

MEDIA RELEASE – MAY 3, 2022

## **Budget's emphasis on health and wellbeing will support many Victorians: Jesuit Social Services**

The Victorian Budget 2022/23, handed down today, contains a range of investments to help the health and wellbeing of Victorians including vulnerable people. Building on last year's significant spending, this year's focus areas include mental health and housing, says Jesuit Social Services.

"As Victoria continues its recovery from the significant impact of COVID-19 over the past two years, this is a Budget that prioritises fundamental community services such as healthcare, mental health and the ongoing implementation of the landmark Royal Commission's recommendations and social and affordable housing, to ensure more Victorians have a safe and secure roof over their heads," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

Jesuit Social Services particularly welcomes the additional \$1.3 billion to continue to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, \$1 billion in low interest loans and Government guarantees to deliver social and affordable housing, perpetrator behavioural change programs to prevent family violence from occurring, a commitment to deliver community-based consent education and funding for a pilot to extend the Navigator program to children aged 10 and 11. Navigator, which currently supports 12 to 17 year olds, aims to increase the number of young people connected to school and engaged in learning.

"We welcome a range of investments to ensure the state's adult and youth criminal justice systems emphasise crime prevention and reducing demand on our prison systems, such as an expansion of the central after-hours assessment and bail service for young people and enhanced rehabilitation and reintegration support services for adults exiting prison to give them the best chance to turn their lives around and prevent further offending.

"We are also very pleased to see further funding for the Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility, an initiative which provides short-term accommodation to men who would otherwise exit prison into homelessness – critically important given one third of people who exit the prison system do so into homelessness. We have partnered with the Victorian Government to deliver this program since 2020, and it has demonstrated that with the right supports in place people can settle into community life, look for work, and plan a better future, which benefits us all," says Ms Edwards.

Jesuit Social Services' [2022/23 Pre-Budget Submission](#) included recommendations such as a refocus of Victoria's adult and youth justice systems towards prevention, early intervention and restorative justice and further resourcing initiatives aimed at engaging boys and men to prevent violence.

"Today's Budget provides vital investments to support Victoria's COVID recovery, and in turn to allow marginalised people and communities to better reach their potential. In this election year, we hope to see all political leaders commit to a vision of a stronger and fairer Victoria and the policies and investments to help us achieve this goal."

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