

# The North-Eastern Metro Bugle

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YOUR LABOR MEMBER FOR THE NORTH-EASTERN METROPOLITAN REGION, SONJA TERPSTRA MP

2024 EDITION



**THE LILYDALE  
LINE IS LEVEL  
CROSSING  
FREE A YEAR  
AHEAD OF  
SCHEDULE**



**TUNNELLING  
HAS BEGUN  
ON THE  
NORTH-  
EAST LINK  
PROJECT**



**SRL DEVELOPMENTS PUTTING HOMES AND  
JOBS WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED MOST**



# HELPING FAMILIES IN MELBOURNE'S NORTH-EAST

## The Allan Labor Government's first Budget is dedicated to helping families in the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Whether it's helping with the cost of living, making sure our kids can be their best, record funding for our healthcare system or continuing to invest in more of the services families rely on – the Victorian Budget 2024/25 invests in our community.

With the current cost of living, covering supplies and extracurricular activities can be hard on families doing it tough. Uniforms, camps and excursions – it all adds up.

That's why we are providing a one-off School Saving Bonus to help cover the costs. This \$400 bonus will help make sure our kids have everything they need for the school day, supporting families with children at government schools and families at our non-government schools who need it most.

Dedicated to helping cover the cost of learning essentials and the extracurriculars that make school fun – we'll work with schools to make it available for the start of the 2025 school year.

We're also tripling our free Glasses for Kids program – making sure even more young Victorians can be their best in the classroom, and beyond. Having already helped 34,000 kids across our state – this investment will help 74,000 more, providing free vision screening and prescription glasses for students who need it.

And because we know that learning isn't limited to the classroom, we're investing \$6 million to extend our Get Active Kids vouchers – providing up to \$200 to help eligible families with the cost of sporting club registration, uniforms and equipment.

*Cost of living is the number one issue for a lot of local families – which is why we're providing real relief*

We're continuing to invest in the strength of our hospitals – because we know what they mean to Victorian families. In this year's Budget we'll deliver an upgraded Austin Hospital, ensuring local families can get the care they need, when they need it, close to home.

This investment will refurbish the existing emergency department, expanding its capacity and making it more



comfortable for patients and staff. A new paediatric emergency department zone will also be created for our youngest patients.

Since we came to government, Victoria's public hospitals now employ over 5,000 more doctors, and over 13,000 more nurses. During the pandemic, when our health system was stretched like never before, we acted decisively – providing record funding to bolster our health system.

Since the pandemic, the cost of running our health system has continued to increase – but every cent is worth it to keep Victorians healthy. That's why we're making the biggest multi-year investment in our health system in Victoria's history. It'll mean our hospitals have the long-term certainty they need over the coming years.

The Metro Tunnel will transform the way we move around our city and state. Opening next year, it will be the biggest public transport project since the City Loop, more than 40 years ago. This year's Budget invests more than \$233 million, getting passengers ready for Day One. This includes continuing to recruit and train drivers, timetabling and signalling work, and completing final testing.

We know buses play an important role in our public transport network, helping to connect Victorians to work, school and each other. This Budget builds on our investments with \$29.7 million to improve our public transport services, including rerouting bus services at the new bus interchange Croydon Station being built as part of the Coolstore Road Level Crossing Removal.

We're making sure they get the opportunity to pursue their passions and graduate with workforce-ready skills. We're investing \$23 million to improve access and

support for school students to undertake Vocational Education and Training (VET) – including a new 'taster' pilot program to give students in Years 9 and 10 the opportunity to do short vocational courses and experience studying at TAFE.

Last year, our Free Kinder program saved around 140,000 families up to \$2,500 in fees, helping with the cost of living and ensuring cost was not a barrier to participation. This year's Budget continues this investment with an additional \$129 million to continue delivering Free Kinder and the statewide rollout of Three-Year-Old Kinder.

An extra \$19 million will deliver new Building Blocks grants – enabling kinders to renovate and upgrade early learning facilities. From expanding classrooms to funding native gardens, upgrading technology or transforming outdoor play spaces, these projects are an investment in our youngest learners.

*This Budget also invests in the services our community needs – from support for families to help for new parents and their bubs*

Community legal services do an incredible job, making sure Victorians can access the legal support they need. We're supporting this important work with \$28.8 million for community legal centres and specialist legal services – including funding for the Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) and the Mabels Program, which provides early intervention support for women experiencing family violence.

We know how important community events are and the role they play in bringing people together. Which is why we're bringing the International Highland Heavy Games to Croydon as part of the Celtic Festival in 2025 – bringing even more visitors to our part of the state.

Each investment is an investment in the people of Melbourne's North-East.

Because this is a Budget – and a Government – dedicated to helping families.

build, we will continue to have the lowest wholesale electricity prices.

Around 39% of our power comes from renewables.

Victoria was the first to create a default offer and the rest of the country followed. Keeping more money in people's pockets.

## Keeping Power Bills Down with the Victorian Default Offer

The Victorian Default Offer (VDO) continues to be a trusted safety net for Victorians.

Victorian households and businesses on our default offer have been paying less for their electricity since 1 July this year.

The final VDO shows bills going down by \$100 for the average household and \$261 for small businesses. That's money back in the pockets of over half a million Victorian families and 58,000 businesses.

The main driver for the VDO decrease is the reduction in wholesale electricity prices by 23 per cent, driven largely by our record investments in renewable energy – the cheapest form of new build energy there is.

We'll continue to build more renewable energy to keep the lights on and bring prices down.

Prices under the VDO remain cheaper than the Default Market Offer in other states. Victorian households on the VDO pay \$311 less on average for their electricity than those on the Default Market Offer and for small businesses it's \$1,331 less.

The VDO is a reference price and there are still cheaper offers available in the market. Go to [compare.energy.vic.gov.au](https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au) to make sure you're getting the best deal on your energy.

We also know that one of the best way to lower bills permanently is to install solar and go all-electric. Our

### OTHER WAYS WE'RE KEEPING POWER BILLS DOWN:

- Energy concessions**  
For concession card holders, we offer the most generous energy concessions in the country – 17.5% for electricity all year round and 17.5% for gas during the winter months.
- Energy Assistance Program**  
The Energy Assistance Program provides vulnerable Victorians one-on-one assistance to help navigate the energy market, apply for eligible grants and concessions, find and switch to better offers and address billing errors.
- Utility Relief Grant Scheme**  
The utility relief grant scheme provides up to \$650 per utility (electricity, gas and water) every two years to low-income Victorians unable to pay their bills due to temporary financial crisis.
- Payment Difficulty Framework**  
Under the Payment Difficulty Framework, introduced by our government in 2019, your power company cannot disconnect you if you seek help from them.
- Victorian Energy Upgrades program**  
The Victorian Energy Upgrades program continues to make it easier for Victorians to move off gas and slash their energy bills. In 2023, more than 506,000 homes and 24,000 businesses received upgrades through the program, with households and businesses that undertake energy efficiency upgrades under the program save \$110 and \$3,700 respectively on their energy bills.

# Renting Taskforce Cracks Down on Dodgy Rentals

The Allan Labor Government's renting taskforce is now in force, cracking down on rental providers and estate agents who do the wrong thing.

More than 130 rental reforms the Labor Government introduced in 2021 increased protections for renters while making it easier for owners to manage rental properties, but some rental providers are still trying to get away with poor conduct.

The rental minimum standards include things that most people would reasonably expect in a home, such as a functional kitchen, lockable external doors, and being structurally sound and waterproof.

Victorians who suspect properties available for rent are being falsely advertised or do not meet minimum standards can alert Consumer Affairs Victoria directly through a new complaint form online.

After recent reports from the public via the new webform, the taskforce engaged with estate agents to ensure rental properties were upgraded and repaired to meet the minimum standards before they were leased.

Victorians looking for a rental property are urged to use the new form to report concerns – it only takes about five minutes to complete and can be submitted anonymously.

Backed by a \$4 million investment from the Labor Government, the renting taskforce is scaling up operations using intelligence and market analysis to boost monitoring of rental campaigns, conduct targeted inspections and act on identified breaches. Operations will continue to scale up throughout 2024.

Letting a new renter move into a rental property that does not meet the minimum standards is a criminal offence, with maximum penalties of over \$11,000 for individuals and over \$57,000 for companies.

To access the advertised rental property report form, visit [consumer.vic.gov.au/rental-listing](https://consumer.vic.gov.au/rental-listing).

A dedicated taskforce will send a clear message to rental providers that rental offences will not be tolerated – cracking down on offences like false advertising, renting out properties that don't meet minimum standards, and not lodging bonds.

Backed by a \$4 million investment, the renting taskforce will operate in a similar way to the successful underquoting taskforce, using intelligence and market analysis to boost monitoring of rental campaigns, conduct targeted inspections and act on identified breaches. It will scale up operations throughout 2024.

The taskforce will be embedded within Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and will employ extra intelligence analysts, inspectors, investigators and lawyers. CAV will also build on its existing services and make it easier for the public to report potential unlawful conduct to its intelligence team and upload evidence like photos through its website.

The rental minimum standards include things that people would reasonably expect in a home – like a functional kitchen, lockable external doors, and being structurally sound and waterproof.

Letting a new renter move into a rental property that doesn't meet these standards is a criminal offence, with maximum penalties of over \$11,000 for individuals and over \$57,000 for companies.

The renting taskforce builds on the work being done through the Labor Government's Housing Statement, including banning all types of rental bidding, restricting rent increases between successive fixed-term rental agreements, and extending the notice of rent increase and notice to vacate periods to 90 days.

To find out more about the taskforce, visit [consumer.vic.gov.au/about-us/in-focus/renting-taskforce](https://consumer.vic.gov.au/about-us/in-focus/renting-taskforce)

## More Long-Term Rentals and More Social Homes

The Allan Labor Government is delivering more social and affordable housing and making more properties available for long-term rentals – with the Short Stay Levy Bill 2024 introduced into Parliament.

Announced as part of the landmark Housing Statement, the final policy has been informed by consultation with local councils, industry and tourism bodies to get the balance right for communities across Victoria.

The legislation introduces a 7.5 per cent levy from 1 January 2025 on short stay accommodation bookings, including bookings made through platforms such as Airbnb and Stayz.

Short stay rentals reduce the number of properties available for longer term accommodation for families who need a place to live. In Victoria, there are around 63,000 short stay accommodation places – with nearly half of these in regional Victoria. Almost 50,000 of those places are entire homes which are not available for long-term rental.

Expected to raise around \$60 million a year, all revenue will go to Homes Victoria to support the building and maintenance of social and affordable housing – with 25 per cent of funds to be invested in regional Victoria.

The levy will not apply to a homeowner leasing out all or part of their principal place of residence for a short stay. When a homeowner goes on holiday and someone else stays there temporarily, the levy does not apply.

Commercial accommodation such as hotels, motels and caravan parks are also exempt. The levy will also only apply to stays less than 28 days.

Transitional arrangements will be in place, and the levy will not apply to bookings made prior to 1 January 2025.

The Labor Government is also giving local communities the ability to respond to local concerns – with owners' corporations now able to ban short stays in their developments if approved by 75 per cent of owners. There will also be changes to the planning system to give local councils the power to regulate short stay accommodation.

Governments across Australia and around the world have taken steps to regulate short-stay accommodation – including the use of short-stay booking levies – to tackle challenges with the supply of longer-term rental accommodation and manage the impacts of short-stay accommodation on local communities.

## Rental Stress Support Package

Victorian renters who are feeling the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis will benefit from an almost \$8 million Rental Stress Support Package.

Around 5 per cent of Victorian households are facing serious rental stress, with demand increasing for organisations that provide information and advice, financial counselling, advocacy and legal assistance to Victorian renters.

The Allan Labor Government's Rental Stress Support Package will help families stay in their homes and prevent homelessness, and builds on the Housing Statement commitment to back the critical work of community organisations addressing the high demand for rental assistance we know is being seen across Victoria.

The Rental Stress Support Package means more support for Victorians with important services such as advice and advocacy, legal assistance, community education and financial counselling, when they need it most.

**If you are experiencing rental stress and are in need of support, help is available through the following organisations:**

- Anglicare Victoria**  
1800 809 722  
<https://www.anglicarevic.org.au/>
- Housing for the Aged Action Group**  
1300 765 178  
<https://www.oldertenants.org.au/>
- Justice Connect**  
<https://justiceconnect.org.au/>
- Tenants Victoria**  
Renter support line  
(03) 9416 2577  
<https://tenantsvic.org.au/>

## More Homes – Faster – Near Jobs, Transport and Services

The Allan Labor Government is delivering more homes close to jobs, transport and services in 10 key suburban activity centres across Melbourne: Broadmeadows, Camberwell Junction, Chadstone, Epping, Frankston, Moorabbin, Niddrie (Keilor Road), North Essendon, Preston (High Street), and Ringwood.

Under the pilot program, long and complicated 'structure planning' in the activity centres will be fast-tracked from up to 5 years in some cases, down to around 12 months – delivering more homes faster.

Under the draft plans, height rules and boundaries differ to suit each area. Generally, the commercial cores of the activity centres are proposed to accommodate taller buildings and larger developments. In Camberwell Junction, the proposed maximum height at the core will increase from six to 12 storeys.

Government will also consult on how projects within this commercial core can benefit from a more streamlined planning approval pathway.

In the catchment area surrounding the activity centres – everything that's within a 10-minute walk of shops and transport – new rules will encourage more townhouses and apartments ranging from three to six storeys in height.

Government will consult with members of its landmark Affordability Partnership on ways to ensure enough affordable housing is delivered in and around the activity centres. Government will also continue the conversation with councils about infrastructure support that communities need.

These 10 centres were chosen for their potential to host more homes close to trains, trams, shopping centres, jobs and services – the things Victorians want linked to housing. Now, locals can have their say on the draft plans.

The Camberwell Junction area is well suited for more homes. The Lilydale line is now level crossing free, trains run frequently, the area is within walking and cycling distance of jobs and services, and the Labor Government has upgraded Camberwell High School, Camberwell Primary School, and more.

The Activity Centres program was outlined as part of the Government's Housing Statement and will provide an additional 60,000 homes across the 10 centres by 2051. For more information and to have your say, visit [engage.vic.gov.au/activitycentres](https://engage.vic.gov.au/activitycentres)

# \$400 School Saving Bonus Will Help Busy Families

Families across the North-Eastern Metro Region will be able to spend the School Saving Bonus on more items when the Victorian Government's once-off \$400 bonus becomes available later in 2024 year to all students at government schools and eligible non-government school students.

The School Saving Bonus – which had sought to cover the costs of uniforms, camps, excursions, and other extracurricular activities through the year – can also be spent on textbooks.

Schools and families will also get more information about how the \$400 School Saving Bonus can be accessed later this year, so families have time to plan and budget for the 2025 school year.

The once-off bonus will be available in November 2024. It will be applied for each child, so a family with three school children will receive \$1,200 in support to spend on school costs.

The Government has worked to make the process of getting and spending the \$400 School Saving Bonus as easy and as flexible as possible for busy families and schools.

No family of a child in a government school will need to apply for their bonus: it is free, automatic and universal.

In Term 4, families will receive a code granting them access to the bonus. They will get to choose how much of the funds they want allocated to a uniform and textbook voucher, and how much they want to use on school activities – like camps, sports, excursions, graduations, and other eligible programs.

The voucher for uniforms and books will be redeemable at a school-approved uniform or textbook supplier, while funds that families allocate to school activities will be managed through the school.

The voucher can be combined if families have children at different schools but use the same supplier for uniforms and textbooks. Families can also use the voucher to buy second-hand uniforms and textbooks directly from schools.

For families of students at a non-government school, the \$400 will be provided directly to each school – to be managed in consultation with the student's family and in line with the intent of the program.

Non-government school families who are eligible for the means-tested Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (including healthcare and concession card holders) are eligible for the School Saving Bonus. Their application process will be the same as that for the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.



The School Saving Bonus was announced as part of a \$287 million package in the Victorian Budget 2024/25, and it will help up to 700,000 students – including around 44,000 non-government students.

For more information on the \$400 School Saving Bonus, visit [vic.gov.au/school-saving-bonus](http://vic.gov.au/school-saving-bonus)

# Kinder for Every Child: Victoria's Commitment to Early Childhood Education

In Victoria, 97 per cent of funded kindergarten services are participating in Free Kinder - ensuring around 140,000 children each year can go to kinder at no cost – saving hard-working families up to \$2,563 in fees per child per year.

Children attending Three-Year-Old Kindergarten receive 5 to 15 hours of play-based learning each week, while those in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten receive 15 hours weekly.

Victorian families have embraced Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, with approximately 89 per cent of eligible children participating last year. Now, thanks to record investment and take-up across the state, more than 80 per cent of kindergarten services are offering a full 15-hour-per-week program – well ahead of the roll-out schedule.

For the first time next year, children in the local government areas of Ararat, Gannawarra, Hindmarsh, Murrindindi, Northern Grampians and Yarriambiack will be the first to enrol in Pre-Prep.

Led by qualified teachers, Pre-Prep provides children with more hours of quality play-based learning in the year before school. As the roll-out progresses, four-year-old children are eligible for 16 to 30 hours of kindergarten each week.

At kinder, qualified teachers and educators guide children's learning, encouraging them to use their imagination and make discoveries while listening, sharing and working with others. Children also learn about numbers, words, and language, and develop social and emotional skills, building key skills for life.

Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support a child's development. Two years of quality kindergarten have a greater impact on children who start at three rather than four. The benefits are even greater for children needing extra support.

Families can find kindergarten services near them by contacting their local council or visiting [vic.gov.au/kinder](http://vic.gov.au/kinder).



When visiting services, they should also look for a Kinder Tick to be confident their child is attending a government-funded and approved kindergarten program.

# Free Glasses for Kids to Help Them Reach Their Full Potential

The Allan Labor Government have a vision for the future, and it starts with our kids.

Too many kids are falling behind in schools because of undiagnosed and treatable vision problems - whilst families are struggling to find the time to get tested.

The Victorian Budget 2024/2025 is about helping families – with the popular Glasses for Kids program being an important part.

The Allan Labor Government is tripling funding to the program to \$6.8 million, with an additional 70,000 Victorian students benefitting.

The Glasses for kids program will see students from prep to Year 3 students being treated onsite with vision testing and even free glasses, making life easier for the busy schedules of families.

The program will target Victorian Government schools identified with high and medium levels of disadvantage, based on the school's Student Family Occupational Education Index.

The 2024/25 budget is about helping families who we know are doing it tough, and the Glasses for Kids program is just one of the many ways the Allan Labor Government is helping families fight the cost-of-living crisis.

# Easing the Transition from Primary to Secondary School

The Allan Labor Government is helping keep students engaged in their education as they move from primary school into secondary school – a period where there can be higher levels of disengagement from learning.

The first day of secondary school can be daunting. While it is a period of tremendous growth and development for most young people, for some students, there is a heightened risk of disengagement from their education, poor wellbeing, and a decline in learning outcomes.

Keeping kids engaged in school helps them to be productive and successful young adults.



A student's transition experience is successful when they have good engagement with their peers and their families – this is especially important for students who may be at higher risk of a poor transition, including neurodiverse and Autistic students, students with disabilities and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The updated materials, which are expected to support roughly 200,000 students every year through the transition, feature a series of internal guidance, resources, and practical examples for schools to use through a four-year staged process from upper primary to lower secondary.

This update, designed to provide greater support for students during their transition, is set to significantly enhance their engagement and overall experience for students in Years 5 to 8.

This update is particularly beneficial to parents, carers, and the broader network of family or guardians. Acknowledging their profound and formative impact on students, this support network is recognised as a major contributor to a successful transition.

## The new guidance and resources cover four phases of transition:

- **Preparation (Years 5 and 6)** - introduces students to general skills like organisation and time management that will help them navigate in a new environment, for example using lockers and having a timetable
- **Transfer (end of Year 6)** - students can attend their new school for a day to learn the new layout and attend classes and meet key staff and future classmates
- **Induction (Year 7)** - supports new students to develop a strong sense of connection and belonging in their new environment and to ease into the new practices, rhythms and relationships
- **Consolidation (Year 8)** builds on the skills, knowledge, and experiences students have gained in previous phases, with a strong emphasis on supporting their wellbeing and confidence in their learning environment.

# Big Upgrades Coming to Croydon Special Developmental School

'Care, share and do your best' is Croydon Special Developmental School's motto and that's exactly what I saw when I visited the school to turn the first sod on the \$11.7 million capital works project.

The school will soon have an upgraded hydrotherapy pool, administration buildings and gym, helping both staff and students to achieve great things.

Congratulations to principal Christine and students, at Croydon Special Developmental School, I can't wait to come back and see everything up and running.

The Victorian Government is investing record funding in our schools to make Victoria the Education State.

In the past 9 years, the Victorian Government has invested \$14.9 billion in building new schools and more than 1,940 school upgrades.

This investment will ensure:

- every child can get a great education
- our schools can cater for Victoria's growing population
- our government schools are better equipped to prepare students for the 21st century.

New and modern school buildings contribute to school pride for students, parents and the wider community, building their engagement with education.

By reforming schools, the Victorian Government is transforming communities. By sharing sport, cultural and health facilities, schools are becoming neighbourhood hubs.



# \$1.347 Million Upgrades to Croydon Primary School Now Open

Back in February, I had the pleasure of opening a new arts and crafts building at Croydon Primary School.

The new addition at Croydon Primary is equipped with brand-new all-inclusive toilet facilities as well as an upgraded outdoor recreation garden area.

The Allan Labor Government provided \$1.347 million to upgrade these creative spaces, as well as replacing the ageing toilet block and an update to the gardens at the school.

The Victorian Government is investing record funding in our schools to make Victoria the Education State.

In the past 9 years, the Victorian Government has invested \$14.9 billion in building new schools and more than 1,940 school upgrades.

This investment will ensure; every child can get a great education, our schools can cater for Victoria's growing population, our government schools are better equipped to prepare students for the 21st century.

Modern learning environments help develop creative thinking, promote STEM literacy, and inspire learning for life – critical skills for future success.

New and modern school buildings contribute to school pride for students, parents and the wider community, building their engagement with education.

By reforming schools, the Victorian Government is transforming communities. By sharing sport, cultural and health facilities, schools are becoming neighbourhood hubs.

# Inclusive Playspace Coming Soon to Warranwood Primary

I'm pleased to announce that Warranwood Primary School will be receiving \$299,362 through the Labor Government's Inclusive Schools Fund, giving Warranwood students of all abilities more chances to play, learn and socialise.

The funding will be used to build a new inclusive play space for students who need a calm, safe and inviting area to participate in play specifically designed with their mobility and self-regulation needs in mind.

Since its establishment, around 420 creative projects have been funded through the transformational program, helping build inclusive learning spaces and specially designed accessible playgrounds – ensuring all students are able to fully participate, develop and succeed in Victorian government schools.



# New Classrooms and Science Facilities Coming to East Doncaster Secondary College

East Doncaster Secondary College is getting 2 upgrades to their facilities, to improve amenity, cleanliness and hygiene at the school.

Thanks to the Allan Labor Government, nine relocatable buildings will be delivered and installed at the school later in 2024. This will include 4 single-storey buildings and 5 double-storey buildings.

The new buildings will provide the school with an additional 16 classrooms, science facilities and extra toilets. Relocatable buildings are energy-efficient and built offsite to minimise disruption.

The 3 single-storey relocatable buildings located near the soccer pitch will be removed from early September.

# Opening the new Upgrades at Tunstall Square Kinder

I was pleased to open the \$1.4 million upgraded facilities at Tunstall Square Kinder made possible thanks to the 2021-22 Building Blocks Capacity Building Grants.

This new modular building allows for an additional 22 kindergarten places as well as a new bathroom and kitchen, solar panels and an energy efficient design, as well as an increased size to the outdoor play space for the children.

Tunstall Square Kinder was the first kinder I visited as a newly elected MP, and it holds a special place in my heart. I know the staff at Tunstall Square Kinder demonstrate their dedication, warmth and commitment to our littlest learners every day.



# Andersons Creek PS to Get Much Needed Facility Refurbishment



Andersons Creek Primary School will soon have the upgraded facilities it needs thanks to \$498,793 from the Minor Capital Works Fund from the 2023-24 State Budget.

The project will see a refurbishment of the school's toilets, making them more pleasant, and improve cleanliness and hygiene.

The Allan Labor Government's Minor Capital Works Fund is supporting this work, to provide grants for small building projects that make a big difference in our schools.

Every child deserves the best, high quality school facilities to learn in.

This is just one small part of our quest to continue to upgrade and improve government school facilities right across the state.

This project is currently in the design stages and is due for completion by the end of 2025.

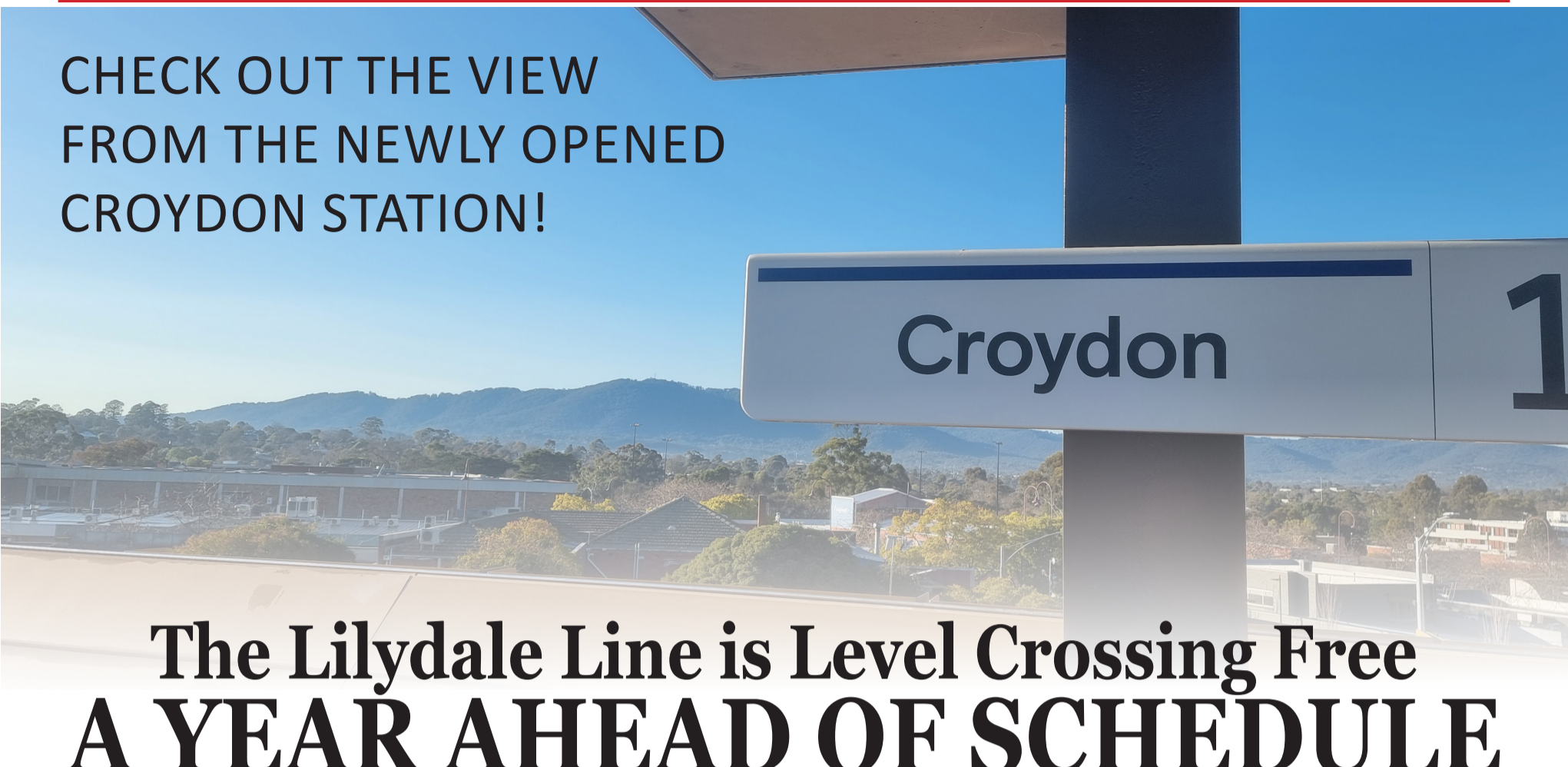
# We're Ending the Double Drop Off in Croydon Hills!

Families in Croydon Hills won't have to make multiple trips to drop off their kids, with a new Kinder on site being rolled out at Croydon Hills Primary School.

Through the Allan Labor Government's nation-leading investment in quality early childhood education, from 2026, 13 new government-built kinders will provide more than 850 new kindergarten places for local children across the state.

Locating kindergartens on or close to schools supports children to get the most out of their early learning, makes drop-off more convenient for busy parents and carers, and helps with a smoother transition to primary school.

## CHECK OUT THE VIEW FROM THE NEWLY OPENED CROYDON STATION!



# The Lilydale Line is Level Crossing Free A YEAR AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

The Lilydale Line is the first metropolitan Melbourne train line to be level crossing free – one year ahead of schedule.

In Croydon, the new station is open, trains are running along the new 687-metre-long rail bridge and vehicles are driving on the new Kent Avenue to Lacey Street connection as part of the Coolstore Road, Level Crossing Removal.

The new Croydon Transport Hub will make it easier to get where you need to go and provide a modern and safe Croydon Station precinct. Finishing works on the Croydon Transport Hub will continue into spring 2024.

The new Ringwood East Station is also open with trains running through the new rail trench and the Dublin Road level crossing gone for good. The station features a main concourse, platforms that are accessible by lifts and stairs, and upgraded pedestrian and cycling paths.

Since 2017, the Level Crossing Removal Project has removed 9 level crossings and built 6 new stations along the Lilydale Line, which together with the Belgrave Line, is Melbourne's second busiest rail line on the network, used by more than 72,000 passengers each weekday.

Getting rid of these crossings has eliminated more than 5 hours of boom gate down time from the Lilydale Line in the morning peak and reduced frustrating delays for the more than 123,000 vehicles travelling through these crossings every day.

Separating trains and vehicles along the busy rail line has also made the road and rail network safer for all users.

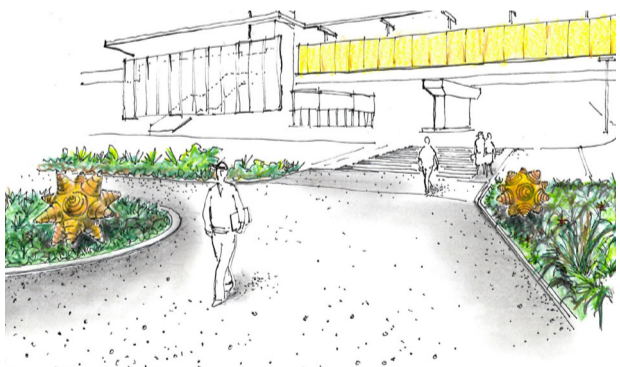
Previously, serious accidents and fatalities had been recorded at several of the level crossing sites, including Union Road in Surrey Hills, fast-tracked for removal in 2023 after the deaths of 2 people.

The new transport precincts have transformed communities along the rail line, delivering almost 7km of new walking and cycling paths to link to surrounding bike networks, and thousands of square metres of new and upgraded open spaces landscaped with more than 260,000 trees, shrubs and plantings.

World class station designs have also improved local amenity, with the Lilydale and Mooroolbark stations nominated for several national and international design awards, and Union Station in Surrey Hills recognised for its environmental focus, awarded the Infrastructure Sustainability Council's highest rating for a Victorian rail project.

To find out about the whole project, visit [bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/level-crossing-removal-project/projects/coolstore-road-croydon](http://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/level-crossing-removal-project/projects/coolstore-road-croydon)

## Croydon in Bloom



Acclaimed Australian artist Donna Marcus has been selected to create a striking cast-bronze artwork that will frame the entrance to the new premium Croydon Station as part of the Coolstore Road, Level Crossing Removal Project.

The public artwork, titled Bloom, is in Marcus's signature style of repurposing everyday household objects as modular sculptures, taking inspiration from Croydon's natural environment and bustling multicultural community, while also paying tribute to the region's agricultural heritage.

The two works, measuring about 1.2 metres and 1.5 metres tall, each comprise 12 cone-like shapes forming large spherical forms and will be positioned in two planter beds near the main station entrance.

The Brisbane-based artist, who has been working with aluminium kitchenware for more than 30 years, credits a pudding bowl found in Croydon's Vinnies shop as the starting point for Bloom. Humble kitchen items such as bowls, lids, jelly moulds and egg poachers will be used to form Bloom's conical shapes, cast in bronze to create the final sculptural works.

The sculptures will be installed as part of finishing works on the project later this year.



# Tunnelling Starts on North East Link Project

Tunnelling has started on the Australian and Victorian governments' North East Link Project in Melbourne's northeast.

The first tunnel boring machine (TBM) is now digging the 6.5-kilometre tunnel between Watsonia and Bulleen – which will take 15,000 trucks off local roads and slash travel times by up to 35 minutes.

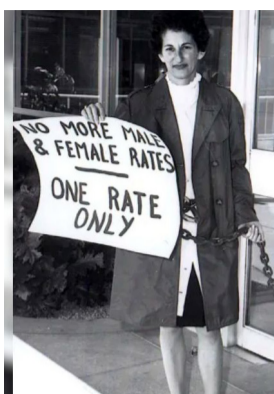
The TBM is the first of two massive machines that will dig up to 15 metres per day and up to 45 metres underground.

The 4,000 tonne machines will also install tunnel walls made of approximately 44,000 individual concrete segments made locally in Benalla.

More than 100 tunnel workers have undergone specialised training to work below ground, with the Victorian Tunnelling Centre at Holmesglen providing state-of-the-art training.

The tunnels will be built using 100 per cent renewable electricity.

Dirt and rock from the tunnels will be re-used across the North East Link and other transport sites where possible – with a significant amount of dirt also helping rehabilitate a former quarry at Point Wilson and the former Orica site in Deer Park.



The two TBMs have been named Zelda and Gillian, to honour two ground-breaking Victorian women.

The late West Heidelberg resident Zelda D'Aprano AO (left) was a renowned women's rights activist who worked tirelessly to close the gender pay gap and established the Women's Action Committee.

Dr Gillian Opie is a neonatal paediatrician at the Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg and founded Australia's first breast milk bank – providing sick and premature babies in Melbourne's neonatal intensive care units with safe, screened and pasteurised milk.

More than 6,700 people are currently working across the project – which will create 12,000 jobs before completion in 2028.

At the 2024-25 Budget the Australian Government committed an additional \$3.25 billion to the North East Link Project to make a total contribution of \$5 billion, with the Victorian Government providing the remaining project funding.



## Works Blitz Set to Ramp Up Across SRL Sites

A massive program of early works on the Allan Labor Government's Suburban Rail Loop is ramping up as the project powers towards tunnelling in 2026.

Clayton Road will be closed to vehicles between Colonel Street and Houghton Road from Tuesday, 27 August 2024 until late-October to move underground utilities and to deliver a replacement park featuring new exercise and play equipment with designs shaped by the local community.

This significant program of works is being undertaken at the same time to minimise the impact to the community and reduce the overall time roads are impacted – with sections of Houghton and Carinish roads also expected to be closed at times during the works blitz.

Emergency vehicle access including ambulance access to the nearby medical precinct, will be maintained at all times.

The Suburban Rail Loop team will work closely with local residents, traders and the City of Monash to minimise the impacts of the works and provide tailored support during this time – and locals are still encouraged to support local businesses.

In Box Hill, Whitehorse Road will be closed overnight at times throughout the rest of 2024, while crews move utilities and build a temporary bridging structure to keep traffic moving along Whitehorse Road during construction.

In Burwood, underground services are being moved to make way for the new SRL station – with Burwood Highway lane closures set to continue and full overnight closures in both directions at times.

Coleman Parade in Glen Waverley will also be closed from September until later this year, as workers move underground services, while in Heatherton, Old Dandenong Road will be permanently closed between Henry Street and Kingston Road from October to make way for the train stabling facility.

SRL is creating up to 8,000 direct local jobs in construction, with more than 1,400 people already on the project.

SRL will not only transform our public transport network, but bring thousands more homes, jobs and services to the areas around the new state-of-the-art stations.

For more information on the works and road closures, visit [suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au/works](http://suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au/works)

## All-Women TBM Crew to Build Suburban Rail Loop Tunnels

In a world first, an all-women tunnel boring machine (TBM) crew will help build the Allan Labor Government's Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) East twin tunnels between Cheltenham and Glen Waverley – with Expressions of Interest now open for those who want to be a part of this city shaping project.

SRL East Tunnels South Construction Manager Isolde Piet will lead the highly-skilled crew of 25 which include a TBM operator, gantry and segment crane operators and support roles – opening up careers in construction for a new generation of women.

The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is open to young women looking to start their careers or wanting to change industries.

At least 10 per cent of total labour hours on the tunnels will be worked by women – with tunnelling to start in 2026 and trains taking passengers by 2035.

This world first is the culmination of the Labor Government's decade long work to improve gender equality right across our major projects and transport sectors.

From Metro Tunnel, West Gate Tunnel, North East Link and now Suburban Rail Loop – our continued investment in skills and training for women has meant that more women now have more opportunities to work across our Big Build Projects.

The first stage of the SRL will deliver six new underground stations between Cheltenham and Box Hill, which will slash travel times and congestion – while connecting people to 70,000 new homes, hundreds of thousands more jobs and world-class public services across Melbourne's east and southeast.

Expressions of Interest to be part of the all-female TBM crew, and other roles on this city-shaping project, can be registered at [suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au/jobs](http://suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au/jobs)

## Training Ramps Up Ahead of Metro Tunnel Opening

The Allan Labor Government has delivered a new state-of-the-art facility in Melbourne's CBD – to help train and boost the number of rail workers ahead of the Metro Tunnel opening in 2025.

The new Metro Academy facility which simulates a mini metropolitan rail network – with live tracks and platform simulators available will train almost 100 students each day.

The Academy will train more than 200 future train drivers, station staff and Authorised Officers ahead of the opening of the Metro Tunnel – with the first round of students beginning their training program.

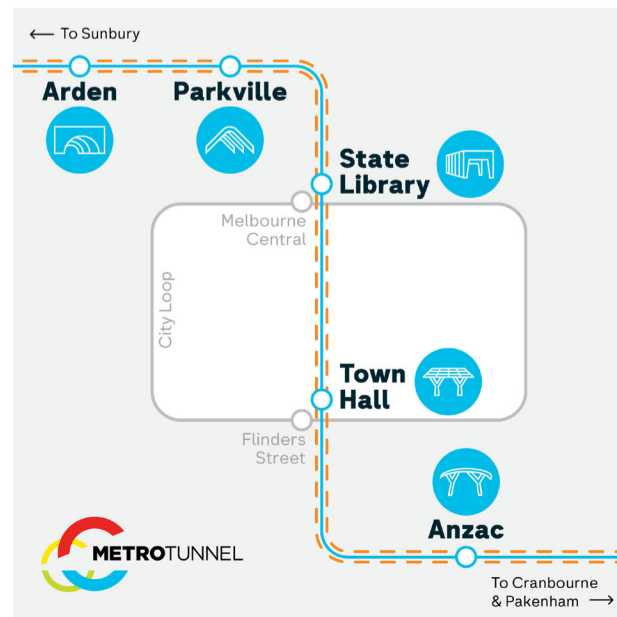
To get rail workers ready for the job, students will be provided classroom, practical and on-the-job training – with the Academy offering a range of platform simulators including passenger information displays and CCTV safety zones, to help customer service and Authorised Officers safely apply their skills.

The Metro Tunnel is the biggest transformation of Melbourne's rail network since the City Loop opened in 1981 – transforming Melbourne's train network and how we move around our city.

The project will create new connections across the city, delivering five new world-class underground stations – connecting major precincts at Parkville, Arden and the Shrine of Remembrance to our rail network for the first time.

Metro train drivers and station staff will need to be trained to operate all the tunnel's new systems and technology, including Victorian-first platform screen doors that will open and close at stations with the train doors.

The new facility supports Metro's existing Metro Academy training facilities in Kensington and Newport, which aim to simulate real life experiences so workers can hit the ground running when fully qualified.



## Making Urgent Care Even More Accessible for Victorians

The Allan Labor Government's Priority Primary Care Clinics – which are currently averaging 7,000 patient visits each week through both walk ins and appointments – have marked half a million visits from Victorians in need.

The 29 clinics were set up by the Labor Government to reduce pressure on busy emergency departments, with patient survey data revealing around 50 per cent would have gone to emergency if the clinics did not exist.

General practitioners are the backbone of primary care, which is why highly experienced GPs lead the clinics, backed by nurses.

The clinics are free for anyone with or without a Medicare card. People can seek care for a range of reasons including sprains, broken bones, mild burns, respiratory illness, tonsillitis, ear infections and urinary tract infections.

Hospitals, paramedics, Nurse on Call, and the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) are also using the clinics as a safe and effective referral option, with around 36 per cent of patients coming via these services.

The clinics also receive referrals from GP clinics and pharmacies.

The clinics are popular with regional Victorians, with more than 142,000 patients seen at the nine clinics in country Victoria.

Due to the inaction of the former Federal Coalition Government, too many Victorians are unable to secure an appointment or afford to see a GP.

As these clinics become further embedded in our health system, it is also important to ensure they are aligned with national Medicare Urgent Care Clinics. The Commonwealth has now taken over funding 10 of Victoria's existing clinics as part of its responsibility for delivering primary care across Australia.

Continued investment in the VVED is also helping to relieve pressure on hospitals and paramedics, with more than 360,000 virtual consultations completed since 2020. 86 per cent of these callers did not require a physical care.

If faced with a medical emergency, people should still call Triple Zero or present to their closest hospital ED. For locations or more information, please visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/urgent-care-clinics](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/urgent-care-clinics).

Priority Primary Care Clinics can be found in Bayswater, Forest Hill and Glen Waverley.



## Giving Victorian Women the Healthcare they Deserve

More women across Victoria can access the preventative health promotion and education they need to live healthy and happy lives thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Made possible by an investment of \$18 million in the Victorian Budget 2024/25 – 12 women's health organisations, including Women's Health East, will deliver initiatives focused on sexual and reproductive health, chronic illness and reducing the impact of family violence on women and the health system.

The work will be delivered by women for women, including those from multicultural backgrounds, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, and women in regional Victoria.

Women's Health organisations provide a range of services including producing tools and resources to empower women to take charge of their own health, sharing information about women's rights and service options, as well as initiatives to promote gender equality, family violence prevention and inclusive women's health policy.

This year's funding builds on the delivery of \$153 million in the Victorian Budget 2023/24 and is part of a broader investment into women's health by the Labor Government to close the gender pain gap and deliver equity in healthcare.

## New Women's Health Hubs Boost Access to Care

The Allan Labor Government is making sure more women can access the sexual and reproductive healthcare they need and deserve – as we continue to drive down the gender health gap.

This hub joins the current network of 14 hubs that are already delivering free or low-cost care including contraception, medical abortion, referral for surgical abortion and sexual health testing and treatment.

The latest locations were chosen based on where there was a high demand for women's healthcare and a lack of services including:

- Central Highlands Rural Health – Kyneton
- Western Health – Melton
- IPC Health – Wyndham Vale
- DPV Health – Broadmeadows
- Grampians Health – Horsham and Stawell
- East Grampians Health – Ararat

Hubs were selected following extensive sector consultation and are expected to help at least 4,000 more girls and women access sexual and reproductive health services every year.

Part of a \$153 million women's health package, the hubs will transform the way women's health issues are

The recipients sharing in this funding include:

- Gippsland Women's Health
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Women's Health Barwon South West
- Women's Health East
- Women's Health Goulburn North East
- Women's Health Grampians
- Women's Health in the North
- Women's Health in the South East
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Women's Health Victoria
- GenWest

Victoria has a proud track record of investing in women's health – from establishing Victoria's first clinic for women's heart health, delivering 14 sexual and reproductive health hubs, and launching the state's first ever sexual and reproductive health phone line.

treated – breaking down barriers women and girls face in accessing affordable and comprehensive care.

The workforce supporting the hubs will also benefit from our Women's Health Scholarship program, helping to address existing skills and knowledge shortages when it comes to women's health.

More than 100 scholarships are being delivered – offering chances to upskill in areas like IUD insertion, sexual and reproductive health, pelvic physio training, menopause and PCOS.

The scholarships also fund training to promote cultural safety and remove existing barriers for First Nations women, women from migrant and refugee backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ communities.



## 10,000 Supported as Pharmacy Pilot Passes Halfway Mark

More than 10,000 consultations have been delivered as part of the Allan Labor Government's Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot – ensuring Victorians are getting the basic care they need, without having to wait to get an appointment with a busy local doctor.

Women are benefitting the most from this fast and affordable everyday healthcare – with more than 5,290 consultations delivered for the treatment of an uncomplicated urinary tract infection and 3,160 for a resupply of the oral contraceptive pill.

Additionally, more than 2,200 Victorians have been able to easily access travel health and other vaccines. Treatment for shingles and flare ups of mild plaque psoriasis were added to the pilot in February this year.

The pilot is making it easier for residents across the North-Eastern Metro Region to seek the care or advice they need, with 27 per cent of participating pharmacies and more than 20 per cent of total consultations delivered in regional Victoria.

Backed by a \$20 million investment – the pilot is making it easier for people to access care without having to repeatedly visit a GP, helping to free up appointments for those who need them and give more viable alternatives than delaying care, going to an emergency department or calling Triple Zero.

It is a clear winner with Victorians – 97 per cent reporting they are satisfied with the service they received and most stating they did not need to seek further healthcare.

The 12-month pilot is guided by experts and clinical groups representing the pharmacy and medical professions – at its conclusion, the pilot will be evaluated, and any recommendations will inform longer-term decision making.

The pilot is just one in a suite of initiatives the Labor Government is undertaking to improve access to timely care, including establishing 29 Priority Primary Care Centres and the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department.

More info is available at [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/services-support/community-pharmacist-pilot](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/services-support/community-pharmacist-pilot)



## A Cheaper, Cleaner, Renewable Future for Victoria

The Allan Labor Government has laid the groundwork to transition Victoria to a cheaper and more reliable renewable energy future while ensuring that communities and businesses will benefit from an orderly transition.

'Cheaper, cleaner, renewable: Our plan for Victoria's Electricity Future' – sets out the plan for delivering Victoria's future energy system and reaching the target of 95 per cent renewable generation by 2035.

By 2035, Victoria's electricity system will be fundamentally transformed. Electricity use will have increased by about 50 per cent per cent or more, driven by homes and businesses switching to electricity, and population growth. At the same time, all of Victoria's ageing coal-fired power plants will have closed.

To ensure that we keep the lights on and reach our 95 per cent renewable energy target, Victoria will unlock around 25 gigawatts of new rooftop solar, offshore wind, onshore renewables and energy storage over the next decade.

This plan outlines the policies and programs that are in place to deliver this new capacity and highlights the investment and job opportunities available. An estimated \$35 billion in capital investment will be required and 59,000 jobs will be created to 2035. The expansion of training and apprenticeship programs will create a pipeline of skilled workers.

Victoria has already led the country, more than tripling the share of renewable energy since 2014 and is now generating 39 per cent of our power from renewables. That means renewables are now producing more electricity per annum than any of the three remaining coal fired generators.

Victoria's target of 95 per cent renewable generation by 2035 includes a role for gas fired electricity generation to support grid reliability and security. On average, gas provides around 2-5 per cent of total electricity generation each year in Victoria.

## Building the Skills for our Clean Economy Workforce

Students, trainees and workers will be able to get the skills they need to join Victoria's fast-growing clean economy workforce, thanks to a nearly \$9 million funding package to boost skills in environmental sustainability and the clean economy, helping people enter the sector thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

The investment will support TAFEs, universities, training providers and industry to establish practical Skills Labs where innovative new short courses called Skill Sets can be developed.

In response to the 2021 Macklin Review of Victoria's training system, Skills Labs will involve industry partners in the development of new training approaches – including the creation of new Skill Sets, which are flexible, nationally recognised short courses designed to rapidly respond to skill shortages in the economy.

The funding package includes \$3.45 million to establish three Clean Economy Skills Labs – hosted at TAFE Gippsland and Melbourne Polytechnic – to develop

training in offshore wind, circular design, manufacturing and meeting net-zero emissions targets.

As part of the package, RMIT will receive \$970,000 to co-design three new Skill Sets in sustainable building practices. These Skill Sets are currently being piloted with industry professionals and students.

A total of 10 Skill Sets are now available to study tuition-free through the Labor Government's Free TAFE program.

The ongoing development and delivery of Skill Sets are funded through a \$32 million investment in the Victorian Budget 2024/25.

Victoria has hit every climate target it has set to date and is on track to meet its renewable energy target of 95 per cent by 2035 – creating 59,000 clean energy jobs, delivering \$9.5 billion in economic development, and putting us on the path to net-zero emissions by 2045.



## Sun's Shining Thanks to Solar Home Savings

The Allan Labor Government has helped thousands of families slash an annual \$279 million off their energy bills – with more than five million individual solar panels installed on rooftops, thanks to our Solar Homes program.

Solar Homes has delivered over 2 gigawatts of solar capacity across Victoria – close to double the capacity of Yallourn and nearly as much as Loy Yang A.

The program represents 13 per cent of the total renewable capacity installed in the state, with its solar panels having cumulatively generated 6.5 gigawatt hours of power – enough cheap renewable energy to power every fridge in Victoria for almost two years.

The program has seen 350,000 solar panel, hot water, and solar battery systems installed through rebates and interest-free loans.

The last 12 months have been Solar Homes' biggest, with 7,873 approved applications last month – including 4,435 rooftop solar approvals and 3,125 solar hot water approvals.

Eligible households can access a \$1,400 rebate to install solar panels, a further \$1,400 interest free loan and a further rebate of up to \$1,000 to replace their hot water system – cutting \$3,800 from upfront installation costs.

Customers who maximise their solar can save around \$1,000 each year on their energy bill. Combined with hot water, heat pump savings can be up to \$1,400 a year or at least \$1,600 with a battery.

Melbourne's western suburbs have overwhelmingly embraced the sun's power with 44 per cent of homes in Tarneit, Truganina, Werribee and Hoppers Crossing having installed solar. In regional Victoria, Mildura and Shepparton have the highest solar uptake closely followed by Wodonga, Wangaratta and Wallan.

Victorians are taking control of their energy bills with solar now installed on 30 per cent of Victorian homes – a significant increase from 14 per cent when the Solar Homes program started six years ago. Since then, the program has also supported 5,500 jobs and delivered free training for plumbers and electricians to upskill.

Households and businesses will continue to be empowered to lower their energy bills by installing solar through Solar Victoria, and increasing energy efficiency through programs such as Victorian Energy Upgrades.

To ensure that the benefits of this massive investment in Victoria are shared equitably VicGrid is collaborating with landowners, local communities and Traditional Owners on the way renewable energy infrastructure – including transmission – is planned and developed.

An orderly transition is critical to keeping the lights on and energy prices down as Victoria moves towards its world leading climate target of net zero by 2045. Although this transition is complex, the plan demonstrates that Victoria is well prepared for a future that is cleaner, cheaper and renewable.

To view the statement visit, [energy.vic.gov.au/industry/victorias-electricity-future](https://energy.vic.gov.au/industry/victorias-electricity-future)



## More than 500,000 Containers Recycled as Part of the CDS

Victorians in every corner of the state are embracing the Allan Labor Government's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in record numbers – having returned more than 500 million cans and bottles to be recycled.

Victorians continue to step up to the challenge in record numbers, returning an average of 138 containers per transaction with CDS Vic processing around 17 million cans, cartons and bottles statewide every week.

Containers collected through CDS Vic can be transformed into all kinds of new things, including material for roads, furniture, construction, textiles and more – creating new economic opportunities that will support more than 600 jobs across Victoria.

Thanks to the generosity of Victorians, more than \$260,000 has already been donated to the scheme's 3000 participating charity partners - including Citizen Blue in Williamstown, Scouts Victoria in Glen Waverley and Envirobank in Kangaroo Flat and East Bendigo.

The Labor Government has invested a record \$515 million to transform the Victoria's waste and recycling system, driving progress towards the target of diverting 80 per cent of all waste away from landfill by 2030.

Victorians are now able to return eligible drink containers to around 600 refund points across the state. To find your nearest refund point and for more information, visit [cdsvic.org.au](https://cdsvic.org.au).

**VICTORIA'S CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME**

**FIND YOUR NEAREST COLLECTION POINT**

**SCAN ME!**

# Melbourne Highland Games & Celtic Festival 2025 will be the Biggest One Yet!

The Melbourne Highland Games & Celtic Festival takes place every year, but 2025 will see it host the 2025 International Heavy Games thanks to funding from the Allan Labor Government.

The festival is an important opportunity for people of Celtic heritage to come together and celebrate their culture, heritage and traditions. People travel from right around Australia to attend and we love the fact that the games are held in the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region at Eastfield Park in Croydon.

The festival commenced in 1967 and has been running for over 50 years, with so much to see and do including: Dancing, Pipe Bands, Heavy Events, Folk Music, Displays, Clans and Stalls and more! Coming from a long line of McGraws on my maternal side, it was good to reconnect with my ancestry.

I have been a proud sponsor of the festival since entering Parliament, and I have thoroughly enjoyed this display of culture and tradition.

The 2025 Highland Games will be held on the 23rd of March 2025 at Eastfield Park, Croydon.

To find out more about the 2025 festival, visit [melbournehighlandgames.org.au](http://melbournehighlandgames.org.au)



## More Outdoor Fun in Doncaster East Pinks Reserve

Kids and kids at heart can look forward to ramping up the fun at Doncaster East's newest playspace, outdoor court and fitness hub thanks to support from the Allan Labor Government.

I joined Manningham City Mayor, Cr Carli Lange earlier in 2024 to visit the new Cat Jump Park facilities, made possible by a more than \$248,000 investment from the Victorian Government's Local Sports Infrastructure Fund.

With more and more families wanting to get active in Manningham, the new areas feature a combination of sport and play elements catering for all ages and abilities.

A rope play, junior play unit and swings make up the new play area that's complemented by nearby paths. Upgrades also delivered 3 new outdoor fitness stations, and the installation of a new multi-use court line marked for basketball, netball and tennis.

Together they make a perfect spot for the community to come together to play, get fit, stay active or re-energise.



## More Local Musicians at Local Gigs

The Allan Labor Government is making sure the music we have coming, keeps coming ahead and that Victorian venues are filled with Victorian talent.

The Live music scene in Victoria over the next four years will see a \$10 million boost through two new Allan Labor Government programs – the Victorian Gig Fund and the Live Music Fund.

The Live Music fund will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to Victorian festival organisers to help stage new or existing events – creating more local jobs and attracting more music fans to Victoria.

The Victorian Gig Fund will provide grants of up to \$10,000 for established live music venues towards Victorian artists' fees for gigs at their venue.

The Victorian Gig Fund and Live Music Fund is on top of the \$2 million that the Allan Labor government has

already provided for Support Act – providing welfare to musicians and people in the music industry who need it the most.

The Allan Labor Government also values creating the next generation of Nick Cave's or Kylie Minogue's, which is why we're investing in music in schools through the SongMakers Program – run by APRA AMCOS the program is teaching kids in schools about songwriting and getting them involved in the production of music.

These targeted supports towards live music will create more jobs for Victorians and support live music venues, whilst also giving the opportunity to see more local acts close to where you live.

Victoria is the cultural capital, and our festivals and venues are the lifeblood of the Victorian art scene, and the Allan Labor Government is ensuring it stays that way.

## Pinks Reserve Sports Score a New Two Storey Pavilion

Local football, cricket and more at Pinks Reserve can enjoy a new home advantage thanks to the completion of the two-storey sports pavilion at the popular Kilsyth sporting hub.

I joined representatives from Yarra Ranges Council and local clubs to officially open the new Gary Tait pavilion, one of several recent upgrades at the reserve supported by a \$10.5 million investment from the Allan Labor Government's Local Sports Grants initiative.

With grassroots sports back in full swing, the new pavilion provides the perfect base for home clubs like the Kilsyth Football and Cricket Clubs to host the big events, expand on their junior and female teams, and take grassroots sport to the next level.

The Gary Tait pavilion has four female friendly change rooms, two umpires' change rooms, social room, as well as a first aid room, gymnasium facilities, a kiosk, and storage areas.

The first floor features a community social room with views of Pinks Reserve, a large semi-commercial kitchen and servery, a terrace, scorer rooms for each oval and there's also undercover spectator viewing areas.

It's not just local sports that benefit, nearby schools and community groups will also be able to use the pavilion for meetings and events.

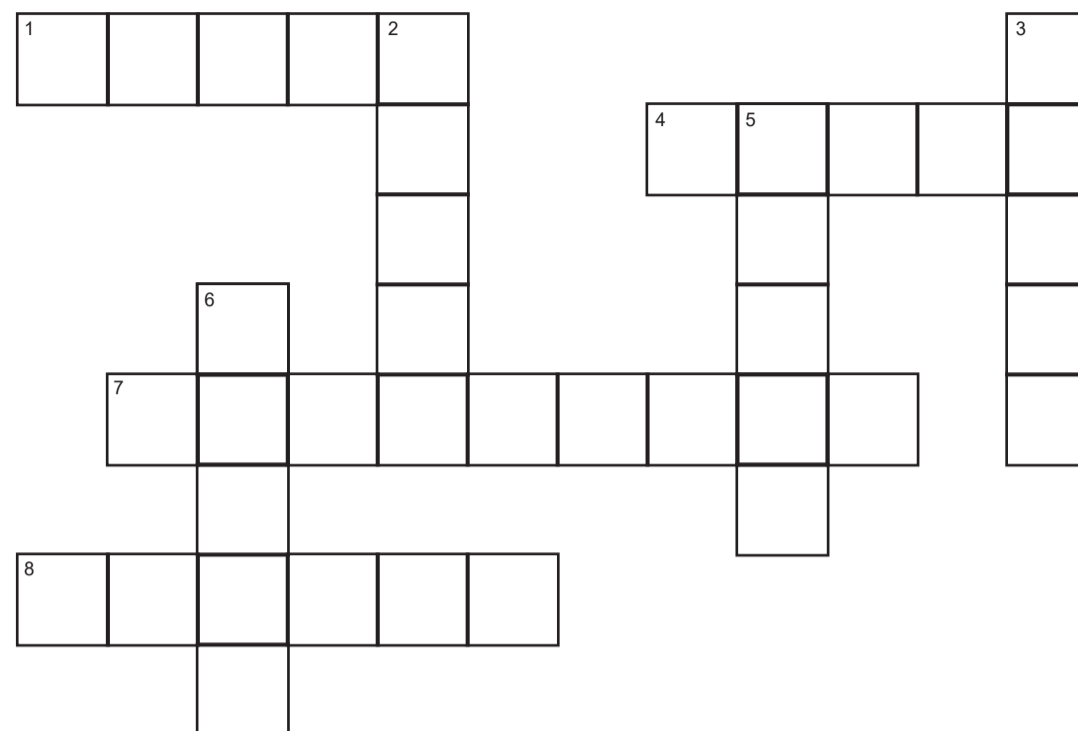
Other Government backed developments at Pinks Reserve include the recently completed netball court covers, an upgrade to the lighting on the softball field and new softball batting cage, plus an extension of the Kilsyth Basketball Stadium featuring a new competition court. All reserve upgrades are expected to be completed in 2024.

The Victorian Government has invested more than \$1.9 billion in community sport and active recreation infrastructure over the past decade.

For more information about infrastructure grant opportunities available through the Victorian Government visit [sport.vic.gov.au](http://sport.vic.gov.au)



### Crossword - Our Local Area



#### Across

1. Australian Olympic snowboarder, Scotty \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Szubanski, famous actress and comedian that grew up in Croydon North.
7. Film that was made in Whipstick Gully Quarry, Pound Bend, Warrandyte State Park.
8. Brett \_\_\_\_\_ grew up in Croydon and was Victoria's Chief Health Officer

#### Down

2. Wonga Park named after elder of the Wurundjeri indigenous people, \_\_\_\_\_ Wonga
3. William \_\_\_\_\_ was born in Brushy Creek and was a significant aboriginal artist and influential spokesperson for aboriginal justice.
5. The 100 \_\_\_\_\_ is a natural bush reserve where you can go horse riding, dog walking, jogging and walking.
6. Mountain in Wonga Park, Mt \_\_\_\_\_.

# Doggos of the North-Eastern Metro Region



Sonja with Daisy at the Celebrating Superheroes Festival in Croydon

Sonja with a Scottish Deerhound at the Melbourne Highland Games Festival

\* not named - other dogs we've met at festivals and dog parks across the North-Eastern Metro Region

Sonja and Don with Zeus at the Warrandyte RSL on ANZAC Day

## Sharing Stories to Stop Scammers

The Allan Labor Government is urging Victorians to share their scam stories as new data shows that investment, romance and false billing scams are the most common across the state.

Data from the National Anti-Scam Centre shows that Victorians lost \$76.5 million from almost 70,000 scams in the 2023-24 financial year. Consumers across the state lost \$44.8 million to investment scams, \$6.2 million to romance scams and \$6 million to false billing scams.

Investment scammers typically offer 'get rich quick' schemes and investments based on 'secret' information or special software. They may claim to predict the outcomes of sports or share trading, but after the victims pay their expensive fees, the claims of past performance and guarantees about future results turn out to be false.

Scams are a crime and the only person at fault is the scammer, not the victim. Victims sharing their story can help law enforcement and consumer protection agencies trace and disrupt scams.

While anyone can fall victim to a scam, there are some ways Victorians can protect themselves from an investment scam:

- Do not make investment decisions under pressure.
- Ask for written information and always get independent financial advice.
- Check that the company is registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and that the advisor is a licensed financial advisor.

Scams Awareness Week runs from 26 August to 30 August. This year's theme is 'Share a story, stop a scam.'

If someone thinks they have been scammed, they should contact their bank or financial institution as soon as possible, before contacting local police and reporting the matter to Consumer Affairs Victoria at [consumer.vic.gov.au/reportascam](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/reportascam)

## Digital Drivers Licences Hit the Million Mark

More than one million Victorians have activated a digital drivers licence on their smartphone since they were launched by the Allan Labor Government in May this year.

Digital drivers licences are convenient and optional, with more than one-in-five eligible licence holders accessing their driver, motorcycle, and heavy vehicle licences safely and securely via the myVicRoads and Service Victoria apps.

Since its launch, tens of thousands of Victorians activate their digital drivers licence each week, with the strong take up expected to continue when digital drivers licences become available for learner and probationary drivers this summer.

Feedback from Victorians has been overwhelmingly positive, with ease of use and convenience being the most common reasons for people embracing the technology.

Digital drivers licences feature a time sensitive unique QR code embedded at the top of the licence, an inbuilt dynamic hologram of the Victorian Coat of Arms, a pull to refresh function, and an ability for the user to select the level of personal information they share on the screen.

Security measures that protect licence holders also provide confidence to authorities and businesses that digital licences are authentic and regularly updated. Digital drivers licences automatically display if a licence is no longer valid but can still be used to prove identity or age for up to two years.

Visit the VicRoads or Service Victoria websites to find out more about the digital drivers licence.

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET YOUR DIGITAL DRIVERS LICENCE ON THE SERVICEVIC APP ON YOUR PHONE**



## Hundreds of New Homes Delivered in Croydon



Hundreds of residents are moving into brand new homes in Croydon following completion of one of the biggest housing projects being delivered as part of the Allan Labor Government's Big Housing Build.

I got to visit the site with Minister for Housing Harriet Shing to meet new residents living at the \$57 million development on Lusher Road.

The Croydon site is the largest development to be completed under Social Housing Growth Fund for around 3,300 new social housing homes across Victoria.

The development features 137 new social and affordable units, which will give up to 250 people on the Victorian Housing Register a place to call home, with more than 60 households already moved in.

The new one, two, three and four-bedroom homes are modern and energy efficient, meaning renters will be warm in winter and cool in summer while saving on their power bills.

The site also features a communal garden courtyard and secure basement car park and bicycle spaces and is walking distance from the local shopping plaza and Eastfield Park.

The Labor Government is focused on putting the voices and needs of renters first, through a partnership with Community Housing Limited who will host community activities based on the interests of residents at Lusher Road.

As part of the landmark Big Housing Build and other projects, the Labor Government is delivering more than 145 new homes in the Maroondah local government area.

Once complete, the Big Housing Build will deliver more than 12,000 new homes across Victoria, with an additional \$1 billion for more than 1300 new social and affordable homes in rural and regional Victoria.

**Sonja**  
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