

MEDIA RELEASE – MARCH 13, 2025

State Budget must prioritise funding of early intervention support to help Victorians to flourish: Jesuit Social Services

The Victorian Government’s 2025-26 State Budget must prioritise the funding, or re-funding, of critical services that support marginalised people and communities to flourish, says Jesuit Social Services.

The organisation’s recently published Victorian Pre-Budget Submission 2025-26 highlights that complex challenges such as housing insecurity, family violence and mental health problems compound current cost-of-living pressures and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, in turn driving up demand for community service organisations and supports.

“We acknowledge that there are significant budgetary pressures on all levels of Government at the moment, and that there are many competing demands on limited resources,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

“However, we are deeply concerned by funding cuts to services including employment programs run by Jesuit Social Services that have demonstrated a significant reduction in crime.

“The result of this will be more marginalised people slipping through the cracks, and potentially putting more strain on our criminal justice systems and health systems. Every dollar spent on social services is a dollar spent on building a more equitable Victoria, one where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.”

In its submission, Jesuit Social Services calls for continued funding for the Jobs Victoria Mentors Service, which supports people with justice system involvement into employment. Since July 2023, nearly 120 people have been supported into employment through this program.

“Crime and how to best respond to people who do get into trouble is, rightly, one of the most important issues in the state at the moment. Fewer than 10 per cent of people who’ve been supported into work by this program have re-offended within 6 months – substantially lower than the overall recidivism rate which is closer to 47 per cent. This demonstrates the vital role that services like ours play in supporting people onto positive pathways.

“Additionally, the after hours component of our Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS) which we’ve operated since 2008 is currently only funded until the end of June 2025. YJCSS provides intensive support to children and young people aged 10–21 who are involved with the youth justice system, working to reduce re-offending build their capacity of participant to lead productive lives.”

Other recommendations in Jesuit Social Services’ Victorian pre-Budget submission 2025-26 include:

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- Replicate the Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility model in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria to provide supports to people released from custody, including to particularly vulnerable cohorts (including women and young people aged 18- 25) to reduce the number of people exiting prison into homelessness. This is an effective model with significant scope for scaling up: men supported by the facility are 30 per cent less likely to reoffend compared to those leaving prison without similar housing and supports
- Funding to implement an evidence-informed Alternative Service Model to support young Victorians to stay out of the justice system
- Invest in a violence prevention workforce strategy that foregrounds working with men and boys across a range of settings
- Invest in enhanced collection of higher quality data relating to perpetration of violence, including its extent, dynamics and drivers, so we know where to invest to reduce violence against women and children
- Increase investment in public housing, reduce waiting lists, and target access for those in the most critical need, including people leaving prison; young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; women and children who need to leave violent situations; and people with complex needs, including mental ill-health and cognitive disabilities.

“We know that early intervention and prevention are key to addressing the underlying causes of disadvantage, and that this Victorian Budget is an opportunity to make targeted, evidence-informed investments that support stronger, more cohesive communities for us all.”

Read Jesuit Social Services’ Victorian pre-Budget submission [here](#).

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