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Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Police

Thursday 5 June 2025



Supporting police to reduce crime in 2025-26

The 2025-26 State Budget has funded a collection of initiatives to reduce crime and improve community safety and, including:

- **\$13 million** to implement the machete disposal scheme alongside new powers for police to search for dangerous weapons
- **\$3.8 million** to continue the Embedded Youth Outreach program in Werribee and Dandenong
- **\$10.3 million** for initiatives to counter violent extremism including the Victorian Fixated Threat Assessment Centre
- **\$7.4 million** towards Victoria Police Recruitment campaigns
- **\$156 million** to support the expansion of the Road Safety Camera Program Distracted Driver and Seatbelt Camera program
- **\$80.7 million** to continue the operation of fixed road safety cameras
- **\$9.4 million** towards Victoria's integration with the National Firearms Register.



\$156 million

to expand the Distracted Driver and Seatbelt Camera program



\$13 million

towards Australia's first machete disposal scheme



\$10.3 million

for initiatives to counter violent extremism including the Victorian Fixated Threat Assessment Centre

The Victorian Government is committed to improving community safety

Responding to concern from Victoria Police and the community around serious incidents, including home invasions and violent crime.

- On 13 March 2025, the Victorian Government announced that machetes will become prohibited weapons from 1 September 2025.
- ***The 2025-26 Budget includes \$13 million in funding for a Machete Surrender Scheme, as part of the Community Safety Package.***
- The funding will be used to implement the ban, including the installation of secure drop-off boxes for people to hand-in their machetes in an Australian-first Machete Surrender Scheme.
- A community education and public awareness campaign will support the Machete Surrender Scheme, to promote public, community, industry and retailer understanding of the prohibition, amnesty and new penalties.
- An interim ban on the sale of machetes commenced on 28 May 2025.



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The Government is taking proactive measures to target knife crime

The Government has taken strong action to address rising weapons-related offending

- In addition to reclassifying machetes as prohibited weapons, the Victorian Government has expanded and improved police powers to conduct random weapons searches in public 'designated areas'.
- A range of legislative amendments have been made, including:
 - Empowering the Chief Commissioner of Police to declare certain places to be designated areas for up to 6 months;
 - Expanding the types of locations that can be designated areas (e.g., new public events) and the periods for which they can be designated (i.e., for non-events, 24 hours instead of 12 hours); and
 - Streamlining the process for how declarations of designated areas need to be made (e.g., removing the need to advertise in newspapers).



Early intervention helps keep young people out of the justice system

The Embedded Youth Outreach Program is a key Victoria Police-led initiative that prioritises early engagement with young people to keep them out of the justice system

- **\$3.8 million** is provided over 2 years to continue the EYOP in the existing locations of Werribee and Dandenong.
- EYOP sees police officers and youth workers paired together to provide assessment, initial support and referral pathways for vulnerable young people – providing them with the tools and resources to prevent possible future reoffending.
- EYOP has been operational for the past 6 years, delivering services to at risk young people, including offenders and victims from Werribee and Dandenong police stations.
- An evaluation of the program so far has found that EYOP has successfully identified at-risk youth and intervened in a manner that has interrupted the offending pathway for many young people.



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Preventing violent extremism remains a focus for Government

A further \$28 million will be invested over 2 years in health and justice initiatives to counter violent extremism.

- The Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) will receive **\$23.9 million** over two years to prevent and counter the threat posed by fixated individuals and grievance-fuelled lone actors through joint mental health and policing responses. **\$5.7 million** will be provided to Victoria Police component and **\$18.2 million** will be provided to the health-led component.
- Funding is also provided to continue key responses to countering violent extremism.
- This includes **\$2.4 million** for intervention programs administered by Victoria Police that directly support and engage with people assessed as radicalising to violent extremism in the community and custodial settings.
- **\$1.8 million** has been provided to the Northern Community Support Group to support the Muslim community with the primary objective of preventing and countering anti-social behaviour, including violent extremism.
- **\$0.34 million** has also been provided to enhance research on Countering Violent Extremism through the Centre for Resilience and Inclusive Societies.



A serious approach to addressing road trauma

Funding is provided to continue and expand Victoria's distracted driver and seatbelt camera (DDS) network as part of the Road Safety Partnership Road Safety Action Plan 2.

- **\$156 million** has been provided over four years to continue and expand the DDS program, building on the government's initial investment of \$33.7 million to roll out the DDS cameras.
- The DDS cameras began enforcing on 1 July 2023. The additional funding will continue enforcement through to 2029 with a progressive expansion of enforcement hours over that time.
- Illegal portable device use and seatbelt non-compliance are key contributors to road trauma.
- DDS cameras can currently be deployed to more than 300 locations across rural and metropolitan areas throughout Victoria – ensuring that drivers who are doing the wrong thing can be caught anywhere at any time.



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Additional funding to drive Victoria Police recruitment

\$7.2 million has been provided to Victoria Police to expand its recruitment programs, enabling it to identify and attract quality talent into a career in policing

- Between 1 July 2024 and 31 March 2025, Victoria Police received 5,086 police and 581 PSO applications. Of those, 544 police and 171 PSOs commenced at the Academy and 393 Police and 168 PSOs have been sworn in.
- From 14 July 2025, the Victoria Police Academy Course will be reduced from 31 weeks to 25 weeks and will focus on practical real-world training.
- Streamlining of the training program will allow new recruits to graduate and begin operational duties sooner, assisting workforce shortages.
- Victoria Police has also adjusted certain health and education requirements for some applicants to improve the efficiency of the recruitment process, enabling people with relevant experience or qualifications to be exempt from sitting the police entrance exam.
- The 'Made for More' police recruitment campaign resumed on 9 March 2025, with \$4 million of the \$7.2 million in funding allocated over 2 years to continue this initiative.



Promoting and protecting police mental health

BlueHub is an initiative run by The Police Association of Victoria (TPAV) providing expert psychological assessment and tailored trauma and mental health treatment to current sworn Victoria Police members.

- There is a high prevalence of mental health issues experienced by police members due exposure to traumatic events as a result of the nature of their work.
- The 2023-24 Budget provided **\$4.00 million over four years** for embedding and expanding the BlueHub Police Mental Health Project initiative.
- Victoria Police also invests in a range of programs to support police mental health.
- BlueHub clients have shown a reduction in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity, psychological distress, anxiety and depression symptoms upon their discharge from BlueHub compared to intake.
- As of 31 March 2025:
 - The number of BlueHub clinicians has increased to a total of 60 active clinicians with a further 12 clinicians currently completing onboarding.
 - 478 members were undergoing treatment, 7 members on the wait list, and 220 members had been discharged following treatment.



Thank you