Growing Victoria Together

Innovative State. Caring Communities.
I want to tell you about my Government’s priorities for Victoria for the next decade. We will be focussing on three important goals:

1. Providing decent and responsible government.
2. Getting the basics right – good schools, quality health care, more jobs, safe streets.
3. Leading the way to a better Victoria with education and lifelong learning as the key.

For two years we have been delivering on the promises we made in 1999. We have concentrated on providing responsible and decent government and delivering quality services. We have already:

- Ensured the State’s finances stay in the black.
- Begun turning around our education and health services and created jobs across Victoria.
- Employed 2000 more teachers and staff; 2650 more nurses and 500 more police.
- Restored the independence of the Auditor General and established Community Cabinet where Ministers meet communities across Victoria.

We have now prepared this booklet, *Growing Victoria Together* which sets out how we intend to address important issues into the future. This unique document provides signposts for government and all Victorians for the coming decade.

*Growing Victoria Together* balances our economic, social and environmental goals and provides a basis for regular reports on the quality of life of Victorian communities.

Further copies of *Growing Victoria Together* can be obtained by calling 1300 366 356, by writing to Information Victoria at 356 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000, from the web site [www.growingvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.growingvictoria.vic.gov.au) or from your local library.

We will use *Growing Victoria Together* to talk in more detail with Victorians about the key issues facing each community. Our Community Cabinet program provides one way of doing this. The booklet and website detail other ways in which you can have your say. I strongly encourage you to take the opportunity to tell us your views.

We will continue to listen, act and work together to create a caring and innovative Victoria.

Yours sincerely

STEVE BRACKS MP
Premier of Victoria
“We will be focussing on three important goals:

• Providing decent and responsible government.
• Getting the basics right – good schools, quality health care, more jobs, safe streets.
• Leading the way to a better Victoria with education and lifelong learning as the key.”

The way forward

_Growing Victoria Together_ expresses the Government’s broad vision for the future. It links the issues important to Victorians, the priority actions we need to take next and the measures we will use to show progress. It is a basis for involving all Victorians in our ongoing challenge – working together to deliver today and build a fair, sustainable and prosperous future for tomorrow.

_Growing Victoria Together_ balances economic, social and environmental goals and actions. It is clear that we need a broader measure of progress and common prosperity than economic growth alone. That is the heart of our balanced approach – a way of thinking, a way of working and a way of governing which starts by valuing equally our economic, social and environmental goals.

The important issues and priority actions will guide our budget and policy choices. The demonstrating progress measures will be used to give regular reports showing improvements in the quality of life of Victorian communities. The first of these reports will appear in 2002-2003.

The priority actions and measures of progress will continue to be developed to ensure that they are responsive to local community concerns. Ministers will therefore be using _Growing Victoria Together_ to engage Victorians to ensure we all benefit from expanding opportunities and a better quality of life.
Victoria’s strengths

- A healthy, safe and enjoyable place to live and work
- A strong mix of innovative businesses and industries
- A skilled and creative workforce
- High quality schools, TAFE institutes and universities
- Outstanding scientific and research centres
- A vibrant cultural life
- Rich natural resources
- Magnificent national parks and coastlines
- A population rich in cultures and languages
- A proud tradition of community participation and strong local government
Victoria’s challenges

• Creating new jobs in a competitive world by promoting new ideas and technology
• Maintaining a strong public health system
• Promoting the sustainability of our environments, communities and industries
• Strengthening rural, regional and urban communities
• Linking Victoria to promote social cohesion and growth
• Building opportunities for quality education and lifelong learning for every Victorian
• Reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Victorians
• Planning for the needs of our changing population at all stages of life
• Maintaining sound financial management
• Improving confidence and participation in democratic decision making
The Bracks Government’s vision for Victoria is that by 2010 we will be a State where:

- Innovation leads to thriving industries generating high quality jobs
- Protecting the environment for future generations is built into everything we do
- We have caring, safe communities in which opportunities are fairly shared
- All Victorians have access to the highest quality health and education services all through their lives

From vision to reality

To make this vision a reality and focus our actions we have identified the following strategic issues important to Victorians along with the key priority actions needed to address them and ways of demonstrating progress.

The Bracks Government believes the following issues are of most importance to Victoria over the next ten years.

Valuing and investing in lifelong education
High quality, accessible health and community services
Sound financial management
Safe streets, homes and workplaces
Growing and linking all of Victoria
Promoting sustainable development
More jobs and thriving, innovative industries across Victoria
Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities
Protecting the environment for future generations
Promoting rights and respecting diversity
Government that listens and leads

The approach outlined here will guide how the Government uses your taxes.
Valuing and investing in lifelong education

The Bracks Government believes that education is the key to our children’s future and Victoria’s prosperity. Education opens the doors to high quality jobs, to a full and creative life and a sense of common citizenship.

We recognise that education improves everybody’s life chances.

We need our children to stay actively and enthusiastically involved in learning both at school and throughout life.

We must therefore ensure that our preschool services, schools, TAFE institutes and universities have the people, the resources, the technology and the community linkages to create exciting learning environments.

We have already

- Employed 2000 more teachers and staff in schools
- Commenced rebuilding our public schools and TAFE institutes
- Reached over 100,000 apprenticeships and traineeships for the first time in Victoria
- Reduced class sizes
- Ensured there is at least one computer to every five students
- Assisted young people to move from school to work through Local Learning and Employment Networks
- Funded nine ‘Learning Towns’ and more than 500 Neighbourhood Houses and Adult Community Learning Centres to deliver lifelong learning

Priority actions

Improve participation and achievement in education and training

Provide better links between schools, business and communities

Expand opportunities for training and learning all through life

Demonstrating progress

Victorian primary school children will be at or above national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy by 2005

90 per cent of young people in Victoria will successfully complete Year 12 or its equivalent by 2010

The percentage of young people 15-19 in rural and regional Victoria engaged in education and training will rise by 6 per cent by 2005

The proportion of Victorians learning new skills will increase
For more information see
Centre for Adult Education – www.cae.edu.au
Adult Community and Further Education Board – www.acfe.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Education, Employment and Training on 9637 2222 or 1800 809 834
High quality, accessible health and community services

Victorians expect high quality health and community services to be available when needed. The Bracks Government will therefore continue to invest to improve local access to essential health, aged care and community services, particularly in rural and regional communities.

In addition to rebuilding the Victorian health system we face the challenges of increased demand for services and an ageing population.

Sustaining and improving essential hospital, community health, aged care, mental health, disability, child protection and family support services is fundamental.

We have already

- Funded 2650 more nurses and opened 360 more hospital beds
- Stopped privatisation and commenced rebuilding hospitals at 13 sites around Victoria
- Begun work on the new Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre
- Banned smoking in restaurants and shopping centres
- Announced the closure of Kew Residential Services (Kew Cottages), rebuilding new homes for residents from 2002
- Cut the average waiting time for drug treatment and rehabilitation programs by 72 per cent
- Provided 145 new ambulances and 10 new ambulance stations
- Expanded support for Victoria’s homeless by 600 extra places

Priority actions

- Build, improve and integrate hospitals and community health services
- Link and invest in services for mothers and children through pregnancy to age 8
- Support older people to live active lives in the community
- Reduce drug abuse and harm
- Tackle health issues linked to inequality including mental and dental health

Demonstrating progress

- Waiting times and levels of confidence in health and community services will improve
- Health and education outcomes for young children will improve
- Waiting times for drug treatment will decrease, as will deaths from drugs, including tobacco and alcohol
For more information see
Department of Human Services
www.dhs.vic.gov.au
Best Start – www.beststart.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Human Services on 9616 7777
The Bracks Government is committed to balancing the books.

A strong and secure financial base provides an essential foundation for Victoria’s long term economic, social and environmental well being. It ensures ongoing resources to deliver improved services and create jobs across the State.

We have already

- Met our commitment to maintain an operating surplus of at least $100 million
- Reinvested part of our operating surplus to upgrade and modernise the State’s infrastructure without incurring additional borrowings
- Made Victoria’s business taxes fewer and simpler and reduced them by $774 million over four years
- Had Victoria’s triple A credit rating reaffirmed by both major ratings agencies

Priority actions

- Maintain responsible financial management
- Invest in long term social and physical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, public transport and waste management
- Provide an annual report showing the link between budget outcomes and progress on issues important to Victorians

Demonstrating progress

- An annual budget surplus
- Victoria’s taxes will remain competitive with the Australian average
- Maintain a triple A rating
For more information see
Department of Treasury and Finance
www.dtf.vic.gov.au
Auditor General – www.audit.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Treasury and Finance on 9651 5111
Safe streets, homes and workplaces

The Government will improve safety and confidence in the places Victorians live and work.

Preventing crime and maintaining community safety requires highly skilled, well resourced police and emergency services, respect for the rights of all citizens and cohesive communities.

Tackling the causes of crime by reducing offending and re-offending and by minimising drug abuse and self harm is also crucial for effective crime prevention.

We will continue to legislate and campaign to reduce unnecessary injury and deaths in our workplaces and on our roads.

We have already

- Put more than 500 police back on the streets
- Started providing police with state of the art safety equipment including bullet proof vests and metal detectors
- Funded upgrading and replacement of 16 metropolitan and regional police stations and 31 country police stations
- Provided 1000 places for offender rehabilitation and assistance to be drug free
- Increased penalties for drug traffickers
- Increased the number of WorkSafe inspectors by more than 80
- Introduced a 50 kilometre speed limit on residential streets to make them safer
- Provided funds to make safer 670 known black spots on Victorian roads (over half of them in rural and regional Victoria)

Priority actions

Continue to increase police numbers until we have 800 extra police in the front line against crime

Develop new and expanded crime prevention programs

Reduce family violence

Improve road and workplace safety

Demonstrating progress

Violent crime and fear of violent crime will be reduced

Road accidents and deaths will be reduced by 20 per cent over the next five years
For more information see
Department of Justice – www.justice.vic.gov.au
Workcover – www.workcover.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Justice on 9651 0333
Growing and linking all of Victoria

Fast, reliable and efficient transport and communications infrastructure is essential to link and connect our people, our communities and our businesses.

That is why upgrading our road and rail transport system, re-opening passenger rail services, standardising rail gauges and expanding Internet access across the State are key priorities for the Bracks Government.

At the same time we need to rebuild Victoria’s social infrastructure – the schools, hospitals, community services, recreational and cultural resources which are the basic building blocks of prosperous and sustainable communities.

We will link our regional centres to Melbourne and revitalise our suburbs in partnership with local government and the private sector.

We have already

✓ Expanded job opportunities across the State with more than one third of all job growth in rural and regional Victoria over the past two years
✓ Established the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund to maximise regional growth and development opportunities
✓ Allocated funding for the development of fast train services between Melbourne and Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and the Latrobe Valley
✓ Allocated funding to re-open country rail passenger lines between Melbourne and Mildura, Leongatha, Bairnsdale and Ararat between 2003 and 2004
✓ Allocated funding to the standardisation of Victoria’s regional rail system which will enable it to be connected to the national standard gauge network
✓ Committed funding to the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor to provide freeway and public transport improvements from Ringwood to Frankston

Priority actions

Build faster, better, more accessible transport and communication links
Better link Melbourne and regional ports to industry and agricultural centres across Victoria
Connect more Victorians to the Internet and other new technologies

Demonstrating progress

The proportion of freight transported to ports by rail will increase from 10 per cent to 30 per cent
Rail travel times will be reduced to Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley
Travel in Melbourne taken on public transport will increase from 9 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2020
For more information see
Department of State and Regional Development – www.dsrd.vic.gov.au
Department of Infrastructure
www.doi.vic.gov.au
Department of Natural Resources and Environment – www.nre.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Infrastructure on 9655 6666
The Bracks Government will continue to promote a better quality of life for current and future generations, by ensuring our economy, our society and our environment develop in a balanced way.

We have to ensure our timber, energy, mining and food production industries are sustainable into the future and continue to create jobs across Victoria.

We have to generate more power in a way that reduces greenhouse gases.

We need a sound framework for the delivery of secure and reliable electricity and gas at an affordable price to all Victorians.

**We have already**

- Established a Sustainable Energy Authority to ensure Victorians have access to energy efficient choices, programs and rebates
- Implemented incentives for energy efficient houses and building projects
- Established five regional energy smart advisory centres
- Promoted the use of Green Power to encourage companies to invest in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power
- Provided additional funding to farmers and regional communities to manage salinity, improve irrigation and plant more trees
- Provided funding to promote value adding in the timber industry
**Priority actions**

Increase recycling and effective waste management and increase the development and use of renewable energy sources.

Improve the productivity and sustainability of natural resource industries such as fisheries, farming, forestry and mining.

Facilitate the planting of more trees.

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**Demonstrating progress**

Renewable energy efforts will increase.

Energy consumption in Government buildings will be reduced by 15 per cent and the use of electricity from Green Power by Government will be increased to 5 per cent by 2005.

Waste recycling efforts will increase and the use of land fill as a waste disposal method will be reduced.

Waste water reuse in Melbourne will increase from 1 per cent to 20 per cent by 2010.

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**For more information see**

Department of Natural Resources and Environment – www.nre.vic.gov.au

Sustainable Energy Authority – www.seav.vic.gov.au

Or contact the Department of Natural Resources on 136186.
More jobs and thriving, innovative industries across Victoria

The Bracks Government believes that the best way to generate high quality jobs across the State is to make full use of the abilities, skills and ideas of all Victorians.

We are a creative, innovative and enterprising State. We need to build on our great strengths in the agricultural, food, manufacturing, medical research, tourism and cultural industries.

At the same time we must develop our emerging strengths in new knowledge-based industries and jobs: information and communications, biotechnology, professional services, design, advanced manufacturing and environmental management.

To support this vision we need world class economic infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce, competitive business costs, high performing, cooperative work places and an attractive environment for living, working and doing business.

We have already

- Attracted new investment and 103,800 new jobs in Victoria, including, for example, the Holden engine plant, Infogrames Asian Headquarters, GKN Engage British Aeronautical Company and AIW Printing
- Seen jobs growth in rural and regional Victoria account for more than a third of the State total
- Established the biotechnology precinct Bio21 and secured the national Synchrotron facility in Melbourne which will make Victoria a global leader in biotechnology and scientific research
- Committed funding for a high technology film and television studio facility at the Melbourne Docklands
- Established the Technology Commercialisation Program which turns good ideas into good business
- Begun to restore regional rail lines, improve roads and bus services and upgrade Victoria’s ports and rail links serving regional industries

Priority actions

Promote the creation and use of new ideas and technologies to attract investment and employment in new and existing industries

Promote growth in information and communications, biotechnology, professional services, design, advanced manufacturing and environmental management

Improve the business environment through competitive business costs, certainty and security of energy supply, high performing, co-operative workplaces and a highly skilled workforce

Demonstrating progress

Victoria’s productivity and competitiveness will increase. We will see this through increasing GDP per worker

There will be more and better jobs across Victoria

The proportion of Victorians learning new skills will increase

A greater share of innovative R&D activity will be in Victoria
For more information see
Department of State and Regional Development
www.dsrd.vic.gov.au

Department of Infrastructure www.doi.vic.gov.au

Employment Programs Division, Department of Education, Employment and Training –
www.employment.vic.gov.au

Or contact the Department of State and Regional Development on 9651 9999
Building cohesive communities and reducing inequalities

Cohesive, caring communities are places which support families and where there are good jobs, schools and services; a safe, healthy environment and active and inclusive social, cultural and volunteer networks.

The Bracks Government’s community building approach is based on listening to local experience, supporting local connections, providing responsive services and investing in the infrastructure which makes communities good places to live and work. Inequality and disadvantage unfairly undermine the opportunities and hopes of many families and communities.

The most effective actions which the Government can take to make Victoria a fairer community are to expand job opportunities and improve access to affordable, high quality education, health, housing, transport, communications and energy services.

We have already

✓ Begun to rebuild the educational, health and community service infrastructure
✓ Commenced 10 community building projects throughout Victoria and introduced new guidelines for the Community Support Fund for new community building initiatives, particularly in areas most disadvantaged by gambling
✓ Reduced the risks of problem gambling by capping the numbers of poker machines and increased advertising and counselling services
✓ Created 2,500 jobs for long term unemployed people through 140 community jobs projects
✓ Reduced waiting times and costs for public dental treatment for low income Victorians and provided travel and accommodation subsidies for rural patients for medical and dental treatment
✓ Increased pre-school subsidies for low income families and increased concessions for LPG gas for low income households, especially in rural Victoria
✓ Commenced renewal of 13 public housing estates, provided additional funding to build 800 houses for low income people and expanded emergency accommodation for homeless people

Priority actions

Support new community building initiatives and develop partnerships with local government around local communities’ needs
Enhance community participation and engagement in cultural activities
Encourage employers, workers and families to better balance their work and family responsibilities and their ability to participate in community life
Reduce unemployment and rejuvenate those areas worst affected by social and economic disadvantage
Expand the supply of secure, affordable and appropriate public housing
Demonstrating progress

The extent and diversity of participation in community, cultural and recreational organisations will increase.

In a crisis there will be more people Victorians can turn to for support.

Inequalities in health, education and wellbeing between communities will be reduced.

For more information see

Department of Premier and Cabinet
www.dpc.vic.gov.au


Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs
www.mau.vic.gov.au

Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria
www.eoc.vic.gov.au

Department of Human Services
www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Or contact the Department of Human Services on 9616 7777.
Protecting the environment for future generations

The State of Victoria includes magnificent alpine, desert, rainforest, grassland, wetlands, marine and coastal environments. The Bracks Government will continue to protect our precious environment.

Victoria has a long history of government working in partnership with the community to protect the environment. The highly successful Landcare movement started in Victoria and our system of water catchment management is a model being replicated around the world.

We will continue to build on this strong foundation in order to maintain healthy, diverse and enjoyable national, state and metropolitan parks, rivers, catchments and coastal and marine environments for Victorians.

We have already

☑ Reached agreement with the Commonwealth and NSW Governments on a long term target to return 28 per cent of the original water flow in the Snowy River
☑ Retained Water Authorities in public ownership
☑ Prevented inappropriate commercial development within Wilsons Promontory National Park
☑ Protected an additional 450,000 hectares of forest
☑ Implemented RESCODE to secure the character of local neighbourhoods and make housing more environmentally friendly
☑ Made an unprecedented investment in environmentally friendly regional and suburban rail, tram, bus and bicycle infrastructure

For more information see

Department of Natural Resources and Environment – www.nre.vic.gov.au
Department of Infrastructure
www.doi.vic.gov.au
Parks Victoria – www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
Environmental Protection Authority
www.epa.vic.gov.au

Or contact the Department of Natural Resources and Environment on 136 186
**Priority actions**

- Improve the health of our rivers and waterways and take effective action to reduce salinity
- Increase and provide greater protection for areas of high conservation value including the establishment of a comprehensive system of marine national parks
- Ensure water authorities continue to supply affordable good quality drinking water
- Encourage increased use of public transport

**Demonstrating progress**

- The Snowy River will be returned to 21 per cent of its original flow within 10 years and over time to 28 per cent
- The quality of air and drinking water will improve
- The health of Victoria’s catchments, rivers and bays will improve
- The area covered by native vegetation will increase
- There will be a real reduction in the environmental and economic impact of salinity by 2015
The Bracks Government recognises that the diverse cultural backgrounds, languages and abilities of Victorians are some of the State’s greatest strengths.

This strength is built upon the values of respect, cooperation and the protection of all Victorians’ rights. Protecting these rights requires balanced law, accessible courts and an informed community.

Consistent with these values, the Bracks Government encourages all of us to contribute to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Victorians.

Priority actions
- Improve awareness of rights and promote equal opportunity
- Improve access to courts, legal aid, victim support and alternative dispute resolution procedures
- Increase racial and religious tolerance
- Promote reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Victorians and move to redress the dispossession of Aboriginal land and culture
- Improve access to services for culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians
- Increase the diversity of representation on decision making boards and in local government

We have already
- Improved access to justice by boosting funds to legal aid and community legal centres
- Reinstated compensation for pain and suffering for victims of crime
- Ended discrimination against same sex couples in areas such as property rights
- Begun implementing racial and religious tolerance legislation
- Begun implementing the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- Increased support for ethnic communities through the Victorian Multicultural Commission

Demonstrating progress
- The proportion of Victorians aware of their legal and civil rights will increase
- More Victorians from all backgrounds will have the opportunity to have a say on issues which matter to them
For more information see
Department of Justice
www.justice.vic.gov.au
Victorian Multicultural Commission
www.multicultural.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Justice on 9651 0333
The Bracks Government listens to Victorians and at the same time provides leadership through decisive action.

We have restored many democratic safeguards and will continue to improve opportunities for all Victorians to be heard and to have a say on issues which matter to them.

We have already

- Made government contracts open and transparent
- Restored the independence of the Auditor General
- Held regular Community Cabinet meetings where Ministers meet communities
- Held community consultations on many important issues such as health, education, community services and metropolitan and regional planning
- Increased Parliamentary sitting days and questions without notice as well as taken Parliament outside Melbourne for the first time

Priority actions

- Provide strong, clear vision and direction with regular reports on progress
- Make Government more democratic, open and inclusive through better access to decision making processes including numerous Community Cabinets each year
- Strengthen the capacity of the public sector to deliver high quality, responsive, accessible and efficient services

Demonstrating progress

- More Victorians will be consulted on issues which matter to them
- There will be regular reports on progress in improving the quality of life for all Victorians and their communities
For more information see

Department of Premier and Cabinet
www.dpc.vic.gov.au
Auditor General – www.audit.vic.gov.au
Or contact the Department of Premier and Cabinet on 9651 5111
Growing Victoria Together is a broad framework for choosing the actions we need to take over the next decade to build a fair, sustainable and prosperous Victoria. The important issues and priority actions will guide our budget choices and the directions of government departments. The demonstrating progress measures will be used to report on progress and show where further action is needed.

In some areas (for example in children’s literacy and numeracy) we have already established clear measures of progress. In other areas further work is required. It is vital that decisions about future actions are based on the practical experience, expertise and ideas of Victorians. Ministers will therefore be organising discussions with community and stakeholder organisations to provide feedback on implementation and sharpening measures of progress.

Comments from individuals are also welcome and can be communicated via the web site: www.growingvictoria.vic.gov.au or by writing to the Premier of Victoria, GPO Box 4912VV Melbourne Victoria 3002.
Further copies of *Growing Victoria Together* can be obtained from the website, by writing to Information Victoria at 356 Collins Street Melbourne 3000, by calling 1300 366 356 or from your local library. The web site also includes links to more detailed information on actions underway, progress made and future plans in relation to specific policy issues.

We will use your comments to help set future priority actions.

We will provide regular reports on progress.

And we will keep taking action, keep listening and keep working together to achieve a fair, sustainable and prosperous future for all Victorians.