

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Financial and Performance Outcomes 2024-25

Peta McCammon

Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness & Housing



Families,
Fairness
and Housing

Our Statement of Direction

Vision: Safe and supported children and families, in stable homes and strong communities.

We will achieve this by

Standing up for inclusion and equality, preventing harm and discrimination, and delivering social and housing support for Victorians who need it.

Objective 1

Aboriginal voice, knowledge and cultural leadership drive Aboriginal policy, legislation and system reform.

Objective 2

Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported.

Objective 3

Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient.

Objective 4

All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing.

Objective 5

Our social services system is integrated, effective, person-centred and sustainable.

Guiding principles



Cultural safety



Client voice and agency



An intersectional lens



Lived and living experience



Evidence-led

Enabler 1 - Sustainable and inclusive workforces

We will fund and employ diverse, skilled workforces in culturally safe workplaces, now and into the future.

Enabler 2 - Modern departmental systems

We will continually improve ways of working to deliver high-quality, evidence-driven and sustainable programs and services.

Vulnerable Victorians face increasing challenges

106,427

Family violence incidents in 2024-25
(↑ of 7.7%)

151,587

Reports to child protection in 2024-25 (↑ 8.6%)

1.34 million

People living with disability

30,899

In urgent need of housing (priority wait list)

9,288

Children and young people in state care

750,000

Unpaid carers

17.3 months

Wait for social housing for family violence survivors

8%+

Experiencing severe food insecurity

Aboriginal children **x20.6** overrepresented in care

↑ 3.9%

Increase in cost of private rental in 2024-25

47 in 10,000

Victorians homeless

Victorians felt their community faced pressures on several fronts

- ▶ **68.5%** identified **housing affordability and homelessness** as an issue in their community and 35% said it was an issue for themselves
- ▶ **52.8%** identified **financial hardship and inclusion** as an issue in their community and 32.4% said it was an issue for themselves

DFFH was there to support Victorians in need

We responded to growing community needs

- ▶ Commenced **47,361 child protection** investigations (**↑15%**)
- ▶ Authorised **448 children** to an Aboriginal child protection agency
- ▶ Delivered family services to **19,854 families**
- ▶ Opened **301,863 cases** through The Orange Door, with **30%** of people accessing directly through self-referral
- ▶ Delivered **33,985 family violence case management** support episodes to victim survivors
- ▶ Provided **550,000 hours** of respite and support for carers
- ▶ Supported **231,390 households** with utility relief grants
- ▶ Issued **8,841 bond loans** to help low-income Victorians access private rentals (**↑27.5%**)
- ▶ Supported **111,000 Victorians in public housing** on any given night



We worked hard to improve the lives of Victorians

We delivered

- ▶ **2,392 new social homes** and **286 new affordable homes** across Victoria
- ▶ **313 pad and tampon vending machines** installed in Free Pads and Tampons in Public Places program
- ▶ **116 grants** to boost food security and deliver direct food relief
- ▶ **21 disability advocacy agencies** funded to support an extra **800** Victorians with disability
- ▶ **47,000+ jobs created**, boosting the economy and improving the livelihoods of Victorians.

We improved

- ▶ **137,000 risk assessments and safety plans** using MARAM across health, education, justice and community services
- ▶ Established **Child Sexual Exploitation Response Team** alongside Sexual Exploitation Practice Leaders

We invested

- ▶ **30 scholarships** to attract/upskill disability workers in rural and regional areas
- ▶ **Community and Social Services Graduate Program** to support new graduates working in community service



Objective 1

Aboriginal voice, knowledge and cultural leadership drive Aboriginal policy, legislation and system reform

In 2024-25, we...

Supported **Aboriginal leadership, culture and community.**

Added **4 teams** to the **Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care program**, giving **Aboriginal community-controlled organisations legal responsibility** for an **additional 144 Aboriginal children** involved in the child protection system

Supported **27 place-based projects** for Aboriginal-led approaches to **preventing and responding to family violence** through the **Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund.**

Helped establish and maintain self-governing **Aboriginal governance groups across Victoria, including:**

- ▶ Metro and Regional based Governance Groups
- ▶ The department's Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum (ASGF)
- ▶ ACCO caucus leadership role in agenda setting for the Aboriginal Children's Forum (ACF) increased and formalised.

Supported:

- ▶ Aboriginal women to recover from the trauma and impact of family violence
- ▶ improved access to early childhood, maternal and child health, and family support services

Strengthened engagement with **First Nations young people through**

- ▶ partnership with the Koorie Youth Council
- ▶ youth leadership and mentoring initiatives
- ▶ support for youth mentoring programs, building connection to culture and community and enhancing pathways to employment

Objective 2

Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported.

In 2024-25

151,587

Reports were made to child protection services about the safety and wellbeing of children - an **increase of 8.6%**

We launched **Victorian Redress for Historical Institutional Abuse**

- ▶ Applications for **Victorian Redress** opened on 10 December 2024
- ▶ Government committed **\$165 million under the 2024–25 State Budget** to deliver redress for people physically, psychologically or emotionally abused or neglected as children in institutional settings before 1990.

...and we delivered

186,524

Total assessments undertaken at **The Orange Door** (up approx. 10,000 from 2023-24)

20,868

Sexual Assault support services delivered to adults, children and young people

Over 33,477

Families received **Family Services** or attended **Supported Playgroups**

We worked to improve outcomes for **children and young people in care**

- ▶ **Education support for children in care** provides one-on-one tutoring from a qualified teacher for up to 500 of the more than 2,000 children and young people in care who are disengaged or at risk disengaging from education.
- ▶ **Pathways to Good Health**, delivered collaboratively with Department of Health, gives children who enter or re-enter statutory care pathways for health and disability supports.
- ▶ **Housing First** commenced for young people leaving care, providing at least two years of housing and three years of wraparound supports.

Objective 3

Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient.

In 2024-25, we delivered...

560,351

Hours of coordination funding to **neighbourhood houses**

1,711,320

Community **engagement activities** provided

Support to retain women on Victorian Government boards at 53%

We supported wellbeing and engagement for **South Sudanese, Somali, Afghan and Pasifika young people and their families through**

- ▶ funding **6 Community Support Groups** that support more than **2,500 young people and their families** through education and training, mental health and employment as well as through cultural and community activities that foster positive engagement
- ▶ delivering the **Le Mana Pasifika Project** for at-risk Pasifika young people, which supported more than **1,000 Pasifika young people** in 2024–25.

We supported **Victorians with disability**

- ▶ publicly funded **autism assessments** for people who would otherwise be unable to afford an assessment
- ▶ engaged residents and their supports to co-design and build **innovative Specialist Disability Accommodation**
- ▶ Increased resourcing to the **Youth Forensic Disability Clinical Service**.

Objective 4

All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing

In 2024-25, we provided...

102,449

people support to address / prevent homelessness

2,500+

people with **Specialist Disability Accommodation**

44,319

clients impacted by family violence supported to prevent or address homelessness

...and we delivered

2,392

additional social housing homes

resulting in

91,068

social housing homes in total to Victorians in need

We provided **more social and affordable housing** to the community by progressing the delivery of:

- ▶ the Housing Statement's **High-Rise Redevelopment Program**
- ▶ more than **10,800 homes underway or complete** (including **3,700 regional homes**) through the **Big Housing Build** and **Regional Housing Fund**
- ▶ **2,740 homes** under the innovative **Ground Lease Model** – a mix of social, affordable, market rental and specialist disability accommodation.
- ▶ Upgrades to **1,716 public housing dwellings**.

We supported **Victorians experiencing homelessness** by delivering:

- ▶ delivering **Housing First** programs, such as **Journey to Social Inclusion** which allocated support packages to more than **110 people** experiencing chronic homelessness
- ▶ targeted **housing & support to prevent youth homelessness** through 4 additional initiatives: Village 21 Preston, Kids Under Cover Studios, Holmesglen Education First Youth Foyer and Homelessness Youth Dual Diagnosis Initiative.

Objective 5

Our social services system is integrated, effective, person-centred and sustainable

In 2024-25, we...

Supported

delivery of the **social services regulatory scheme** and improved regulatory oversight through

- ▶ supporting establishment and operation of the **Social Services Regulator** in its first year.

Invested

in recruitment and retention strategies to support our **community services workforce** by

- ▶ working with the community services sector to recruit the right people for the right roles in the **Jobs that Matter** campaign
- ▶ targeting child protection recruitment within the campaign through **Go Where You're Needed**
- ▶ Focusing on regional locations with the highest vacancy rates by running **localised campaigns** in areas such as Gippsland, the Mallee and Wodonga.

Introduced

a new **Service Agreement** with the community service sector that

- ▶ provides the terms and conditions for **community services organisations to use departmental funding**
- ▶ includes new terms and conditions that **strengthen protection against fraud and corruption.**