Jesuit Social Services
Building a Just Society

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MAY 20, 2021

Victorian Budget investments will create stronger communities

The Victorian Government's 2021-22 Budget provides a range of critical investments to help people and communities, including marginalised Victorians, to flourish says Jesuit Social Services.

"Today's Budget has been handed down at a time when our society is still being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. After an extremely challenging 15 months for our entire community, we welcome the substantial funding boost to health, education and mental health services that will enable people to reach their potential," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

The Budget has a significant focus on mental health reform, including $277 million to boost mental health programs in schools and a $350 million upgrade of the Thomas Embling Hospital to support people who have contact with the criminal justice system and mental health problems.

"The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System released its final report and recommendations in March, and provided a roadmap for a stronger, better resourced and more effective mental health system. We welcome the unprecedented mental health funding announced by the Victorian Government over the past 12 months which will support this goal."

The Budget also funds initiatives to address disadvantage such as community-based mental health services and services to support people sleeping rough into stable housing across key locations.

"For more than 20 years, Jesuit Social Services has conducted research into locational disadvantage. This includes our major *Dropping off the Edge* reports, a new iteration of which will be published later this year, which identify where entrenched and persistent disadvantage is located and the complex web of challenges faced by those communities.

"Through this work, and our newly established Centre for Just Places, we recognise everyone's wellbeing is significantly influenced by the community they live in, and every community is different. We need to work with communities to identify and address their concerns and support them to implement tailored, evidence-informed interventions. These investments will lift up disadvantaged communities and ensure they come out of the pandemic stronger than they entered it."

Jesuit Social Services also welcomes investments into services for people impacted by family violence, $380 million for TAFE and training providers and an expansion of the child protection workforce. Funding will also help to deliver violence perpetrator interventions and behavioural change programs, and develop and deliver tools to address the drivers of sexual violence.

"Through our Men's Project, we work to intervene earlier to prevent the use of violence and other harmful behaviours. We are pleased to see funding in the budget acknowledging the importance of preventing violence before it occurs including engaging with young people to promote healthier relationships."

"The Victorian Government says this is a Budget that puts people first. We agree. This is a Budget that will give Victorians access to the services and opportunities they need to thrive. Ultimately, it can help to create a stronger and more cohesive state for all of us."

Ph: (03) 9421 7600
Fax: (03) 9421 7699
326 Church St (PO Box 271)
Richmond VIC 3121
jss@jss.org.au
www.jss.org.au
ABN: 72 005 269 554