with access to organic food and garden waste recycling services</li> <li>Proportion of Victorian households with access to separated glass recycling services</li> <li>Cumulative increase in the capacity of Victoria’s resource recovery infrastructure</li> </ul>
Objective 7: Productive and effective land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of park visitor satisfaction across the Parks Victoria estate</li> <li>Bay and park assets rated in average to excellent condition</li> <li>Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA’s progress in enabling self-determination</li> </ul>	Management of Public Land and Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual visitation to Zoos Victoria</li> <li>Local parks, playgrounds and dog parks completed</li> <li>Major regulatory education and engagement activities delivered to regulated entities and the Victorian Community, to support compliance with environmental laws</li> <li>Participants in Coastcare activities</li> <li>Specimens curated in the State Botanical Collection</li> <li>Strategic compliance and enforcement operations completed by the Conservation Regulator</li> <li>Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and Cranbourne</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly elected Committees of Management that have a current statutory appointment</li> <li>Recreational facilities in state forests maintained to have a life expectancy greater than five years</li> <li>Applications for consent to use or develop marine and coastal land determined within statutory timelines</li> <li>Rent reviews of Department managed Crown land leases undertaken within specified time frames</li> </ul>
		Parks Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area treated to minimise the impact of pest plants, pest animals and over abundant native animals in parks managed by Parks Victoria</li> <li>Total area of estate managed by Parks Victoria</li> <li>Visits to national, state, urban and other terrestrial parks</li> <li>Visits to piers and jetties</li> <li>Significant built bay assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition</li> <li>Significant built park assets managed by Parks Victoria rated in average to excellent condition</li> </ul>

<b>Minister*</b>	Minister for Climate Action		
<b>Portfolio</b>	Climate Action		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Objective indicator/s</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
Objective 2: Net zero emissions, climate ready economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2005</li> <li>Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program</li> <li>Strengthen community and government resilience to climate change hazards</li> </ul>	Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual energy saved by Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program</li> <li>Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program</li> <li>Delivery of statutory outputs under the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> within statutory timeframes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Victorian Government operations</li> </ul>		
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<b>Minister*</b>	Minister for Energy and Resources		
<b>Portfolio</b>	Energy and Resources		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Objective indicator/s</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
Objective 3: Sustainable development of Victoria's earth resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metres drilled for minerals exploration in Victoria</li> <li>Level of production of minerals and extractives.</li> </ul>	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and stakeholder engagement information forums</li> <li>Earth resources regulatory audits completed in line with the agreed compliance work program</li> <li>Geoscience reports and publications released to promote earth resource opportunities across the State</li> <li>Delivery of agreed milestones for major resources initiatives and priority projects</li> <li>Extractive Industries Work Authority work plans processed within regulatory timeframes</li> <li>Mineral licence applications processed within regulatory timeframes</li> <li>Mineral work plans processed within regulatory timeframes</li> <li>Site rehabilitation bonds processed within 90 days from issue of bond notice for work plans expanding access to resource</li> </ul>
Objective 5: Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relative share of Victoria's energy sourced from renewables</li> <li>Electricity generating capacity installed under the Solar Homes program</li> </ul>	Solar Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applications for Solar panel system rebates for households approved</li> <li>Applications for hot water rebates approved</li> <li>Rebated installations audited by the Solar Homes Audit Program within 6 months of installation</li> <li>Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (each representing one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar panel systems and energy efficient hot water systems installed under the Solar Homes program</li> </ul>		<p>avoided) surrendered by energy retailers to meet their liabilities under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar Homes Program customers who rate the overall performance of Solar Victoria as 'Good' or 'Very Good' in post-approval surveys</li> <li>Average number of business days to process completed eligibility applications</li> <li>Rebate payments for Solar retailers processed within five business days</li> </ul>
		Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Government-supported events that engage business, industry and international delegations in Victoria's energy sector</li> <li>Neighbourhood batteries installed, including batteries specifically for Traditional Owners and First Peoples communities</li> <li>Victorian household appliances converted from gas to electricity through government electrification programs</li> <li>Vulnerable Victorian energy consumers supported to navigate the energy market by the Energy Assistance Program</li> <li>Users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report they are likely to recommend the website to others</li> </ul>

<b>Minister*</b>	Minister for Water		
<b>Portfolio</b>	Water		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Objective indicator/s</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
Objective 8: Safe, sustainable and productive water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of waterway sites with maintained or improved environmental condition as a result of active management</li> </ul>	Water and Catchments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of active stewardship to improve catchment health and resilience through broadacre management</li> <li>Area of waterway vegetation works undertaken to improve the health and resilience of waterways</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative water savings (permanent reduction in irrigation distribution system delivery losses) realised through water recovery projects.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental watering actions achieved at planned sites</li> <li>Households or community housing assisted in the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit Program</li> <li>Long-term water monitoring site parameters maintained</li> <li>New flood studies funded to ensure communities understand flood risk and to inform investment in flood warning and mitigation measures</li> <li>Number of Traditional Owner groups funded to undertake self-determined water projects</li> <li>Place-based plans and actions completed for healthier communities and environments that encompass multiple values (Aboriginal, social, environmental and economic)</li> <li>Schools signed up to Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP)</li> <li>Compliance with the salinity management actions agreed in the Murray Darling Basin Agreement</li> <li>Victorian Water Register system availability per annum</li> <li>Water market information products published annually to ensure water users can make informed decisions</li> <li>Waterway licenses and permits processed within statutory timeframes</li> </ul>
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\* Where Ministers share responsibility for outputs, initiatives or performance measures please detail where appropriate

**Question 19**

- a) Please provide, by ministerial portfolio, a list of the agencies/entities/bodies and the categories (for example statutory/administrative office/authority) to which the information contained in this questionnaire relates.

The financial information provided in this questionnaire includes the following agencies/entities/bodies:

<b>Ministerial Portfolio</b>	<b>Name of agency/entity/body</b>	<b>Category of agency/entity/body</b>
Environment portfolio	Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (CES)	The CES is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.
Water portfolio	Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH)	The VEWH is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.
Energy and Resources portfolio	Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA)	The MLRA is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.
Agriculture portfolio	Rural Assistant Commissioner (RAC)	The RAC is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

The questionnaire also includes additional information related to the following bodies:

<b>Ministerial Portfolio</b>	<b>Name of agency/entity/body</b>	<b>Category of agency/entity/body</b>
Environment portfolio	Environment Protection Authority Victoria	Public entity
Environment portfolio	Sustainability Victoria	Public entity
Environment portfolio	Zoos Victoria	Public entity
Environment portfolio	Parks Victoria	Public entity
Environment portfolio	Royal Botanic Gardens	Public entity
Water portfolio	Catchment Management Authorities	Public entity
Water portfolio	Water Corporations	Public entity
Water portfolio	Victorian Environmental Water Holder	Public entity

b) Please identify functions that have been moved into the department in line with the Government’s response to the Independent Review of the Public Service<sup>10</sup> (or are planned to be moved in this budget year and over the estimates)?

Function	Entity previously responsible for function	What is/will be the impact on the department of taking on these functions? (including budgetary and service delivery impacts)	What is/will be the impact on the function of moving it into the department?
<p>Engagement and education about the rehabilitation of the Latrobe Valley coal mines and the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy, as well as the registration of rehabilitated land after licences are surrendered and post-closure monitoring and management as specified in the registered post-closure plan.</p>	<p>Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA).</p>	<p>Resources Victoria, within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), will provide rehabilitation support to the mines. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finalising the Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan Guidelines and providing advice on the guidelines;</li> <li>• establishing Interdepartmental Committees to oversee the rehabilitation process;</li> <li>• assigning the Resources Victoria Approvals Coordinator to support the mines with approval processes; and</li> <li>• ongoing community engagement and consultation.</li> </ul> <p>The budget funding previously allocated to the MLRA has been allocated to Resources Victoria.</p>	<p>The following key activities will be managed by Resources Victoria, creating increased clarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy.</li> <li>• Providing guidance and advice on the Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plans.</li> <li>• Clearer focus on community engagement and consultation and avoidance of duplication.</li> <li>• Driving cross-government coordination on rehabilitation issues.</li> <li>• Ensuring mine operators meet their legal obligations under the <i>Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act</i>.</li> </ul>
<p>Creation of Safe Food Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health (food safety functions in Health Regulator)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a new entity (Safe Food Victoria).</li> </ul>	<p>The creation of a single entity with whole of supply chain responsibility for food safety regulation. Food safety regulations will no longer be</p>

<sup>10</sup> Victorian Government, *Ensuring the public sector is focused on what matters most*, Melbourne, 2025, p. 9.

Function	Entity previously responsible for function	What is/will be the impact on the department of taking on these functions? (including budgetary and service delivery impacts)	What is/will be the impact on the function of moving it into the department?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (food safety functions in Agriculture Victoria)</li> <li>PrimeSafe</li> <li>Dairy Food Safety Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abolition of two existing entities (PrimeSafe and Dairy Food Safety Victoria).</li> <li>Movement of operational functions from the Department of Health and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to Safe Food Victoria - with Safe Food Victoria to undertake these functions.</li> <li>The budget funding for existing regulators will transition to Safe Food Victoria.</li> </ul>	<p>delivered on a commodity by commodity basis (i.e. meat, dairy).</p> <p>The legislation creating Safe Food Victoria passed Parliament on 2 April 2026. Implementation planning for entity consolidation is underway and will take effect in the forward estimates.</p>
Food policy	Department of Health (food safety functions in Health Regulator).	Movement of policy responsibilities from the Department of Health to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. This includes legislative and regulatory stewardship, governance and policy functions. There is no budget funding being transferred from the Department of Health to deliver these functions.	The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action will add additional responsibilities for the <i>Food Act</i> , stakeholder groups, policy development and governance to the existing food safety policy role within Agriculture Victoria.
Regulatory responsibilities of Parks Victoria to transfer to the Conservation Regulator (DEECA)	Parks Victoria.	A strategic focus across DEECA managed land and Parks Victoria managed land will be taken, to ensure regulatory efforts are focused on the greatest risks and what is most important to the	The consolidation of environmental regulatory functions on public land will strengthen accountability, consistency and efficiency in regulation for DEECA and Parks Victoria managed land.

Function	Entity previously responsible for function	What is/will be the impact on the department of taking on these functions? (including budgetary and service delivery impacts)	What is/will be the impact on the function of moving it into the department?
		<p>Victorian environment and community.</p> <p>The Conservation Regulator will deliver Parks Victoria's regulatory functions with existing resources.</p>	
<p>Specific programs will transfer from Sustainability Victoria to DEECA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ResourceSmart Schools</li> <li>• Detox Your Home</li> <li>• Industry and Infrastructure Development Program</li> <li>• Markets Acceleration Package</li> <li>• Investment Facilitation</li> <li>• Education and Behaviour Change</li> <li>• Energy software, First Rate 5 function</li> </ul>	Sustainability Victoria (SV).	<p>Existing SV staff and budgets associated with these functions will transfer to DEECA to support the continued delivery of these programs.</p> <p>The Energy software, First Rate 5 function generates income from the sale of certificates for which it has government approval to utilise for its operating costs. The budget impacts are expected to be neutral.</p>	These programs will continue to be delivered consistent with existing commitments and deliverables.

## Departmental objectives

### Question 20 – new objectives

For all new departmental objectives in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a description of the objective
- an explanation of why the objective was added
- related outputs
- related objective indicators
- how the departmental objective aligns with Government objectives and priorities.

#### Response

Not applicable. There were no new departmental objectives in the 2026-27 Budget for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

### Question 21 – modified objectives

For all modified departmental objectives in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a description of changes made to the objective
- an explanation of why the objective was changed.

#### Response

Objective	Productive and sustainably used agricultural resources
Description of changes made to the objective	The name of this objective has changed from 'Productive and sustainably used natural resources' in 2025-26 to 'Productive and sustainably used agricultural resources' in 2026-27.
Explanation of why the objective was changed	This objective has been renamed to more accurately reflect services delivered and differentiate it from other DEECA objectives.

**Question 22 – discontinued objectives**

For all discontinued departmental objectives in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) a description of the objective
- b) an explanation of why the objective was discontinued
- c) any objectives that will replace the discontinued objective in part or in full.

**Response**

Not applicable. There were no discontinued departmental objectives in the 2026-27 Budget for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

**Objective indicators****Question 23 – new indicators**

For all new objective indicators in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) the related objective
- b) a description of the indicator
- c) an explanation of why the indicator was added
- d) the assumptions and methodology underpinning the indicator
- e) the target (if applicable)
- f) how the target was set (if applicable)
- g) any shortcomings of the indicator, including data limitations, that limit the ability to assess performance against departmental objectives.

**Response**

Not applicable. There were no new indicators in the 2026-27 Budget for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

### Question 24 – modified objective indicators

For all modified objective indicators in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) a description of changes made to the indicator
- b) an explanation of why the indicator was changed.

#### Response

Indicator	Improvement in Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management
Description of changes made to the indicator	This objective indicator has been renamed from ‘Improve Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management’ in 2025–26 to ‘Improvement in Victoria’s native species populations and their habitat through targeted management’ in 2026–27.
Explanation of why the indicator was changed	The objective indicator has been renamed to describe an outcome to better align with the Resource Management Framework.

### Question 25 – discontinued indicators

For all discontinued objective indicators in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) a description of the indicator
- b) an explanation of why the indicator was discontinued
- c) any impacts on the ability to measure achievement of departmental objectives
- d) any indicators that will replace the discontinued indicator in part or in full.

#### Response

Indicator	Percentage of surveyed users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report that they plan to switch offers after using the website
Description of the indicator	The objective indicator measures the proportion of Victorian Energy Compare (VEC) website users who, when surveyed after using the website, report that they intend to switch retail offers. The percentage is calculated as the number of surveyed users who indicate an intention to switch, divided by the total number of survey respondents.
Explanation of why the indicator was discontinued	The 2025-26 objective indicator ‘Percentage of surveyed users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report that they plan to switch offers after using the website’

	has been removed, as it does not directly demonstrate energy bill savings through user engagement with the Victorian Energy Compare website, but rather suggests potential energy bill savings through users' intention only.
Any impacts on the ability to measure achievement of departmental objectives	The objective will continue to report on three appropriate and robust objective indicators to demonstrate achievement towards reliable, sustainable and affordable energy services. The department will also continue to report on the output performance measure 'Users of the Victorian Energy Compare website who report they are likely to recommend the website to others' to demonstrate the department's service delivery at an output level.
Any indicators that will replace the discontinued indicator	Not applicable.

## Outputs

### Question 26 – new outputs

For all new outputs in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a description of the output
- an explanation of why the output was added
- related performance measures
- how the output will contribute to outcomes in terms of departmental objectives.

### Response

Not applicable. There were no new outputs in the 2026-27 Budget for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

### Question 27 – modified outputs

For all modified outputs in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a description of changes made to the output
- an explanation of why the output was changed.

**Response**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Output: Agriculture; Sub-output: Sustainably Develop Forest and Fibre Resources</b>
Description of changes made to the output	The 2025-26 Agriculture sub-output 'Sustainably Manage Forest Resources' output has been renamed in 2026-27 to 'Sustainably Develop Forest and Fibre Resources'.
Explanation of why the output was changed	This output has been renamed to more accurately reflect services delivered.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Water and Catchments</b>
Description of changes made to the output	The 2025-26 'Effective Water Management and Supply' output has been renamed in 2026-27 to 'Water and Catchments'.
Explanation of why the output was changed	This output has been renamed to better reflect the deliverables of the portfolio.

**Question 28 – discontinued outputs**

For all discontinued outputs in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) a description of the output
- b) an explanation of why the output was discontinued
- c) any impacts on the achievement of departmental objectives
- d) any outputs that will replace the discontinued output in part or in full.

**Response**

Not applicable. There were no discontinued outputs in the 2026-27 Budget for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

## Performance measures

### Question 29 – new performance measures

For all new performance measures in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- the output the measure relates to
- a description of the measure
- the assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure (including how the supporting data are calculated or derived, source and frequency of data collection, as well as any other business rules and assumptions)
- how the target was set
- the shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations.

#### Response

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Victorian household appliances converted from gas to electricity through government electrification programs</b>
Output the measure relates to	Energy
Description of the measure	This new performance measure reports on annual gas heating and hot water appliance conversions through the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) and Solar Victoria programs.
Assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure	The result is a count of gas heating and hot water appliance conversions through the VEU and Solar Victoria programs. This is calculated using the number of VEU rebates plus Solar Victoria rebates, with a formula in place to avoid potential double counting (where consumers apply for both rebates for one appliance).
How target was set	The target has been set using the actual uptake of electrification activities through VEU and Solar Victoria programs to date as a basis, with consideration of expected changes to the VEU program (including targets for 2026-27).
Shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations	This measure captures the electrification events that are recorded through Government programs and does not include electrification activities that occur outside of these programs.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Development or update of market access arrangements completed within specified timeframes to facilitate interstate trade for Victorian plants and plant products</b>
Output the measure relates to	Agriculture

Description of the measure	This new performance measure replaces the 2025-26 performance measure 'Actions commenced within specified timeframes to respond to new or amended assurance or accreditation programs to meet interstate requirements and enable export of Victorian plant and plant products'. The new measure continues to report on the same assurance and accreditation programs as the previous measure, however the new measure reports on the completion of arrangements rather than preliminary actions. This better reflects activity within the Department's control and is more aligned to a service delivery output of the Department.
Assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure	The result is the total number of arrangements developed/updated within the specific timeframe divided by the total number of arrangements that have been identified as necessary to be developed or amended.
How target was set	The target has been set based on historical data, national commitments and the expected workload during 2026-27.
Shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations	This measure reports on the elapsed time between receipt of a request and completion of the associated work and does not capture the time required to complete prerequisite activities, which are not the control of DEECA.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Major regulatory education and engagement activities delivered to regulated entities and the Victorian Community, to support compliance with environmental laws</b>
Output the measure relates to	Management of Public Land and Forests
Description of the measure	This new performance measure reports on the Conservation Regulator's administration of environmental regulations by improving awareness of environmental laws to increase voluntary compliance.
Assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure	The result is a count of the number of major events where the Conservation Regulator has a presence, plus the number of major communications and engagement projects run by the Conservation Regulator.
How target was set	The target has been set based on historical data.
Shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers</b>
Output the measure relates to	Circular Economy
Description of the measure	This new performance measure replaces the discontinued measure 'Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points provided to Victorians'. The new measure better

	reflects the Environment Protection Authority's ongoing actions, governance and oversight of the scheme.
Assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure	The result is a count of sites visited by the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) team to educate retailers about obligations under the CDS.
How target was set	The target is based on the department's CDS workplan for 2026-27.
Shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Applications for consent to use or develop marine and coastal land determined within statutory timelines</b>
Output the measure relates to	Management of Public Land and Forests
Description of the measure	This new performance measure reports on the department's timely determination of marine and coastal land use or development applications to balance public access, public safety, and protection of Victoria's marine and coastal environment.
Assumptions and methodology underpinning the measure	The result is the number of cases for which determinations met statutory timeframes divided by the total number of cases received that require a determination by the department.
How target was set	The target is based on available resourcing and data input reliability.
Shortcomings of the measure, including data limitations	Not applicable.

### Question 30 – modified performance measures

For all existing performance measures with an associated target that has been modified in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) the output the measure relates to
- b) a description of the measure
- c) the previous target
- d) the new target and how it was set
- e) the justification for changing the target
- f) an explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable and the 2025–26 expected outcome
- g) the methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget.

## Response

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Major Government-supported events that engage business, industry and international delegations in Victoria's energy sector</b>
Output the measure relates to	Energy
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure provides a count of DEECA-supported events that engage business, supply chains and international delegations regarding the energy sector.
The previous target	10
The new target and how it was set	25 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects that the reporting methodology has been amended for this performance measure to include events comprising international delegates.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 11
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on year-to-date performance and anticipated progress to 30 June 2026, informed by program planning.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Neighbourhood batteries installed, including batteries specifically for Traditional Owners and First Peoples communities</b>
Output the measure relates to	Energy
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure counts the number of neighbourhood battery installations that occur each financial year as part of the 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program.
The previous target	25
The new target and how it was set	41 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the installation of further batteries from Round 1 as well as additional batteries funded through Round 2 of the 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was not met in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 25; 2024–25 actual was 9) due to some projects requiring additional time to complete battery installations to enable extended community consultation at some locations and further network integration design and testing. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 50
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is estimated based on milestone timelines set out in funding agreements, together with schedules provided by proponents.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Applications for Solar panel system rebates for households approved</b>
Output the measure relates to	Solar Victoria
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure quantifies the approval of eligible applications for rental and owner-occupied households.
The previous target	47,700
The new target and how it was set	28,854 - The lower 2026-27 target reflects market dynamics and lower demand for rebates available through the program.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was not met in 2024-25 (2024-25 target was 50,000; 2024-25 actual was 41,581) due to changes to demand reflecting changes in market conditions. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 34,494
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025-26 expected outcome is based on analysis of the latest available data plus an estimation of the number of approved applications to 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (each representing one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions avoided) surrendered by energy retailers to meet their liabilities under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target</b>
Output the measure relates to	Solar Victoria
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure tracks the number of Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (VEEC) surrendered by energy retailers to meet their liabilities under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target. A VEEC is a virtual certificate that represents one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions avoided due to energy efficiency activities undertaken in Victoria. Energy retailers are required to surrender these certificates and provide them to the Essential Services Commission, to meet their obligations under the <i>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007</i> .
The previous target	7.3 million certificates
The new target and how it was set	4.4 million certificates - The lower 2026-27 target reflects the target for the Victorian Energy Upgrades program for 2026, which under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007, must be met by April 2027 unless extended by the scheme administrator, the Essential Services Commission. The target is lower than previous years to reset targets in line with substantial changes in the program towards more complex upgrades and the strategic review of the scheme.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024-25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 7.3 million certificates

The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025-26 expected outcome is estimated based on the availability of registered VEECs, energy retailers' holdings of VEECs and the price VEECs are traded for.
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<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Solar Homes Program customers who rate the overall performance of Solar Victoria as 'Good' or 'Very Good' in post-approval surveys</b>
Output the measure relates to	Solar Victoria
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure monitors customer satisfaction with the Solar Homes Program.
The previous target	75%
The new target and how it was set	85% – The higher 2026–27 target reflects past performance for this measure.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025-26 Expected Outcome: 85%
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on an extrapolation from year-to-date data.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Rebate payments for Solar retailers processed within five business days</b>
Output the measure relates to	Solar Victoria
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure monitors whether rebate payments delivered under the Solar Homes Program are being processed in a timely manner.
The previous target	80%
The new target and how it was set	85% – The higher 2026–27 target reflects past performance for this measure.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 88%
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on an extrapolation from year-to-date data.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Number of worker support payments finalised under the Victorian Forestry Transition Program</b>
Output the measure relates to	Agriculture output - Sustainably Develop Forest and Fibre Resources sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure quantifies the number of worker support payments

	finalised under the worker support program. It relates to a Government commitment to fund redundancy top-up payments for workers who lose their job due to the cessation of native timber harvesting from state forests.
The previous target	50
The new target and how it was set	25 - the Worker Support Program closes on 30 June 2026. The lower target recognises that any payments in 2026–27 are expected to be residual payments unable to be finalised prior to closure.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 150
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the latest available data plus the forecasted number of payments likely to be approved to 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Number of grants awarded through forestry programs</b>
Output the measure relates to	Agriculture output - Sustainably Develop Forest and Fibre Resources sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure counts the number of grants delivered through forestry programs in the financial year, including business, community and plantations grants programs.
The previous target	40
The new target and how it was set	65 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the inclusion of plantations grants programs within the measure, alongside a shift toward more targeted investment opportunities to maximise alignment with sector priorities.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025-26 Expected Outcome: 100
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025-26 expected outcome is based on the latest available data plus the forecasted number of grants likely to be approved to 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Stakeholder and community forums on bushfire management and planned burning held</b>
Output the measure relates to	Fire and Emergency Management
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure counts the number of stakeholder and community forums held in the financial year, which involved sharing of information or decision-making around bushfire management. The type of forums can include community information sessions, workshops, roundtables and place-based events e.g. markets or field days.

The previous target	12
The new target and how it was set	14 – The higher 2026-27 target reflects the expansion of the program to cover more of the state and reflects a change in reporting methodology. The reporting methodology for this measure has been amended to include all statewide forums.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was not met in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 12; 2024–25 actual was 2) due to the impact of significant fires in the Grampians and Bullengarook, which resulted in the diversion of community engagement resources to bushfire response. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 24
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on activities completed in the first 9 months of the financial year and an estimate of further activity expected to be delivered by 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Assessment of Standard of cover completed to assess resource requirements and availability</b>
Output the measure relates to	Fire and Emergency Management
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure reports the month when DEECA finishes an assessment of whether there is a sufficient, sustainable and ongoing supply of skilled individuals and equipment available to deliver on bushfire management (fuel management, readiness and response activities) as per the requirements set out in the Standard of Cover for Bushfire Management.
The previous target	December 2025
The new target and how it was set	June 2027 – The later 2026–27 target better reflects the annual bushfire planning process, as it incorporates insights from post-event reviews from the prior fire season to inform strategies for determining resource capability, in preparation for upcoming bushfire seasons.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: December 2025
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	Under the 2025–26 reporting methodology for this performance measure, all activity was completed by December 2025, so the result is not an estimate.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Biodiversity and threatened species surveys completed on forest, fire management activities</b>
Output the measure relates to	Environment and Biodiversity

Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure counts the number of biodiversity and threatened species surveys that have been delivered by the Biodiversity and Threatened Species Survey Program in the financial year, in support of forest fire management activities.
The previous target	150
The new target and how it was set	250 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects that the greater demand for ecological surveys informing forest and fuel management operations experienced in 2025–26 is expected to continue.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 300
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the level of demand expected to 30 June 2026 for biodiversity and threatened species surveys, driven by DEECA's Fuel Management program.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Weed control in priority locations</b>
Output the measure relates to	Environment and Biodiversity
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure tracks the number of hectares where weeds are searched for, located and treated using grant funding provided by DEECA.
The previous target	50,000 hectares
The new target and how it was set	40,000 hectares – The lower 2026–27 target reflects updated modelling, which resulted in changes to priority locations.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was not met in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 50,000 hectares; 2024–25 actual was 38,803 hectares). 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 40,000 hectares
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is informed by a review of the historical data, annual project planning, and DEECA's expectations for progress to 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Cumulative increase in the capacity of Victoria's resource recovery infrastructure</b>
Output the measure relates to	Circular Economy
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure reports on the increase in Victoria's resource recovery rate through the successful delivery of resource recovery infrastructure projects, measured in tonnes of increased resource recovery capacity.
The previous target	2,400,000 tonnes
The new target and how it was set	

The justification for changing the target	2,600,000 tonnes – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the cumulative impact of activities underway to commission a large number of projects under the Industry and Infrastructure Development Package, which will increase resource recovery of kerbside materials.
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024–25 within the 5 per cent variance threshold. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 2,350,000 tonnes
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on analysis of the latest available data and the capacity of projects scheduled for completion by 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Local parks, playgrounds and dog parks completed</b>
Output the measure relates to	Management of Public Land and Forests
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure monitors the completion of local parks, playgrounds and dog parks projects under the ‘Delivering better parks and playgrounds’ and ‘Protecting our parks, pets and wildlife – dog parks’ initiatives.
The previous target	22
The new target and how it was set	34 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the number of projects expected to be completed under the program in 2026–27.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 22
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on an analysis of the progress made for individual projects against their agreed project delivery milestones. These agreed project delivery milestones are set out in the funding agreements for the projects.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Total area of estate managed by Parks Victoria</b>
Output the measure relates to	Parks Victoria
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure monitors the amount of terrestrial and waterway land Parks Victoria manages on behalf of the State.
The previous target	4,120,000 hectares
The new target and how it was set	4,102,000 hectares – The lower 2026–27 target reflects the transfer of some public land from Parks Victoria for direct management by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024–25 within the 5 per cent variance threshold. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 4,102,000 hectares

The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the latest available data to DEECA plus any planned changes (if applicable) through to 30 June 2026.
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<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Households or community housing assisted in the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit Program</b>
Output the measure relates to	Water and Catchments
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure quantifies the total number of rebates granted through the Community Rebate and Housing Retrofit Program during the financial year.
The previous target	900
The new target and how it was set	1,200 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects that a higher proportion of individual residential customers are expected to access the program compared to housing properties.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 1,610
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is estimated based on year-to-date progress plus the amount of funding remaining for the financial year.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Long-term water monitoring site parameters maintained</b>
Output the measure relates to	Water and Catchments
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure provides information on the number of long-term water monitoring site parameters maintained. Parameters include water level/flow, phosphorus, nitrogen, turbidity, electrical conductivity and pH. Long-term water monitoring site parameters are the most valuable in the water monitoring network as they have long continuous data records and provide information on long term change in water resources across the State.
The previous target	1,700
The new target and how it was set	1,800 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the cumulative nature of this measure, as the number of water monitoring sites that meet the criteria to be considered ‘long-term’ increases over time.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 1,757
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the latest available number of parameters that meet the criteria for classification as long-term water monitoring site parameters.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Number of Traditional Owner groups funded to undertake self-determined water projects</b>
Output the measure relates to	Water and Catchments
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure quantifies the number of Traditional Owner groups funded to undertake self-determined priorities for water, including enabling Traditional Owner organisations to establish and maintain their own water programs, water unit staff and self-determine projects that align with 'Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap' outcomes.
The previous target	20
The new target and how it was set	23 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the anticipated growth of the Aboriginal Water program through targeted grants, which aims to increase the number of partners.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was exceeded in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 24
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the latest available data plus additional funding agreements that are expected to be completed (with a high degree of certainty) by 30 June 2026.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Place-based plans and actions completed for healthier communities and environments that encompass multiple values (Aboriginal, social, environmental and economic)</b>
Output the measure relates to	Water and Catchments
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure quantifies the number of completed place-based plans and actions that address multiple values to achieve community objectives for integrated water management, recreational management of water assets or integrated land use and water management of urban waterways.
The previous target	7
The new target and how it was set	8 – The higher 2026–27 target reflects the number of actions expected in the project plan for the third year of the four-year work program.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was met in 2024–25. 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 7

The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on the latest available data plus an estimation of the number of plans and actions expected to be completed to 30 June 2026. This estimation is informed by DEECA’s monitoring of the progress of projects.
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<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Schools signed up to Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP)</b>
Output the measure relates to	Water and Catchments
Description/purpose of the measure	This performance measure reports on the number of schools signed up to the Schools Water Efficiency Program, which enables schools to track their water usage using data logger technology.
The previous target	1,600 schools
The new target and how it was set	1,650 schools – The higher 2026–27 target due to the cumulative nature of this measure.
The justification for changing the target	
An explanation of why the target was not met in 2024–25, if applicable, and the 2025–26 expected outcome	The target was not met in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 1,900 schools; 2024–25 actual was 1,500 schools) due to schools' competing priorities (energy, waste and other day-to-day operations). 2025–26 Expected Outcome: 1,600 schools
The methodology behind estimating the 2025–26 expected outcome in the 2026–27 Budget	The 2025–26 expected outcome is based on analysis of the latest available data plus an estimation of the number of schools expected to be recruited to 30 June 2026.

**Question 31 – discontinued performance measures**

For performance measures that are identified as to be discontinued in the 2026–27 *Department Performance Statement*, please provide:

- a) the output the measure related to
- b) a description/purpose of the measure and the year the measure was introduced
- c) the previous target
- d) when the target was last modified and reasons for modification
- e) the justification for discontinuing the measure, including any further information that is not available in *Budget Paper No. 3*
- f) any performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure in part or full.

**Response**

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Grant recipients who met agreed milestones</b>
Output the measure related to	Agriculture output - Agriculture industry development and regulation sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This performance measure counts the number of grant recipients who met agreed milestones as a percentage of total grant agreements executed. It provides information on the extent to which grant funds are being used for their intended purpose as part of the Distillery Door Program. This measure was introduced in 2019-20 under the name 'Grant recipients who met or exceeded agreed outcomes'.
The previous target	70%
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	The target was last modified in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 70%; 2023–24 target was 75%). The reason for the modification was to reflect the adverse impact on grant recipients of extended timeframes required for local government approvals, and the availability of qualified service providers.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued as the Distillery Door Program will not run further grant rounds following 30 June 2026.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Performance and grant agreements acquitted within timeframes specified in the funding agreement</b>
Output the measure related to	Agriculture output - Agriculture industry development and regulation sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This measure tracks the timeliness of grant delivery under the Distillery Door Program. This measure was introduced in 2019–20.
The previous target	85%
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	The target was last modified in 2024–25 (2024–25 target was 85%; 2023–24 target was 90%). The reason for the modification was to reflect the adverse impact on grant recipients of extended timeframes required for local government approvals, and the availability of qualified service providers.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued as the Distillery Door Program will not run further grant programs following 30 June 2026.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Actions commenced within specified timeframes to respond to new or amended assurance or accreditation programs to meet interstate requirements and enable export of Victorian plant and plant products</b>
Output the measure related to	Agriculture output - Biosecurity and Agriculture Services sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This measure demonstrates the responsiveness of DEECA in initiating action on new or amended accreditation programs that meet the Interstate Certification Arrangement Scheme rules. This measure was introduced in 2023–24 under the name 'Commence action within specified timeframes on new or amended accreditations to restore or enable trade'.
The previous target	96%
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	Not applicable – target has remained the same since the performance measure was introduced.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued as it has been replaced with the 2026-27 performance measure 'Development or update of market access arrangements completed within specified timeframes to facilitate interstate trade for Victorian plants and plant products'. The new measure continues to report on the same assurance and accreditation programs as the previous measure, however the new measure reports on the completion of arrangements rather than preliminary actions. This better reflects activity within the Department's control and is more aligned to a service delivery output of the Department.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Development or update of market access arrangements completed within specified timeframes to facilitate interstate trade for Victorian plants and plant products

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Number of training activities undertaken under the Victorian Forestry Transition Program</b>
Output the measure related to	Agriculture output - Sustainably Manage Forest Resources sub-output
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This performance measures quantifies the number of workers who have received one or more episodes of training under the Victorian Forestry Transition Program. This measure was introduced in 2024–25.
The previous target	450 workers
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	The target was last modified in 2025–26 (2025–26 target was 450 workers; 2024–25 target was 1,400 workers). The reason for the modification was to reflect an

	anticipated decrease in further redundancies, funded training caps being reached and a reduction in line with the program's delivery schedule.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued as this program ends on 30 June 2026.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Priority conservation actions for threatened species</b>
Output the measure related to	Environment and Biodiversity
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This performance measure quantifies the delivery of targeted management actions undertaken by DEECA and its delivery partners to improve the likelihood of threatened species' persistence and recovery. These include actions such as gene mixing, translocations, ex-situ management (captive breeding and plant nurseries), supplementary feeding, and other actions funded through programs administered by DEECA including the Icon Species Program, Faunal Emblems Program and Nature Fund. This measure was introduced in 2023–24.
The previous target	45 actions
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	The target was last modified in 2025–26 (2025–26 target was 45 actions; 2024–25 target was 70 actions). The reason for the modification was to reflect the completion of many threatened species projects in 2024–25 in line with the program's delivery schedule.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued in 2026-27 as the program ends in June 2026.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Not applicable.

<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points provided to Victorians</b>
Output the measure related to	Circular Economy
Description/purpose of the measure and year introduced	This performance measure was introduced to reflect the Victorian Government's commitment to reducing litter by providing accessible drink container collection points under the Container Deposit Scheme. It is a count of Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points (depots, reverse vending machines and over-the-counter sites) available to Victorians over the reporting period.

	This measure was introduced in 2025–26.
The previous target	Greater than 600
When the target was last modified and reason for modification	Not applicable – target has remained the same since the performance measure was introduced.
The justification for discontinuing the measure	This performance measure is proposed to be discontinued as it has been replaced with the 2026-27 performance measure 'Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers'. The new measure better reflects the Environment Protection Authority's ongoing actions, governance and oversight of the scheme. The previous measure, while overseen by DEECA, was funded by industry and not through the State Budget. Therefore, results were not directly within the Department's control.
Performance measures that will replace the discontinued measure	Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers

## Employees

### Question 32

The Victorian Government's response to the Independent Review of the Victorian Public Service stated that the Government will reduce executive-like roles by 332 and reduce the proportion of senior VPS5 and VPS6 positions. In terms of the Government's response, please indicate:

- the planned number roles reduced in 2025–26 by VPS/Executive classification (Please list each level and actual FTE)
- the number of roles planned for reduction in 2026–27 by VPS/Executive classification (Please list each level and actual FTE)
- anticipated total budgeted savings made as part of the Review for 2025–26 (\$ million)
- anticipated total budgeted savings made as part of the Review for 2026–27 (\$ million)
- the functions within the department expected to be impacted by the reduction of roles
- the impact of role reductions on service delivery.

### Response

Number of roles planned for reduction in 2025–26 by VPS/Executive classification (Actual FTE)	Number of roles planned for reduction in 2026–27 by VPS/Executive classification (Actual FTE)	Anticipated total budgeted savings for 2025–26 (\$ million)	Anticipated total budgeted savings in 2026–27 (\$ million)	Functions expected to be impacted by the reduction of roles	Impact of the role reductions on service delivery
Nil.	SES/STS: 21 FTE by Quarter 1 in 2026-27.  Further reductions in VPS roles and/or classifications have not yet been finalised, but will deliver on aggregate savings as required.	0.0	12.6	DEECA will balance delivery of the required savings while ensuring DEECA can meet its statutory obligations, deliver on existing government commitments, deliver effective emergency management and manage risks to government and the State across its portfolios. Functions will continue or be combined under other senior leadership roles to better align spans and layers.	No anticipated material impacts on frontline service delivery or asset / infrastructure projects in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

### Question 33

Please provide the department's (actual/expected/forecast) Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff numbers for the financial years ending 30 June 2025, 30 June 2026 and 30 June 2027:

- broken down into employee classification codes
- broken down into categories of on-going, fixed term or casual
- according to their gender identification
- employees identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or having a disability.

#### Guidance

In responding to this question please provide details about the department on the same basis of consolidation as is used in the comprehensive operating statement audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in the department's Annual Report.

#### Response

a)

Classification	As at 30-06-2025		As at 30-06-2026		As at 30-06-2027	
	(Actual FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Expected FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Forecast FTE Number)	(% of total staff)
Secretary	1.0	0.0%	1.0	0.0%	1.0	0.0%
EO-1	9.0	0.2%	9.0	0.2%	9.0	0.2%
EO-2	44.0	0.8%	40.0	0.7%	40.0	0.7%
EO-3	116.4	2.0%	110.0	2.0%	110.0	2.0%
VPS Grade 7.3	7.0	0.1%	9.0	0.2%	9.0	0.2%
VPS Grade 7.2	13.0	0.2%	14.0	0.3%	14.0	0.3%
VPS Grade 7.1	19.8	0.3%	23.0	0.4%	23.0	0.4%
<i>Vacant EO and VPS 7 positions</i>	<i>14.0</i>		<i>9.0</i>		<i>9.0</i>	
Sub-total actual + vacant (executive)	224.2		215.0		215.0	

## DEECA

VPS Grade 6.2	423.2	7.4%	399.1	7.3%	399.1	7.3%
VPS Grade 6.1	352.6	6.1%	340.7	6.2%	340.7	6.2%
VPS Grade 5.2	698.7	12.2%	662.1	12.0%	662.1	12.0%
VPS Grade 5.1	739.3	12.9%	694.9	12.6%	694.9	12.6%
VPS Grade 4	1,225.2	21.4%	1,129.4	20.6%	1,129.4	20.6%
VPS Grade 3	565.1	9.9%	540.4	9.8%	540.4	9.8%
VPS Grade 2	169.3	3.0%	168.5	3.1%	168.5	3.1%
VPS Grade 1	0	0.0%	1.0	0.0%	1.0	0.0%
Government Teaching Service						
Health services						
Police						
Allied health professionals						
Child protection						
Disability development and support						
Youth Justice Workers						
Custodial officers						
*Other (Please specify)	1,351.3	23.6%	1,353.2	24.6%	1,353.2	24.6%
Total	5,735.0		5,495.3		5,495.3	

*\*Includes Field Staff, Project Fire Fighters, Principal Scientists, Wild Dog Controllers, Science Adaptive Classifications, Legal Adaptive Classifications and Trainees.*

*Forecasts for 30-06-2026 and 30-06-2027 include known reductions relating to implementation of Silver recommendations; actual implementation of executive reduction targets will demonstrate further reductions to be delivered that lower current forecasts.*

b)

Category	As at 30-06-2025		As at 30-06-2026		As at 30-06-2027	
	(Actual FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Expected FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Forecast FTE Number)	(% of total staff)
Ongoing	4,641.5	80.9%	4,499.8	81.9%	4,499.8	81.9%
Fixed-term	1,086.9	19.0%	988.9	18.0%	988.9	18.0%
Casual	6.6	0.1%	6.6	0.1%	6.6	0.1%
Total	5,735.0		5,495.3		5,495.3	

c)

Identification	As at 30-06-2025		As at 30-06-2026		As at 30-06-2027	
	(Actual FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Expected FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Forecast FTE Number)	(% of total staff)
Men	2,802.4	48.9%	2,704.3	49.2%	2,704.3	49.2%
Women	2,900.1	50.6%	2,759.2	50.2%	2,759.2	50.2%
Self-described	23.5	0.4%	21.4	0.4%	21.4	0.4%
Prefer not to say	9.0	0.2%	10.4	0.2%	10.4	0.2%
Total	5,735.0		5,495.3		5,495.3	

d)

Identification	As at 30-06-2025		As at 30-06-2026		As at 30-06-2027	
	(Actual FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Expected FTE Number)	(% of total staff)	(Forecast FTE Number)	(% of total staff)
People who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	104.7	1.8%	108.1	2.0%	108.1	2.0%
People who identify as having a disability	29.8	0.5%	32.7	0.6%	32.7	0.6%
Total*	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

\* A total is not provided, as individual staff members may be included in both categories.

## Workforce capability and capacity

### Question 34

What are the main gaps in the department's capability and capacity identified in the 2025–26 financial year, and expected in the 2026–27 and 2027–28 financial years?

### Response

Financial year	Main gaps in capability and capacity
2025–26	Not applicable.
2026–27	Not applicable.
2027–28	Not applicable.

For the 2025-26 financial year-to-date, any roles undertaken by contractors, consultants, and labour hire arrangements were identified by management as addressing a specific point-in-time capability gap or required a special skillset that cannot usually be filled through standard VPS recruitment processes.

## Contractors

### Guidance

In responding to this question please provide details about the department on the same basis of consolidation as is used in the comprehensive operating statement audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in the department's Annual Report.

### Question 35

For each of the 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27 financial years, please outline the actual, expected or anticipated:

- spend on contractors
- occupation categories for those contractors
- total number of contractor arrangements.

### Response

	2024–25 (actual)	2025–26 (to 28 Feb 2026)	2026–27 (anticipated) <sup>11</sup>
<b>Spend</b> <sup>12</sup>	\$375.8 million	\$177.9 million	Not applicable
<b>Occupation categories</b> <sup>13</sup>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Total number of contractor arrangements</b>	3,533	Information will be available in DEECA's 2025-26 Annual Report.	Not applicable

<sup>11</sup> The Department is unable to provide accurate forecasts of future spend, given a forecast would be based on future business requirements with consideration to the business circumstance at the time.

<sup>12</sup> Costs include both controlled and administered expenses. Spend is exclusive of GST

<sup>13</sup> The Department does not capture occupation category information for contractors. The number of engagements is based on a specific contract for a particular supplier.

## Consultants

### Guidance

In responding to this question please provide details about the department on the same basis of consolidation as is used in the comprehensive operating statement audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in the department's Annual Report.

### Question 36

- a) For the 2024–25 financial year, please outline the department's total spend on consultants and completed consultancy projects.

### Response

For the 2024-25 financial year, DEECA spent \$87.1 million on consultancies. Reporting is based on spend for the financial year.

- b) For the 2024–25 financial year please outline: the **top five** department consultancy projects that were completed by spend, the actual outcomes achieved by the listed **top five**, the relevant occupation categories for those consultants, and the total number of consultant arrangements

Top five consultancy projects (For 2024-25)

Consultant	Project	Outcomes
KPMG Australia	VicGrid – Victorian Transmission Plan	Provided commercial advisory services.
Ernst & Young	VicGrid	Provided commercial advisory services.
AECOM Australia Pty Ltd	VicGrid – Transmission projects	Provided technical advisory services.
The Boston Consulting Group Pty Ltd	Offshore Wind	Provided commercial advisory services.
Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd	VicGrid	Provided technical advisory services.

- c) For the 2025–26 financial year please outline: the department’s expected spend on consultants, the relevant occupation categories for those consultants, and the total number of consultant arrangements
- d) For the 2026–27 financial year please outline: the department’s anticipated spend for consultants, and what the anticipated occupation categories are for consultant arrangements.

### Response

	2024–25	2025–26 (to 28 Feb 2026)	2026–27 (Anticipated) <sup>14</sup>
<b>Spend<sup>15</sup></b>	\$87.1 million	\$44.0 million	Not applicable
<b>Outcomes<sup>16</sup></b>	Consultants were predominantly used to support the delivery of key energy projects and provide specialist and independent expertise, supplement the workforce while in house capability is built, and provide surge capacity to meet tight regulatory timelines in the energy sector.	Consultants are predominantly used to support the delivery of key energy projects and provide specialist and independent expertise, supplement the workforce while in house capability is built, and provide surge capacity to meet tight regulatory timelines in the energy sector.	Not applicable
<b>Occupation categories<sup>17</sup></b>	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
<b>Total number of consultant arrangements</b>	190	Information will be available in DEECA’s 2025-26 Annual Report.	Not applicable

<sup>14</sup> The Department is unable to provide accurate forecasts of future spend, given a forecast would be based on future business requirements with consideration to the business circumstance at a given time.

<sup>15</sup> Spend costs include both controlled and administered expenses. Spend is exclusive of GST.

<sup>16</sup> For individual consultancies valued at \$10,000 or greater, the name of the consultant and the purpose of the consultancy is outlined each year on DEECA’s website (Annual Report web page).

<sup>17</sup> The Department does not capture occupation category information for consultants. The number of engagements is based on a specific contract for a particular supplier.

## Labour Hire arrangements

### Guidance

In responding to this question please provide details about the department on the same basis of consolidation as is used in the comprehensive operating statement audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in the department's Annual Report.

### Question 37

For the 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27 financial years, please outline the department's actual, expected or anticipated:

- spend on labour hire arrangements
- occupation categories for those labour hire arrangements
- total number of labour hire arrangements.

### Response

	2024–25 (actual)	2025–26 (to 28 Feb 2026)	2026–27 (anticipated) <sup>18</sup>
<b>Spend</b> <sup>19</sup>	\$21.8 million	\$15.0 million	Not applicable
<b>Occupation categories</b> <sup>20</sup>	Administration 35.44% IT 25.00% Specialist 39.56%	Administration 65.11% IT 17.63% Specialist 17.27%	Not applicable
<b>Total number of labour hire arrangements</b>	564	478	Not applicable

<sup>18</sup> The Department is unable to provide accurate forecasts of future spend, given a forecast would be based on future business requirements with consideration to the business circumstance at a given time.

<sup>19</sup> Costs include both controlled and administered expenses. Spend is exclusive of GST.

<sup>20</sup> The Department is only able to report on the occupation category for agency labour hire spend under the Staffing Services State Purchase Contracts (SPC) in DEECA's Vendor Management System.

## Enterprise Bargaining Agreements

### Question 38

- a) Please list all Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs) that are expected to be completed during the 2026–27 year that affect the department, along with an estimate of the proportion of your department's workforce (full-time equivalent) covered by the EBA.
- b) Please describe the effect the EBAs listed above have had on estimates of 2026–27 employee benefits.

### Response

a)

Not applicable. There are no Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs) that are expected to be completed during the 2026–27 year that affect the department.

b)

Not applicable.

## Relationship between the Commonwealth and Victoria

### Question 39

What impact, if any, have changes to federal/state capital funding agreements and Commonwealth Government policy initiatives had on the department's 2026–27 Budget?

### Response

- Restoring flows to the Mallee Floodplain (\$39.7 million over two years)
- Victorian-led Coliban Rural Water Efficiency Project (\$120.1 million over three years)
- Victorian Constraints Measures Program (\$8.8 million over two years)
- Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project Stage 2 (\$100.5 million over two years)
- Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative (\$120.3 million over four years)
- Australian Bushland Program (\$13.3 million over four years)
- Protecting Important Biodiversity Areas Program (\$3.8 million over four years)
- National Plant Health Surveillance Program (\$0.8 million over four years)
- Future Drought Fund - Farm business resilience (\$19.2 million over four years)<sup>21</sup>
- Future Drought Fund - Regional drought resilience planning (\$15.9 million over four years)<sup>22</sup>

The Commonwealth Budget is due to be released on 12 May 2026 which may confirm or revise the amounts listed above. Further impacts on the Department's 2026-27 budget (if any) will be confirmed after this date.

<sup>21</sup> Estimated payments announced as part of Commonwealth Government Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025–26. The agreement with Victoria is being negotiated, with amounts to be confirmed.

<sup>22</sup> Estimated payments announced as part of Commonwealth Government Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025–26. The agreement with Victoria is being negotiated, with amounts to be confirmed.

## Climate Change

### Question 40

- a) Please specify the initiatives in the department's 2026–27 Budget that will contribute to Victoria's Climate Change Strategy. Please also outline the budget allocation, the ways in which the initiatives will contribute to Victoria's Climate Change Strategy and the year the initiative will likely realise benefits.

### Response

Initiatives in 2026–27 Budget that contribute to Climate Change Strategy	Budget allocation in 2026–27 Budget	How will the initiative contribute to Victoria's Climate Change Strategy	Year likely to realise benefits
Solar Homes Program - Hot Water Rebates	\$28.1 million	This initiative will contribute to Victoria's Climate Change Strategy by supporting households to switch from emissions intensive gas hot water systems or inefficient electric systems, to energy efficient heat pump and solar alternatives, thereby reducing emissions and their overall energy consumption.	2026-27
Modernising and mainstreaming the Victorian Energy Upgrades Program	\$0.9 million	This initiative will contribute to Victoria's Climate Change Strategy by proposing amendments to the <i>Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2005</i> to modernise the Victorian Energy Upgrades program's legal framework. This will ensure the program can best support Victoria's energy needs and deliver on Victoria's energy and emission reduction targets until the program's scheduled end in 2045.	2026-27 onwards

Initiatives in 2026–27 Budget that contribute to Climate Change Strategy	Budget allocation in 2026–27 Budget	How will the initiative contribute to Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy	Year likely to realise benefits
Faster, fit for purpose environmental assessments and approvals for renewable energy and affordable housing	\$2.1 million	The initiative supports faster approvals for renewable energy, storage and transmission line projects that are critical for meeting emission reductions and renewable energy targets.	2026-27. However, the benefits of the approved projects will be realised over a longer period depending on the construction and operational life of projects.
Activating Healthy Forests	\$9.9 million	<p>This initiative will contribute to Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing climate resilience and avoiding emissions by restoring degraded forests and enabling post-fire regeneration to protect Victoria’s carbon-dense ecosystems.</li> <li>• Improving climate resilience and emissions outcomes by enhancing bushfire behaviour modelling to support effective mitigation, response and landscape management in a warming climate.</li> </ul>	2026-27
Marinus Link oversight	\$1.8 million	<p>This initiative will contribute to Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced emissions from Victoria’s energy system (through enabling renewable energy generated in either Tasmania or Victoria to be</li> </ul>	2030

Initiatives in 2026–27 Budget that contribute to Climate Change Strategy	Budget allocation in 2026–27 Budget	How will the initiative contribute to Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy	Year likely to realise benefits
		<p>utilised in the national electricity grid).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved reliability, security and stability of the energy system.</li> <li>Increased energy affordability, consumer control and access to energy services (e.g. through Victorian household bill savings as a result of Marinus Link).</li> </ul>	
Establishing VicGrid	\$0 (Funding is provided in 2025-26)	<p>This initiative will contribute to Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating the timely delivery of new transmission and optimising existing grid infrastructure.</li> <li>Developing and coordinating Victoria’s transmission planning and renewable energy zones.</li> <li>Leading reforms to improve engagement with landholders, regional communities and Traditional Owners to ensure they receive benefits from transmission and renewable energy infrastructure.</li> </ul>	2025-26

- b) *The Climate Action Act 2017*, Part 3, section 17, requires decision makers from some departments to have regard to climate change.
- i. What is the most significant challenge for the department in complying with section 17?
  - ii. What guidance does the department have in place to assist decision makers to comply with the *Climate Action Act 2017*?
  - iii. What work is planned and budget allocated in 2026–27 to facilitate compliance of the department with section 17?

**Response**

<p>Most significant challenge to compliance</p>	<p>Climate change impacts all activities and decisions undertaken by DEECA.</p> <p>To ensure that it is taking affirmative action and remains compliant with section 17, DEECA is supporting the Victorian Government in implementing the priorities of the Climate Change Strategy 2026-30. This includes adaptation actions which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure climate change is considered in decision-making processes and operations, and that practitioners across government have the knowledge and skills to act;</li> <li>• use the latest climate science to understand risks and opportunities, draw on the lived experience of communities, and use structured risk assessments to identify adaptation options and priorities;</li> <li>• support others to adapt by providing information, resources and training, while working with other jurisdictions and the private sector so everyone plays their part; and</li> <li>• directly reduce risks to those Victorians who are most vulnerable, to Victoria’s public assets and services, and to Victoria’s natural environment, including by preparing for and recovering from emergencies.</li> </ul>
<p>Guidance in place to assist decision makers</p>	<p>DEECA provides decision-makers with information and advice on climate change issues and climate action by the Victorian Government to inform assessments under section 17 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024, Victoria’s second report, provides a summary of the best available scientific evidence on climate change and projections for Victoria and can be used to inform decision making, including climate risk assessments and adaptation planning.</li> <li>• Victoria’s Future Climate Tool is an interactive tool, allowing users to view future climate information (including temperature, rainfall and heatwaves) as maps and charts at a local level across the State. The tool was updated in May 2025.</li> <li>• Ten updated regional climate summaries – provide a summary of climate projections from the Climate Science Report for Victoria’s regions.</li> </ul>

- Adaptation Action Plans to guide government action to respond to the risks and opportunities of climate change for seven key systems (Built Environment, Education and Training, Health and Human Services, Natural Environment, Primary Production, Transport and Water Cycle).
- Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions report 2023 – this annual report provides detailed information on Victoria’s emissions since 1990, including key trends by sector.
- Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy 2026-30 – building on progress from the first Climate Change Strategy 2021-25, setting the course for reducing emissions and strengthening climate resilience over the next five years.
- Victoria’s Emission Reduction Pledges 2026-30 for seven sectors (Agriculture, Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use, Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry, Transport, Waste and Whole of Victorian Government Pledge) outline the policies and programs the Victorian government is taking to reduce emissions in each sector.
- Victoria’s legislated Climate Action Targets.
- The second Victorian Government Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement 2025. It outlines the climate-related risks and opportunities that are relevant for Victoria and the actions the Victorian Government is taking to manage the risks and capitalise on the opportunities.
- As part of the Climate Budgeting process, the Victorian Government Climate Action Screening and Assessment template are available to budget bid authors to support the early and robust assessment of the emissions and climate impacts of policy and funding proposals.

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria guidance

In 2023, EPA developed an internal guideline to support a consistent approach to considering climate change in permission decisions.

To support the guidelines, EPA has also developed an Emission Contribution Tool and supporting methodologies to assist staff responsible for assessing permission applications received by EPA to calculate the applicant’s emission impact against Victoria’s total emissions.

The methodology enables EPA to evaluate an applicant’s approach to identifying, quantifying, and mitigating their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Authorised officers are also supported in any compliance and enforcement activities and decision making through the development of inspection support guides for climate change.

In 2023, EPA developed external guidance for businesses and industries that it regulates to identify, quantify, and mitigate their GHG emissions.

	<p>EPA is also developing guidance relating to the consequences of climate change, which will support business identify, assess and minimise their pollution and waste risks in a changing climate.</p> <p>EPA’s statement of regulatory intent on climate change sets EPA’s regulatory strategy on climate change and clarifies EPA’s role, who it will focus on and expectations for business and industry to minimise their climate-related risks. The statement makes it clear that EPA’s permission decision-making function plays a key role in EPA’s work to address risks from the causes and consequences of climate change, and our expectations.</p> <p><u>Recycling Victoria</u></p> <p>The Head, Recycling Victoria in assessing Waste to Energy Cap Licence requests mandated consideration of the impact of climate change in accordance with s17(2) of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> as one criterion in assessing cap licence applications.</p> <p>The assessment involved utilising a GHG emission model to estimate the net GHG emissions that will be generated by the proposed facility. It also considers whether GHG reduction measures are to be sufficiently implemented by the facility.</p> <p>Prospective licence applicants were given a comprehensive assessment criteria which informed them that decision makers must have regard to climate change in accordance with s 17(2) of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> and assessed under Schedule 1. Under the criteria, applicants were to provide information regarding any GHG emissions mitigation measures implemented in their proposed facility.</p>
<p>Work planned/budget allocation to facilitate compliance in 2026–27</p>	<p>DEECA is continuing to strengthen the consideration of climate change implications in relevant policies, programs and services it delivers. This includes consideration in the areas of bushfire risk management, coastal assets, biodiversity science, forests and resources, energy policy and programs including solar initiatives, land management, waste and recycling, planning and management of water and catchments, and agricultural policies and programs.</p> <p>Work planned by DEECA’s central climate action policy team to support the department’s (and VPS) compliance with the requirements of the Act in 2026-27 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing the next set of Adaptation Action Plans for the seven key systems (Built Environment, Education and Training, Health and Human Services, Natural Environment, Primary Production, Transport and Water Cycle).</li> <li>• Supporting the application of Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024 through capability building and use in key decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Preparing Victoria’s annual greenhouse gas emissions report.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity development at the practitioner level through a climate action community of practice.</li> <li>• Regular reporting to senior executive forums across the Victorian Public Sector, including the Victorian Secretaries’ Board, and supporting action through a government climate action Interdepartmental Committee</li> <li>• Information and advice as needs arise on how to comply with section 17.</li> <li>• Information and advice on how to comply with section 20 of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> – a broad requirement to consider climate change in relevant decisions, policies, programs and processes.</li> </ul> <p>EPA will continue to promote and raise awareness of its Statement of Regulatory Intent on climate change and implement it, which will include continuing to consider climate change in permission decision-making, and compliance monitoring to ensure major emitters and activities most at risk from a changing climate are meeting their obligations.</p>
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c) Under *FRD 24 Reporting of environmental data by government entities*, Victorian Government organisations must report their greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts. Does the department have internal targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions? If yes, please provide details, quantifying where possible and outlining actions that will be taken in the 2026–27 year onwards to achieve these targets.

**Response**

<b>Internal targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions</b>	<b>Actions to be taken in 2026–27 and onward to achieve these targets</b>
<p>The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030 (in line with FRD 24 reporting). DEECA has a net zero plan in place.</p>	<p><b>Building gas emissions</b>                      Gas assets at DEECA controlled sites continue to be phased out as they approach end of life. There are an estimated 202 gas assets across DEECA occupied sites. It is estimated that 68 per cent of these assets will have been replaced by 2030 with the remainder to be replaced by 2053.</p> <p><b>Shared passenger vehicle emissions</b>                      There are currently 88 zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) in the DEECA shared passenger vehicle fleet. The shared passenger vehicle fleet can transition to ZEVs once current leases expire. The shared passenger vehicle fleet has the potential to fully transition to ZEVs by 2030.</p>

	<p><b>Electricity emissions</b> All large electricity accounts transferred to the State Electricity Commission (SEC) from July 2025 are purchasing zero emissions electricity. All other DEECA controlled accounts continue to purchase 100 per cent green power.</p>
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# Gender Responsive Budgeting

## Question 41

- a) Please list the programs/initiatives (output and asset) from the 2026–27 Budget for which the department has undertaken a gender impact assessment and describe the main outcomes or results of the gender impact assessment process for each program/initiative. Please also advise what percentage of the department’s 2026–27 output and asset initiatives have been subject to a gender impact assessment.

### Response

An assessment was undertaken of all proposals in the 2026-27 Budget to determine which programs or initiatives are likely to have a direct and significant impact on the public. All of the proposals that were determined to have a direct and significant impact on the public completed and submitted gender impact assessments as part of the 2026-27 Budget. Only one proposal was determined not to have a significant impact on the public and therefore a gender impact assessment was not completed for that bid.

For initiatives identified as having gender impacts, DEECA ensured that the gender impacts were considered in the development of the budget bid to ensure gender equality and inclusivity, and that this was factored into how the program is to be delivered.

- b) Please list any other programs/initiatives (output and asset) in the 2026–27 Budget where Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) processes or principles were applied/considered by the department. Please detail: the initiative, how GRB was applied/considered and the outcome of this consideration.

Not applicable. As detailed above, an assessment of all proposals in the 2026-27 Budget was undertaken to determine which programs or initiatives are likely to have a direct and significant impact on the public. All of the proposals that were determined to have a direct and significant impact on the public completed and submitted gender impact assessments as part of the 2026-27 Budget.

- c) Please list what evaluations of the department’s programs/initiatives have been undertaken from a gender perspective and what the key findings of the evaluations were.

Not applicable. As detailed above, an assessment of all proposals in the 2026-27 Budget was undertaken to determine which programs or initiatives are likely to have a direct and significant impact on the public. All of the proposals that were determined to have a direct and significant impact on the public completed and submitted gender impact assessments as part of the 2026-27 Budget.

- d) What further work is being undertaken by the department in 2026–27 to embed GRB?

**Response**

<b>Further work being undertaken by the department in 2026–27 to embed GRB</b>
<p>In 2026–27, DEECA will continue to embed gender responsive budgeting by integrating Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) into budget development.</p> <p>DEECA will continue to undertake GIAs for all relevant budget bids. Where initiatives are identified as having gender impacts, these impacts will be considered during the development of proposals to promote gender equality and inclusivity, and to inform program and service design and delivery.</p> <p>In late 2025, DEECA updated its Project Management Framework guide to include GIAs as a key step in the project management lifecycle, particularly at the concept development stage. In 2026–27, this will support earlier and more consistent consideration of gendered and intersectional impacts in project planning and investment decisions.</p> <p>The department will also continue to strengthen workforce capability through targeted training and guidance, supporting staff to identify gendered and intersectional impacts.</p>

## Implementation of PAEC recommendations

### Question 42 – Update on status of implementation

Please provide an update on the status of the implementation of:

- a) Committee recommendations that were made in the *Report on the 2024–25 Budget Estimates* and supported by the Government
- b) Committee recommendations that were made in the *Report on the 2025–26 Budget Estimates* and supported by the Government

Please populate the below table according to each department's supported recommendations.

#### Response

#### Update on the implementation of recommendations made in the *2024–25 Budget Estimates Report*

Department	Recommendation supported by Government	Actions taken at the time of this questionnaire	Update on status of implementation
DEECA	RECOMMENDATION 32: The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action develop performance measures regarding the Container Deposit Scheme for inclusion in the next Budget.	In support of this recommendation, DEECA developed performance measure 'Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points provided to Victorians' for inclusion in the 2025-26 Budget, with a target of more than 600 locations. DEECA replaced that measure in 2026-27 with new measure 'Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers' with a 2026-27 target of 100 visits.	The 2025-26 performance measure 'Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points provided to Victorians' is proposed to be discontinued in 2026-27 because, while the scheme is overseen by DEECA, it is funded by industry and not through the State Budget. Therefore, Refund Collection Point numbers are not directly within the department's control. However, DEECA continues to work with scheme partners to ensure that refund collection points are convenient and accessible across Victoria. The 2026-27 replacement measure 'Container Deposit Scheme education visits to

			beverage retailers' will be managed and reported on by the Environment Protection Authority. The new measure better reflects the Authority's ongoing actions, governance and oversight of the scheme.
DEECA	RECOMMENDATION 34: The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate action revisit the modified target of 600 for the performance measure 'Victorian schools participating in the ResourceSmart Schools program' in the 2025–26 budget papers.	DEECA supports-in-principle this recommendation. DEECA and Sustainability Victoria (SV), that deliver the ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) program, have reviewed the target and have determined it appropriate to retain it at 600 schools for 2025-26 and 2026-27. The target of 600 was established based on the requirements outlined in the DTF Resource Management Framework, which emphasises setting challenging yet attainable targets to drive performance and support effective program management.	SV has implemented improvements to the RSS online portal to increase accessibility, ease administration requirements for teachers and keep schools engaged in the program. Responsibility for delivering and reporting on RSS will transfer to DEECA on 31 May 2026 when SV is wound up as a result of the Independent Review of the Victorian Public Service.

**Update on the implementation of recommendations made in the 2025–26 Budget Estimates Report**

Department	Recommendation supported by Government	Actions taken at the time of this questionnaire	Update on status of implementation
DEECA	<b>Recommendation 33:</b> The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action report annually on the environmental impact of government operations. This should	DEECA supports-in-principle this recommendation. Victorian Government emissions and energy use is reported by entities in their annual reports in accordance with Victorian Government Financial Reporting Direction (FRD) 24.	DEECA will report annually on aggregated greenhouse gas emissions from 2025-26 onwards. DEECA notes the 'reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Victorian

	include progress made toward the <i>Whole of Government emissions reduction pledge</i> , aggregated environmental performance by departments, aggregated greenhouse gas emissions and aggregated energy usage broken down by energy type.	This information is collated and published in the five-yearly Whole of Victorian Government pledge.	Government operations' was included as a new departmental objective indicator in the 2025-26 State Budget and annual reporting against this indicator will be included from the department's 2025-26 Annual Report. In addition, the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> requires the Minister for Climate Action to prepare an end of interim target report, which includes an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of the emissions reduction pledges. Reporting on progress on the Whole of Victorian Government emissions reduction pledge is most effectively done as part of this process, with the first report due by 31 December 2027. DEECA does not have plans to report annually on aggregated environmental performance by departments and aggregated energy usage broken down by energy type but will assess the benefits of this within the context of available resources.
DEECA	<b>Recommendation 34:</b> The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action develop stronger performance	DEECA supports this recommendation and proposes to replace the 2025-26 performance measure 'Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points	Although the 2025-26 performance measure for 'Container Deposit Scheme refund collection points

	<p>measures relating to the container deposit scheme.</p>	<p>provided to Victorians’ in 2026-27 with a new measure, ‘Container Deposit Scheme education visits to beverage retailers’ with a 2026-27 target of 100 visits.</p> <p>While DEECA oversees the scheme, it is funded by industry, not through the State Budget, and key performance indicators specific to the Scheme Coordinator and Network Operators are commercial-in-confidence. However, the Scheme Coordinator is required to prepare Annual Statutory Reports for publication on Recycling Victoria’s website. Those reports include numerous metrics providing insights into the scheme’s overall performance and outcomes. The most recent statutory annual report is available online at this link: <a href="#">CDS-Vic-Annual-Statutory-Report-2024-25.pdf</a></p>	<p>provided to Victorians’ is proposed to be discontinued in 2026-27, DEECA continues to work with scheme partners to ensure that refund collection points are convenient and accessible across Victoria. The 2026-27 replacement measure will be managed and reported on by the Environment Protection Authority. The new measure better reflects the Authority's ongoing actions, governance and oversight of the scheme.</p>
<p>DEECA</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 35:</b> The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action identify an appropriate avenue for reporting on the actual outcomes of the container deposit scheme, including by how much the scheme has reduced litter, diverted beverage containers from landfill and any other environmental benefits.</p>	<p>DEECA supports this recommendation. The Victorian Government supports reporting publicly on the outcomes delivered by the Container Deposit Scheme (the Scheme). Outcomes including the Scheme’s redemption (or recovery) rate, the total refund amounts received by donation partners, and the total weight of containers recovered through the Scheme and sold for recycling are reported in the VicReturn Annual Statutory Report and the DEECA Annual Report.</p>	<p>To further strengthen reporting, the VicReturn Annual Report will, in future, also report on beverage container litter.</p>

<p>DEECA</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 36:</b> The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action review the new performance measure ‘Delivery of statutory outputs under the Climate Action Act 2017 within statutory timeframes’.</p>	<p>DEECA supports-in-principle this recommendation. DEECA reviewed the new performance measure ‘Delivery of statutory outputs under the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> within the statutory timeframes. The departmental objective ‘net zero emissions, climate ready economy and community’ is delivered through the Climate Action output and incorporates DEECA’s role in providing advice to the Minister for Climate Action and coordinating whole-of-Victorian Government actions to acquit the requirements of the Act. Sectoral policies and actions to reduce emissions and build Victoria’s resilience to climate change are delivered across government, and funding and associated performance measures are included in relevant outputs as appropriate.</p>	<p>While noting the Committee’s concern about the adequacy of the new performance measure, the Act establishes a robust and comprehensive framework to support the delivery of climate action across the Victorian Government. This includes the Act’s policy objectives and guiding principles, emissions reduction targets, and requirements around considerations, content, processes, consultation and timelines associated with statutory products. While the delivery of statutory outputs within statutory timeframes is listed as a timeliness indicator, DEECA considers it appropriately captures the breadth, quality and timeliness of work delivered by the Climate Action output. DEECA will continue to review this performance measure to ensure it continues to represent the full breadth of the Climate Action output.</p>
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## Community consultation on budget initiatives

### Question 43

With regard to the new initiatives in the 2026–27 Budget, which relevant and interested community groups and stakeholders did the department consult or engage with? Please detail the budget initiatives' consultation related to and the final outcomes of consultation.

### Response

- **Improving water quality in our alpine resorts:** Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV) consulted with resort stakeholders through Stakeholder Consultative Committees, including on mountain businesses and leaseholders, alongside water authorities, Traditional Owner groups, local councils and relevant government departments. This confirmed strong support for sustaining ARV operations and prioritising investment in critical water assets.
- **Zoos Victoria Kids Go Free:** Broad Consultation and engagement has been undertaken in the past and informed by Zoos Victoria's regular visitor and market research (including cost-of-living questions) and internal discussions with key executives and senior staff (including CEO, CFO, property, marketing and commercial leads). Findings indicate strong demand from Victorian families and that cost-of-living pressures are a material barrier to leisure participation (63 per cent reporting moderate or severe impacts; 36 per cent for families with children aged 0–7 reporting severe impacts). Awareness of the Kids Go Free policy increased the likelihood of visiting among surveyed families (20 per cent). Visitor feedback (surveys and anecdotal evidence) also supports the policy's continued value.
- **Critical asset renewals within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks:** The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority's (GORCAPA) operations are informed by engagement with the public. GORCAPA's formation is underpinned by the *Great Ocean Road Environs Protection Act 2021*. The Act requires that GORCAPA apply specified protection principles, including a social principle to consult with community in exercising its responsibilities to protect, improve and promote the Great Ocean Road coast and parks.
- **Detox Your Home:** Sustainability Victoria developed the bid informed by operational delivery experience and engagement with local councils, participating households, and its delivery contractor, with internal Victorian Government alignment on waste policy, funding, and regulatory settings. Consultation confirmed strong stakeholder support for the continuation of Detox Your Home, demonstrated high unmet demand and behaviour change benefits.

# Victoria's Housing Statement

## Question 44

- a) Please list the department's output and asset initiatives in the 2026–27 Budget that will deliver on outcomes outlined in *Victoria's Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2034*.<sup>23</sup>

### Response

Initiative	2025–26 funding (\$ million)	2026–27 funding (\$ million)	2027–28 funding (\$ million)	2028–29 funding (\$ million)	2029–30 funding (\$ million)
Faster, fit for purpose environmental assessments and approvals for renewable energy and affordable housing	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0

- b) What will be the impact of the initiatives on
- i. housing affordability
  - ii. Victoria's planning system
  - iii. housing supply (expressed as a number)
  - iv. the regulation of rental properties
  - v. public housing supply (expressed as a number)
  - vi. community housing supply (expressed as a number)

<sup>23</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Victoria's Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2034*, Melbourne, 2023, <[https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/DTP0424\\_Housing\\_Statement\\_v6\\_FA\\_WEB.pdf](https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/DTP0424_Housing_Statement_v6_FA_WEB.pdf)>

**Response**

Initiative	Timeframe (e.g. 1-5 years, 5-10 years)	Housing affordability (if applicable)	Victoria's planning system (if applicable)	Housing supply (if applicable)	The regulation of rental properties (if applicable)	Public housing supply (if applicable)	Community housing supply (if applicable)
Faster, fit for purpose environmental assessments and approvals for renewable energy and affordable housing	1 year	Not applicable	The initiative supports faster approvals for housing projects that are critical for meeting housing targets under the Housing Statement.	The initiative supports faster approvals for housing projects that are critical for meeting housing targets under the Housing Statement.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

**Cyber security****Question 45**

- a) What actions has the department taken over 2025–26, and plans to take over 2026–27, to improve cyber security and mitigate the risk of a cyber-attack or data breach?

**Response**

	<b>Cyber security and cyber-attack risk mitigation measures planned by department</b>
2025–26	<p>The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has a Cyber Security Strategy, which includes a three-year roadmap. The Strategy aligned to both the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards (VPDSS) and an industry recognised framework from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) which organises cyber security into five cyber security functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify</li> <li>2. protect</li> <li>3. detect</li> <li>4. respond</li> </ol>

<b>Cyber security and cyber-attack risk mitigation measures planned by department</b>	
	<p>5. recover.</p> <p>DEECA’s cyber security program and operational services are aligned to these five functions and are designed to continuously uplift the department’s overall cyber security posture.</p> <p>During 2025-26, DEECA continued to deliver on Year 2 of the three-year cyber security roadmap. This included delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved staff awareness, phishing resilience programs and targeted training availability for staff working in high-risk roles.</li> <li>• Implementation of security controls to ensure the safe use of AI tools across the department.</li> <li>• Expansion of the department’s preventative (data loss prevention) and detective (including vulnerability management) capabilities to further safeguard the department’s sensitive data from accidental or malicious loss.</li> <li>• Conducting response exercises and implementing recommendations to optimise the department’s response capability.</li> </ul>
2026–27	<p>In 2026-27, DEECA will continue to strengthen its overall cyber security posture through implementation of Year 3 of the three-year roadmap. This also includes ongoing review of the roadmap as threats evolve.</p> <p>The five cyber security functions as adopted by the industry recognised NIST framework continue to set and improve the foundation for DEECA’s cyber security program. Year 3 of the roadmap will prioritise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing DEECA’s cyber capability to proactively detect, mitigate and respond to incidents.</li> <li>• Further educating staff to identify and report phishing emails and improve department awareness.</li> <li>• Implementing new preventative measures.</li> <li>• Adopting a third-party risk management framework for new third parties engaged by DEECA.</li> <li>• Implementing the Identity and Access Management (IDAM) Strategy: Effective management of identities and access is crucial for all aspects of cybersecurity. Implementing a comprehensive strategy will ensure consistency and mitigate vulnerabilities within IDAM processes.</li> </ul>

b) What resources in terms of funding levels and staffing has the department assigned to cyber security for 2025–26 and 2026–27?

**Response**

	<b>Department cyber security funding (\$ million)</b>	<b>Staff (FTE)</b>
2025–26	\$3.06 million	14
2026–27	\$3.06 million (estimated) *	14 (estimated) *

\* The funding and FTE levels for the Cyber Security Program are determined at the start of each financial year and are therefore estimated for 2026-27 at this time.

If the department (or any of the department's agencies) experienced a cyber attack or data breach in 2025–26:

- c) What was the impact of this data breach on the department/agency's resources, staffing, services provided to the community and ongoing support to individuals impacted by the cybersecurity event?

### Response

The following table summarises cyber incidents as of 7 April 2026.

<b>Cyber-attack/data breach</b>	<b>Impact on department/agency resources</b>	<b>Impact on staffing</b>	<b>Impact on services provided by department/agency to community</b>	<b>Ongoing support to individuals impacted by cyber-attack or data breach</b>
<b>January 2026</b> Unauthorised access – Entity	Low	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>December 2025</b> Temporary unavailable legacy website – DEECA	Low. Part of a legacy website was temporarily unavailable.	Nil. New process implemented.	Nil	Nil
<b>November 2025</b> Data breach – DEECA	Low	Low. Additional training provided to impacted staff.	Nil	Nil
<b>October 2025</b> Temporary unavailable legacy website – DEECA	Low	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>September 2025</b> Data breach – DEECA	Low	Low. Additional training provided to impacted staff.	Nil	Nil
<b>September 2025</b> Phishing emails received – DEECA	Low	Low. Additional training provided to impacted staff.	Nil	Nil
<b>July 2025</b> Data breach – DEECA	Low	Low. Additional training provided to impacted staff.	Nil	Nil

d) What measures were implemented after the event to improve cyber security?

**Response**

Cyber security breaches and incidents inform the implementation of future controls, operations and policy within the department as part of the cyber security program. Examples of initiatives resulting in key risk reduction during 2025-26 include:

- Staff education on how to spot a phishing email through simulated phishing campaigns.
- Staff education on how to use key data storage and email appropriately.
- Preventative and detective controls applied in key areas of the IT environment.
- Improvement in process on lifecycle management of legacy websites.

## Health spending – DH only

### Question 46

Not applicable – DH only.

## Large scale infrastructure projects – DTF/DTP only

### Question 47

Not applicable – DTF/DTP only.

## Economic forecast – DTF only

### Question 48

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Grants – DTF only

### Question 49

Not applicable – DTF only.

### Question 50

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Equity funding – DTF only

### Question 51

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Land transfer duty – DTF only

### Question 52

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Public Private Partnerships – modifications and accountability – DTF only

### Question 53

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Net Debt – DTF only

### Question 54

Not applicable – DTF only.

## Long term financial management objectives – DTF only

### Question 55

Not applicable – DTF only.

### Question 56

Not applicable – DTF only.

Question 10 - Capital asset expenditure

2026-27 State Budget Paper No. 5/Relevant state financial reports

Line item	2023-24 actual (\$ million)	2024-25 budget (\$ million)	2024-25 revised (\$ million)	2024-25 actual (\$ million)	2025-26 budget (\$ million)	2026-27 budget (\$ million)
Payment for non financial assets	181	326	262	179	272	205
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>205</b>

2026-27 State Budget Paper No. 4

Capital projects	2023-24 actual (\$ million)	2024-25 budget (\$ million)	2024-25 revised (\$ million)	2024-25 actual (\$ million)	2025-26 budget (\$ million)	2026-27 budget (\$ million)
<b>New</b>						
Maintaining Critical Assets for Emergency and Land Management	-	-	-	-	-	24.9
Emergency Preparedness Package	-	-	-	-	-	10.0
<b>Existing</b>						
Addressing recovery needs from the Western Victoria Bushfires (regional)	-	-	1.3	0.1	-	-
Bendigo mine impacted groundwater long-term management (Bendigo)	-	43.8	3.8	-	40.0	33.1
Continue the establishment of Liwik Barrington conservation area and protect Victoria's faunal emblems (Yellingbo)	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.4
Efficient and strengthened earth resources regulation (statewide)	-	-	-	-	-	2.0
Improving Victoria's water resources knowledge and access (statewide)	-	-	0.2	-	0.6	0.4
Investing in Serendip Sanctuary and the You Yangs (Wurdi Youang) (Lara)	-	1.5	-	-	-	-
Suburban Parks Program (Creating a Ring of New Parkland) (Metropolitan)	15.0	-	1.6	0.4	10.5	-
<b>Completed</b>						
Additional recovery support for summer 2023-24 floods and storms (statewide)	-	6.1	5.8	5.4	0.4	-
Community infrastructure accessibility and sustainability (statewide)	2.2	-	-	-	-	-
Critical bushfire and emergency asset maintenance and replacement (statewide)	-	-	11.0	4.9	9.0	-
Critical capital works to keep Victorians safe from fire and other emergencies	0.2	-	-	-	-	-
Emergency animal disease preparedness (statewide)	1.4	-	-	-	-	-
Historic Boost for camping in Victoria's Great Outdoors (statewide)	0.1	-	-	-	-	-
Horsham alternative proteins glasshouse complex and incubation hub (Horsham)	9.3	1.1	2.8	3.0	-	-
Reducing Bushfire Risk in a Rapidly Changing Climate (statewide)	10.1	11.0	11.0	7.3	-	-
The evidence base for Victorian water: availability and knowledge (statewide)	0.3	-	-	-	-	-
Werribee Open Range Zoo (Werribee South)	-	6.8	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>70.8</b>

Note: The amounts listed in the table above relate to Budget Paper 4 reported projects that have payments classified as 'payments for non-financial assets'. Other capital programs which include payments relating to other classifications, including equity contributions and capital grants, are not listed in line with report criteria.

Line item	2023-24 actual (\$ million)	2024-25 budget (\$ million)	2024-25 revised (\$ million)	2024-25 actual (\$ million)	2025-26 budget (\$ million)	2026-27 budget (\$ million)
This funding relates to the Department's minor capital programs and various trust accounts that impact PNFA. This is partially offset by movements in creditors, depreciation, accumulated depreciation and asset revaluations.	142.7	256.0	224.7	157.7	211.4	133.7
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>142.7</b>	<b>256.0</b>	<b>224.7</b>	<b>157.7</b>	<b>211.4</b>	<b>133.7</b>

PPPs	2023-24 actual (\$ million)	2024-25 budget (\$ million)	2024-25 revised (\$ million)	2024-25 actual (\$ million)	2025-26 budget (\$ million)	2026-27 budget (\$ million)
<b>Sub total</b>						

Note: The department has no PPP payments that are classified as 'payments for non-financial assets'.

<b>Total Payment for non financial assets</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>205</b>
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Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct	Correct
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