

VCOSS

State Budget Submission 2010 - 11
Executive Summary

Equity



Contents

Overview	2
Children and families	5
Climate change, energy and water	8
Community sector sustainability	11
Disability	15
Education and early childhood development	18
Health and wellbeing	22
Housing	26
Human Rights	29
Transport	30
Young people	32
References	36

Overview

'It is simply not acceptable that we should snap back to where we were before – when we know that the pre-recession economy was neither sustainable, nor just.'

Julia Unwin, CEO, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Making Victoria the best place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family requires renewed State Government commitment to promote and protect our social infrastructure. As the impacts of the Global Financial Crisis and the 2009 Victorian bushfires recede, serious challenges remain, including a changing climate and rapid population growth. It is now essential that the Victorian Government strengthen its long held commitment to promoting economic growth and social equity.

Work by UK Professor of Medical Epidemiology Professor Richard Wilkinson demonstrates that it is reductions in social inequality – not increases in average incomes – that drive improved social outcomes across the whole community.¹ At a time when State revenues may be weakened by the Global Financial Crisis, this highlights the critical importance of focusing the Budget on building strong social foundations for all Victorians.

This would also accord with the *Action for Victoria's Future*² underlying principle of 'addressing disadvantage', which clearly commits all government agencies, not just those focussed on delivering targeted programs for vulnerable Victorians, to addressing disadvantage and ensuring equity.

The significant issues facing Victoria include the economy, climate change, population growth, and changing population demographics. In this submission, VCOSS has prioritised strategies to strengthen Victoria's social infrastructure so the State is in the best position to respond to these challenges.

The overriding need to prioritise social equity and social cohesion, particularly by strengthening opportunities for workforce and education participation, is the key theme underlying the analysis and recommendations of this Budget submission.

Victoria's economic challenge

The Global Financial Crisis has changed the rules, creating a higher level of uncertainty and stress for individuals and families that will continue to grow along with unemployment.³ This increased stress is compounding other pressures – such as housing affordability – which cumulatively are contributing to increasing family breakdowns, family violence, child protection notifications, homelessness, financial stress and community violence.

To ensure this stress does not leave a legacy of permanent damage, the Victorian Government needs to deliver the necessary support and opportunities to ensure vulnerable Victorians can participate in the Victorian economy.

Key investments to achieve this include:

- Intervening earlier and better to support vulnerable Victorian families,
- Investing in alternative housing for all Victorian families living in rooming houses,
- Developing a plan to address health equity,
- Investing in the sustainability of the community sector,
- Protecting vulnerable people from the impacts of climate change,
- Strengthening public transport on the urban fringe and in regional and rural Victoria, and
- Investing in Victoria's young people.

Victoria's climate change challenge

The 2009 Victorian bushfires highlight the profound challenges Victoria faces as a consequence of climate change. As the proximity of the January heatwave to the February bushfires tragically demonstrated, a hotter, drier and windier Victorian climate increases the likelihood of multiple emergencies occurring simultaneously and across large geographic areas. Serial events of this type have a cumulative impact both on Victorians and their communities, and on emergency, health and community services.

The Victorian community sector played a key role in the response to the fires, demonstrating its critical role in making communities stronger and more resilient.

Victoria's population growth challenge

Victoria's significant and sustained population growth over the past six years, and the anticipated continued growth, demands strategic short and long-term responses that must also account for the realities of a changing climate. VCOSS urges the Government to recommit to urban consolidation and sustainability and to developing communities in which access to services, jobs, affordable housing and transport are all 'planned in'.

Different population growth patterns across the State mean different responses are needed in different locations. While Victoria's average population growth has been at 1.8 per cent since 2007,⁴ it is more than double this in some regional areas and more than triple in many outer metropolitan areas.⁵ With funding for services in these areas not keeping pace, disadvantage is becoming entrenched. VCOSS urges the Government to focus on sustainable urban planning and investments in community and health services and in transport to address concentrations of disadvantage.

Victoria's demographic challenge

Victoria's demographic challenges are also evident in the ageing of our population, a major factor in the increased incidence of disability. In order to enable people with disabilities and older Victorians to access social and economic opportunities, a step-up in the level of investment in accessible public transport and the built environment is needed.

The recent 'baby bounce' – in which 2007 marked the fourth consecutive year of rising birth rates in Victoria⁶ – highlights the importance of investing in children to

ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential. In 2010-11, VCOSS challenges the Government to break the link between parental income and educational outcomes – which currently indicate our education system is reinforcing, rather than addressing, disadvantage. To meet this challenge the Government needs to both ensure that families receive support whenever they need it, and better protect and support children experiencing disadvantage.

Building strong social foundations for all Victorians

The challenges to be addressed in 2010-11 require a courageous Government committed to stewardship. As this Government enters its second decade, its previous investment in strengthening our community makes it well placed to embrace these challenges and continue this legacy.

Now is the time for a combination of not only tough State Budget decisions, but also tough regulatory, policy and service reform to achieve an equitable, socially cohesive, and sustainable state.

Chapters on priority policy areas and 2010-11 State Budget recommendations follow. VCOSS looks forward to engaging with members of the Victorian Government to discuss these proposals.

Children and families



Ensuring Victorian children and families emerge stronger and more resilient from the economic downturn requires investing in safety nets and integrated services and supports that are available to families when they need them. The evidence demonstrates that investing in providing children with a strong foundation early on delivers far greater benefits, both to those children and to the whole community.

Many Victorian families are only receiving a service once they reach crisis point. The service is often unable to fully engage with the breadth of their issues, which can include combinations of mental health problems, disability, drug and alcohol abuse and family violence. In building equal social foundations, it is critical that the Victorian Government invest in providing support to families whenever and wherever they need it.

Stronger support for Victorian families: Investing in a comprehensive family services system

For the family services system to be most effective, vulnerable families need to be connected to services as early as possible, for as long as required. A strong and well-funded family services sector needs to be at the core of this support system for Victorian children and families.

1. VCROSS proposes that the Victorian Government better support Victorian children and their families by:
 - a. Continuing to invest in the child protection workforce, including in professional development opportunities for staff,
 - b. Funding family services at the new agreed 'unit price',
 - c. Increasing investment in early intervention family support services,
 - d. Funding the development and maintenance of *Child FIRST* networks, similar to the model used for *Primary Care Partnerships*, and
 - e. Adopting a population-based funding model to resource family services in growth areas.

Culturally competent services for Indigenous children, young people and families

Family services that effectively support Indigenous families are key to 'closing the gap' in outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. Strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to provide services and advocacy for Indigenous wellbeing, and of mainstream organisations to lift their cultural competence, is critical to achieving this. Adequate investment in partnerships between Indigenous organisations and generalist services is also necessary to enhance service delivery and ensure shared responsibility for 'closing the gap'.

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government better support and promote the wellbeing of Indigenous children, young people, families and organisations by:
 - a. Resourcing the implementation of the *Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework* to all funded community sector organisations,
 - b. Investing in building and sustaining partnerships between Aboriginal community-controlled and mainstream organisations, and
 - c. Investing in the capacity of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations by resourcing policy and advocacy capacity, funding cultural input into service delivery and increasing the number of Koorie *Child FIRST* workers.

Continuing to invest in out-of-home care

Outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care, and for young people transitioning from out-of-home care, continue to be poorer than those of the general child population.⁷ Demand for out-of-home care places is also increasing at an unprecedented rate.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Government increase investment and support for children and young people in out-of-home care and those transitioning out by:
 - a. Continuing to invest in the out-of-home care reforms announced in the 2009-10 State Budget, and
 - b. Developing the current model of information provision and referral for young people transitioning from out-of-home care into a more substantial model of service delivery that includes increased brokerage money, active case management and earlier and more flexible program responses.

Supporting Forgotten Australians

The Victorian Government's recent commitment to support older care leavers, known as the 'Forgotten Australians', is an important step in correcting the past mistakes of the state care system.

4. VCOSS proposes that the Victoria Government implements a redress scheme for older care-leavers, known as the 'Forgotten Australians', which adopts the best aspects of other states' schemes.



Climate change, energy and water

Victoria is on the front-line of climate change, facing a future with water scarcity, longer and more severe droughts, heatwaves and greater risks of bushfire and floods. The impacts and the costs are already, and will continue to be, unevenly distributed across Victoria. Low income earners and disadvantaged communities are likely to be affected first and worst.

Building equity and resilience into our climate change responses now will mean that all Victorians will be better equipped to deal with the impacts of climate change and reduce carbon pollution.

Supporting communities: resilience and change

A number of Victorian communities are facing significant additional impacts from climate change, including those affected by drought, water scarcity, industry change and greater risk of flood and fires. Inclusive and equitable transition planning with a focus on sustainable employment and access to quality services will be critical for these communities, as will increasing concessions to mitigate the impact of energy costs.

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government support capacity and resilience in communities experiencing ongoing stress from drought and climate change by:
 - a. Refunding drought support positions and flexible local drought support funds, and
 - b. Supporting inclusive and equitable transition planning for communities facing significant impacts from climate change and related structural adjustment.

Energy and water efficiency

While many households are already taking action to reduce their energy and water use, low income households are less likely to have energy efficient or water saving appliances. These households are also more likely to be renting and often do not have the financial capacity to invest in efficiency.⁸ Assisting households to increase the energy and water efficiency of their housing could offset some of the anticipated price rises for energy and water services, as well as improving the comfort and amenity of the property.

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government assist low income households to improve the energy and water efficiency of their housing by:
 - a. Providing additional funding to the Office of Housing to upgrade the energy and water efficiency of all public housing properties by 2015,

- b. Building on existing household efficiency programs for low income households to ensure a coordinated, flexible and where appropriate, brokered package of services is available to all low income households regardless of tenure type, and
- c. Expanding the *Home Wise* program to include the installation of the most energy-efficient cooling appliances or enabling the maintenance, repair or replacement of existing cooling for people at risk of heatwave.

Affordability and concessions

Access to essential water, electricity and gas services is fundamental to secure a basic standard of living for all Victorians. In recent years, energy and water costs have increased well above the rate of inflation⁹ and the indexation of government income support.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government ensure all households can maintain access to an adequate supply of essential water, electricity and gas by:
 - a. Removing the volumetric cap on the current 50 per cent water concession,
 - b. Extending the *Water Wise* program to all households who have previously received the carted water rebate,
 - c. Better promoting the carted water rebate to ensure all low income households without reticulated water are able to access relevant concessions and rebates, and
 - d. Off-setting the impact of the cost of smart metering infrastructure and rising energy costs by increasing the winter energy concession to 20 per cent.

Emergency management

The impacts of the 2009 Victorian bushfires clearly demonstrated the need for improved planning, coordination, partnership and communication at the local level and across Government, for all types of emergencies. In particular, the impacts on vulnerable communities have been profound, highlighting the need to ensure improved access to adequate support services for those at higher risk during emergencies.

4. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government ensure that Victorian emergency management arrangements adequately supports people at higher risk by:
 - a. Providing additional funding for state wide coverage of full-time emergency planning and recovery managers within local government to strengthen engagement with the community services sector and vulnerable groups within communities,
 - b. Adequately funding the implementation of recommendations from reviews of emergency management procedures, including those for relief centres, emergency relief coordination, communication to vulnerable communities and relocation,

- c. Providing funding for the upgrade of all designated Victorian relief centres to ensure that they are fully accessible, as well as energy and water efficient, and
- d. Providing additional funding for the implementation and ongoing evaluation of local heatwave planning to ensure the provision of additional support services to those who require them during heatwaves.

Health

The January 2009 heatwaves contributed to the death of at least 374 Victorians and placed unprecedented strain on our health system, energy and transport infrastructure.¹⁰ While the Victorian Government has taken some action to address the health impacts of climate change and associated adaptation, additional measures are required to ensure that this action is effective in the long term.

- 5. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government build Victoria's capacity to manage the health risks of climate change by providing additional funding for implementing existing research recommendations and ongoing evaluation.

Community services and facilities

Ensuring that essential public services are able to function in extreme weather and manage increased costs associated with climate change will be critical to minimising the impacts of climate change on vulnerable Victorians.

- 6. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government assist community organisations to reduce their environmental impact and exposure to higher energy and water prices by:
 - a. Expanding existing government programs to deliver training and support in environmental management to community sector organisations, and
 - b. Creating a fund to support community sector organisations to access comprehensive environmental auditing, efficiency infrastructure, training and risk management planning.

Community sector sustainability



Community sector organisations (CSOs) are at the forefront of providing support for vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians and play a critical role in strengthening community resilience, particularly in times of adversity. This role has been clearly evident in 2009 as organisations responded to the Victorian bushfires and people dealing with the fall-out from the Global Financial Crisis.

CSOs have also suffered direct financial losses because of the financial crisis, from reduced investment returns and reductions in philanthropic grants and corporate and donor giving. It is vital that the sustainability of the community sector be supported to help disadvantaged Victorians bounce back during these difficult times.

Standardisation of indexation across government

Adequate indexation of funding is essential to keep pace with costs. Without adequate indexation, declining value means organisations must either cut back on service delivery or subsidise government resources with other revenue.

1. VCROSS proposes that the Victorian Government adopt a standard price indexation rate across all government-funded community sector programs based on movements in the Wage Price Index and Melbourne Consumer Price Index.

Sustainable pricing

For community sector organisations to provide high quality services and supports to Victorians they need to be funded at levels that reflect the full cost of quality service delivery. This is rarely the case.

The problem of partially funding services has been recognised by the Department of Human Services with the adoption of the *Price Review Framework* in October 2007, however many areas of health and human services are yet to have started or scheduled a price review more than two years after the adoption of the framework.

For sectors that have participated in a price review, there is no guarantee that the outcomes will be funded, and a real risk that services will simply be cut back.¹¹

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government support community sector organisations to deliver high quality services by:
 - a. Providing resources to community sector organisations to fully participate in the price review process, and
 - b. Fully funding the outcomes of price reviews in the event of unit prices not being sufficient to maintain current levels of service delivery.

Emergency response

Community sector organisations have experienced significant extra demand as a consequence of fires, through increased client caseload or increased complexity due to the multiple stress factors experienced by clients. Community sector organisations are delivering some of this extra demand unfunded, and many staff members are working volunteer as well as paid hours.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government increase emergency and recovery funding to enable community sector organisations to:
 - a. Participate in emergency planning,
 - b. Respond to the immediate needs of the community during and after an emergency, and
 - c. Provide ongoing support services for at least two years.

Workforce strengthening strategies

Currently, opportunities to improve community sector service quality are being compromised by recruitment and retention issues that reflect a lack of a sector-wide workforce strategy and relatively poor working conditions. VCOSS proposes the Government address these challenges by investing in more sustainable funding, in a portable long service leave system and in the skills and capacity of the community sector.

Portable long service leave

VCOSS, and many other peak bodies and community sector agencies, support the introduction of portable long service leave in principle, considering it an important plank of a broader strategy to build depth of skills by improving retention.

The following features are necessary in a sustainable portable long service leave model:

- **Adequate pricing** - the 'unit price' of funded services needs to be adjusted to reflect the full cost of long service leave, including the additional costs of portability.
 - **Administrative ease** - the model should be set up to enable organisations to 'outsource' all long service leave responsibilities to the central fund, not simply those entitlements under the *Long Service Leave Act 1992*.
 - **Scope** - There needs to be clear criteria and a clear mechanism for determining who is 'in' and who is 'out'.
4. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government commits funding to the portable long service leave scheme to deliver a benefit to workers without impacting on the sustainability of services.

Community services workforce capability framework

VCOSS welcomes the work undertaken by the Office for the Community Sector to develop the *Community Services Workforce Capability Framework* as a valuable tool for community organisations, particularly for small organisations with limited human resources capacity.

5. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government extend funding for the *Community Services Workforce Capability Framework* to ensure its implementation state wide.

Addressing the impact of skills reform on the sector

Providing high quality services to all Victorians relies on the community sector workforce being able to engage in skills development across their careers. However, the recent reforms of Victoria's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector through the *Securing Jobs for Your Future: Skills for Victoria* policy, have the potential to exacerbate challenges to worker recruitment and retention.

Imposing VET course fees also creates additional costs for CSOs, especially where training for staff is mandatory.

6. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government invest in a highly skilled community sector workforce by:
- a. Providing resources to community sector organisations to pay for staff and volunteer VET qualifications, particularly those qualifications that are required by legislative and funding requirements,
 - b. Substantially subsidising fees for training and qualifications in community sector fields,
 - c. Investing in evaluating and monitoring the impacts of the reforms on the community sector, and
 - d. Maintaining the fees for those eligible for concession at January 2009 rates.

Capacity building support service for the community sector¹²

The *Victorian Government Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations* commits to 'broadening and expanding the range of information and support services available to community organisations to help them meet challenges of performance, long-term strategy and capacity development.'¹³ VCOSS Clearinghouse and PilchConnect provide organisational support services that meet this need, including management, governance, financial, legal, and information technology support to Victorian community organisations on a free or low-cost basis.

Both services have been a demonstrated success, leveraging far more support than they are funded to deliver. Despite this success neither service has ongoing funding to sustain and grow their organisation and service provision.

7. VCOSS and PilchConnect propose that the Victorian Government invest \$3.2 million over four years to expand the VCOSS Training and Development Clearinghouse to:
 - a. Continue the current service and expand its reach to arts, sports and environment organisations,
 - b. Deliver niche services to identified topic and sub-sector areas, some of which could be self-funding, for example, finance and occupational health and safety, and
 - c. Incubate a community sector information and communication technology support service.
8. VCOSS and PilchConnect propose that the Victorian Government invest \$400,000 per year over four years to enable PilchConnect to run a full service and to build and position the service to go national.

Disability

Increasing the social and economic participation of people with disabilities drives economic growth, enhances productivity and gives people with disabilities greater choice and control over their lives. Yet service gaps and lack of access to key infrastructure means many people with disabilities cannot participate fully.

Choice, empowerment and equipment for people with a disability

VCOSS welcomes the Victorian Government's ongoing investment in individual support packages as this creates exciting new opportunities for people to have more control over the services they use. However this policy shift also brings along with it the risk of exploitation by unscrupulous service providers and requires a series of focussed investments to support the provision of services delivering genuine choice and opportunities.

Facilitating sufficient access to information and services, the coordination of shared services, improved social and infrastructure planning and greater resources for aids and equipment would maximise the benefits of individual support packages, as well as providing Government with a greater return on investment.

Housing choices

A lack of appropriate accommodation options trap many people with disability in their families' homes well beyond the age that most people choose to live independently. Supported accommodation has an important place in the spectrum of housing options, but is greatly undersupplied and even when available, often compromises tenants' capacity to exercise choice and control.

A strategic review and reorientation of disability accommodation in Victoria is needed to meet current and future accommodation demands. Any reorientation would need to link up available support and suitable accommodation options across the whole gamut of disability housing, public housing and throughout the private market.

A stronger justice system

People with disabilities, particularly mental illness, brain injuries and other cognitive impairments, are grossly over-represented in the justice system. However, very few justice programs are tailored to address the particular needs of people with disabilities.

Stronger investment is needed to integrate improved justice programs into generalist disability services, such as focussed court responses, programs in prisons, and diversionary and rehabilitation programs.

Supporting a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Under the existing system of funding and supports for people with a disability, the cause of how a person acquires a disability is of greater significance than the effect, leading to inequality in the treatment of people with similar disabilities but different causes of injury.

One option for providing more sustainable long-term funding for people who have an acquired disability is a national disability insurance scheme. This would extend the existing no-fault insurance system to cover all people who are catastrophically injured.



Recommendations

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government invest in the rights of people with disabilities to have choice and control over their own lives by:
 - a. Investing in individual support packages to ensure that all Victorians with a disability can access a package when required,
 - b. Investing in individualised supports and services to account for inflation, growth in demand and the findings of the price review process undertaken by the Department of Human Services regarding the pricing of disability services,
 - c. Investing in consumer protections for people with a disability, including enhancing resourcing to the independent advocacy sector,
 - d. Resourcing the provision of independent information about disability service options,
 - e. Ensuring that all social and infrastructure planning mechanisms take into account the requirements of people with a disability,
 - f. Developing coordinated shared use of services and supports,
 - g. Committing sufficient additional recurrent funding to the *Victorian Aids and Equipment* program to close the gap between subsidy levels and the real cost of aids and equipment and to account for inflation and demand growth,
 - h. Committing resources to a long term plan for disability support and accommodation, to be developed in partnership with the non-government disability and housing sectors,
 - i. Increasing investment in court responses, diversionary and rehabilitation programs, accommodation and treatment communities in prisons, and
 - j. Committing to support and invest in a future national disability insurance scheme if required.

Education and early childhood development

In Victoria, educational outcomes remain closely linked to parental income.¹⁴ This indicates that our education system is reinforcing, rather than addressing disadvantage. Reversing this trend is at the centre of the challenge to improve equity in our community.

The research demonstrates that quality, accessible and integrated education and early childhood education and care can successfully break inter-generational cycles of disadvantage, as well as build community capacity.

Investing in integrated service delivery and partnerships

Research demonstrates that integrated services deliver improved outcomes for children and families.¹⁵ VCROSS continues to support the Victorian Government's commitment to integrated service delivery, particularly the emphasis on collaborations between schools and integrated children's and family services.

To facilitate a successful integrated service system, resources must be provided to build and maintain partnerships, to deliver governance support and professional development and to continually improve infrastructure.

1. VCROSS proposes that the Victorian Government resource and support an integrated system of service delivery by:
 - a. Funding the development of a network of 'social outcomes brokers' to work at the local level to build and facilitate links and partnerships between schools, early childhood services, parents and community organisations,
 - b. Investing in governance supports for integrated services,
 - c. Funding professional development for early childhood, schools and the community sector on integrated service delivery,
 - d. Continuing to invest in integrated children's centres, and
 - e. Providing funding to schools, early childhood services and community agencies to participate in partnerships and integration similar to the *Primary Care Partnerships* model.



Early childhood development

For the full potential of the recent years' policy and regulatory reforms to be realised, the Victorian Government needs to invest in the qualifications, professional development and leadership capacity of the early childhood workforce.

Further investment in early childhood education programs is also necessary to enable Victoria to meet the Federal target of 'universal access' to four-year-old programs by 2013.

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government strengthen early childhood services by:
 - a. Investing in the early childhood workforce's qualifications including facilitating re-entry to study, professional development and leadership capacity,
 - b. Improving capacity, access and affordability of early childhood services to ensure that Victoria can make the COAG 'universal access' commitments by 2013, and
 - c. Continuing to invest in capital infrastructure initiatives.

Support for all children and young people to achieve their full potential

Children and young people with additional needs

Recent research indicates that two in every three children and young people with a disability experience difficulty at school because they are not being supported adequately to participate in education.¹⁶ VCOSS believes systemic reform is needed to ensure education and early years support for children and young people with additional needs and their families are more inclusive and available.

Supporting Indigenous children and young people and their families to engage in education

Recent commitments and initiatives to better support the education of Indigenous children and young people require continued investment and evaluation by the Victorian Government if we are to 'close the gap' between the results of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.¹⁷ Engaging Indigenous parents and communities in the systems that are educating their children¹⁸ is critical to any successful strategy.

Indigenous children and young people in out-of-home care also require additional supports to ensure that they can remain engaged in education.

Improving outcomes for students experiencing or at-risk of homelessness

Children and young people who are experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness, often have poor educational outcomes, attributed to the range of pressures they experience, including: poverty, frequent moves that compromise connection to school, and family breakdown as a result of, or causing homelessness. These children and young people require intensive social and educational support to enable them to continue their learning.

The implementation of the *Homeless Education Strategy* not only requires significant investment in professional development, partnerships and the education costs of homeless students but also greater integration and strengthened links across all government policy and service areas.

Investing in flexible and alternative education and learning support

Currently in Victoria there is a lack of sustainable, funded strategies to keep young people engaged and re-engage them in learning. A diverse education system, rather than the current 'one-size fits all' approach, would better meet the needs of vulnerable young people. This would require the development of alternative curriculum and a re-orientation of what schools view as their purpose – moving to a more holistic approach of supporting a young person's learning and development.

Improving outcomes for students experiencing disadvantage by improving education affordability

The cost of education continues to be a barrier to the participation of students from low income families and exacerbates educational disadvantage. While steps toward improvements have been introduced, such as the *Education Maintenance Allowance*, and the recent reform of the *Parent Payment Policy* for government schools, these measures do not guarantee that education is affordable for all Victorians.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government better support all children and young people to achieve their full potential by:
 - a. Ensuring that all children with additional needs have access to universal education services by increasing funding levels and broadening the eligibility criteria of the *Program for Students with a Disability* and the *Kindergarten Inclusion Support Subsidy*,
 - b. Investing in a minimum of 1,000 additional Early Childhood Intervention Services places,
 - c. Investing in a key worker model to ensure that families with children with additional needs are adequately supported to navigate the service system,
 - d. Supporting the learning outcomes of Indigenous children and young people by continuing to invest in the implementation and evaluation of the *Wannik* strategy,
 - e. Investing in the Koorie Education Support workforce to ensure all Indigenous students can access education support,
 - f. Investing in parent engagement initiatives in all Koorie communities,
 - g. Investing in the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association Education Program,
 - h. Investing in the *Homeless Education* Strategy by funding professional development, partnerships, resources and the education costs of homeless students,
 - i. Adequately resourcing the outcomes of the current *Review of Alternative Education*,
 - j. Increasing investment in new and existing alternative education models through ongoing recurrent funding,
 - k. Investing in Learning Support Programs in all disadvantaged communities,
 - l. Improving education affordability by increasing resources to schools to guarantee that families are not charged for camps, excursions, textbooks, subject contributions, levies and consumables, and
 - m. Increasing funding for the *Student Resource Package*, particularly the equity funding component to reflect the true cost of delivery.

Health and wellbeing

Good health and wellbeing is fundamental to a person's quality of life and it brings substantial community and national benefits, including higher productivity and more connected local communities.

Achieving health equity

While Victorians generally have better health than other Australians, this masks significant health inequalities with socio-economic status continuing to be a strong predictor of health outcomes. The social determinants of health, such as housing, education, employment, transport and strong neighbourhoods, must be addressed to help close the gap in health outcomes and ensure a sustainable health system and active communities.¹⁹ Lack of access to services also contributes to poorer health outcomes and further entrenches inequality.

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government take action to promote health equity by developing a Health Equity Action Plan to drive the required system and program reforms across the full spectrum of health services, from health promotion to acute care, which addresses the different levels of inequality, including:
 - a. Inequality of *access* to support services,
 - b. Inequality of *opportunity* to access social and economic resources, and
 - c. Inequality of *impacts* and outcomes between population groups.

Improving Indigenous health and wellbeing

Indigenous Victorians continue to experience poorer health across all age groups and across all measures compared to non-Indigenous Victorians.²⁰ Currently, the life expectancy of Indigenous Australians is estimated to be 17 years lower than the general population.²¹

A significant and sustained cross-government investment is required to respond to the level and complexity of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Victorians. Strengthening the sustainability and capacity of Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations is particularly critical. The resourcing of mainstream organisations is also necessary to lift cultural competency and share responsibility for closing the gap by providing culturally competent services that are accessible to Indigenous Victorians.

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government progress its commitments to Indigenous Victorians to 'close the gap' by:
 - a. Investing in infrastructure at the local level to improve the facilities for Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations (ACCHOs),
 - b. Increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal Health Workers and the availability of training to support the expansion of the workforce,
 - c. Further strengthening the leadership and partnership capacity of ACCHOs, including resourcing a Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation CEO Network and building the management and partnership capacity of ACCHOs,
 - d. Providing appropriate care for pregnant Indigenous women through ensuring the development of culturally competent pregnancy services and birthing care in all ACCHOs, and
 - e. Developing and implementing training and quality improvement accreditation processes to ensure the cultural competence of health services, particularly hospitals and community health services.

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing

Mental illness accounts for an estimated 26 per cent of the total burden of disability in Victoria, and 60 per cent of the burden for people aged 15-34 years, making mental illness the third highest overall contributor to the burden of disease.

Research by the Boston Consulting Group has identified the potential savings in government spending from averting mental health conditions.²² This evidence highlights the need for investment in early intervention and outreach services, particularly in outer metropolitan and rural and regional areas, where services are scarce and difficult to access. It is vitally important that mental health services reach those with the greatest needs, including children and young people and people living in drought and bushfire affected communities.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government better promote the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians by:
 - a. Increasing investment in community-based early intervention mental health services, particularly in rural and regional areas, outer metropolitan areas, and those areas affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires,
 - b. Increasing funding for outreach services to recognise the full cost of providing such services,
 - c. Prioritising the *Because Mental Health Matters* priorities that are targeted at children, particularly those in the middle years aged nine to 14, and
 - d. Resourcing community sector organisations to strengthen collaborative partnerships to better coordinate care for Victorians with complex needs.

Preventing and managing chronic disease

*'The link between poor health and poverty is startling, with the highest burden of chronic disease experienced by the poorest Victorians. Those with the least resources suffer the most illness, pain, chronic disease and reduced life expectancy.'*²³

A Fairer Victoria, 2009

To most effectively halt the burgeoning crisis of chronic disease, the Victorian Government needs to shift "the curve of health spending towards prevention".²⁴

4. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government shift to a wellness model that focuses on prevention and early intervention for chronic disease by:
 - a. Investing in health promotion initiatives around alcohol, smoking, and diet and activity that are targeted at specific population groups, particularly low socio-economic groups and Indigenous Victorians,
 - b. Increasing investment in primary health supports, including resourcing community health services to employ and train more multi-disciplinary teams to better prevent and respond to chronic disease,
 - c. Providing resources to trial the Expanded Chronic Care model,
 - d. Extending the *Early Intervention in Chronic Disease Program* to all Victorian community health services, and
 - e. Increasing education and health promotion initiatives to better support people with a chronic disease to be able to self manage their care.

Enhancing community and women's health services – a key part of a primary health platform

Accessible and effective community and women's health services are a unique and essential component of Victoria's social infrastructure. These services play a pivotal role in health promotion, prevention and early intervention, as well as reducing demand for acute health services and providing post acute care supports. Services typically are designed to address specific issues and areas of disadvantage for that community – for example meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, specific culturally and linguistically diverse groups, and those experiencing complex disadvantage.

5. VCOSS proposes that the Government build on the strengths of the Victorian community health services and women's health services model in a way that demonstrates national leadership and ensures that the achievements of the past are maintained and strengthened by:
 - a. Increasing investment in services provided by community health services,
 - b. Increasing investment in the health promotion role of women's health services, and
 - c. Advocating in COAG discussions, the value of health services built around the social model of health and focusing on providing specific services to best meet the needs of local communities.

Reducing the harm of alcohol and drugs

Alcohol is estimated to account for around 5 per cent of the total burden of disease in Victoria.²⁵ Misuse of alcohol and drugs contributes to a range of social harms including crime, family violence and accidents.

In order to achieve the Government's vision for a high quality, evidence-based treatment service system that is accessible and client focussed, and to ensure the harms of alcohol and drugs are reduced, these three steps are required:

- Enhancing the capacity of treatment services to respond to alcohol-related harm,
 - Improving access to services in outer urban growth corridors, and
 - Reducing the harm associated with alcohol and drugs for older Victorians.
6. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government strengthen the alcohol and drug treatment system to better reduce the harms of alcohol and drugs by:
- a. Investing in six alcohol and drug clinicians to better support agencies responding to increasing numbers of people seeking treatment and support for alcohol-related problems,
 - b. Undertake improved forecasting and planning for alcohol and drug treatment services in metropolitan growth areas and increase investment to establish and expand available services in metropolitan areas, and
 - c. Piloting a new treatment service type to better support older Victorians who experience alcohol or drug harm.

Housing

Ensuring Victoria's housing market delivers affordable and appropriate housing is critical to building a fairer Victoria. The failure of the housing market to deliver secure housing to more than 250,000 low and middle income Victorian households will further entrench inequity in our community. Unless there is action to address this problem, fewer working families will be able to afford stable housing or to build wealth through home ownership.

A shortage of supply

Housing market failure to produce rental accommodation that is affordable for low to middle income households is contributing to increasing numbers of people paying more for rent than they can afford, and having to compromise other areas of expenditure, including health, education and meals.

For low-income households the impact is dire. Supply shortages have driven rapid rental price rises with Victorian rents increasing a further 5.7 per cent in the year to June 2009, and 41 per cent over the last five years.²⁶ In the first quarter of 2009 just 5.3 per cent of all private rental lettings in Melbourne were affordable.²⁷



The shortage of affordable housing in the private rental market is compounded by a decline in social housing as a proportion of all housing stock, despite record levels of investment.²⁸

Achieving housing affordability and sustainability with planning

Given the scale of the fiscal challenge, the Victorian Government must look to policy levers other than direct spending, to deliver increases in affordable housing. The long overdue *Integrated Housing Strategy* – first promised in 2006 and again in the *2009 Statement of Government Intentions*²⁹ – must bring together actions across all tenures to make housing more affordable and create a fairer housing system in Victoria.

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government develop a target for social housing at 5 per cent of all housing stock accompanied by an integrated housing plan to achieve this target. The plan would include:
 - a. An annual direct investment in social housing,
 - b. Rescinding the deed of agreement between the Office of Housing and the Department of Treasury and Finance for \$50 million per year to 2042,
 - c. Mechanisms to achieve greater density of housing around activity centres and transport hubs,
 - d. Introducing new inclusionary zoning legislation to require 10 per cent of new dwellings in developments of 10 or more dwellings to be reserved for affordable housing,
 - e. Greater use of government land for affordable housing development, and
 - f. Active engagement by the Victorian Government and its agencies to assist in land assembly in activity centres and for brown-field developments.

Poor policy driving market failure

The First Home Buyers Grant and particularly its boost by the Federal Government, supported by the Victorian Government, has inflated house prices across the housing market. The inflation has resulted in increased rental prices, thereby further compromising the ability of renters to save for a deposit and become home owners.

2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government work with the Commonwealth to means test the *First Home Buyers Grant* for the purchase of newly-constructed housing and phase it out completely for the purchase of existing dwellings.

Addressing the immediate crisis in housing families

Victoria's record low vacancy rates, currently at 1.4 per cent, are driving the proliferation of unregulated, inappropriate and exploitative rooming house accommodation. VCOSS estimates that around 500 rooming house tenancies are families with children, who are at risk from other residents and are deprived of adequate space for play and ordinary family activities.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government commit to a policy that no child will be living in a rooming house by 1 January 2011 by fast tracking the re-housing of families in rooming houses into appropriate housing by:
 - a. Resourcing an immediate investment in new social housing to provide long-term exit points for families with high needs,
 - b. Funding a package of support measures to enhance entry to private rental targeted to low-need families in rooming houses, and
 - c. Developing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of Housing and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to ensure children maintain a connection with their school or early childhood service.

Acting to reduce homelessness

Current Victorian Government work to revitalise the homelessness service system could drive significant improvement in outcomes for homeless people. However, unless the strategy is accompanied by significant additional investment in long-term sustainable exit points, this potential will not be realised.

Research has demonstrated that investment in housing represents an overall cost-saving to Government because of reduced demand in other areas of government spending. This is particularly the case for people with mental illness who are over-represented in acute health services and in the justice system.

4. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government invest in singles housing for people with mental illness to complement recent investments in mental health.

Minimum standards needed to respond to climate change

Tight vacancy rates are exacerbating the underlying lack of incentive for landlords to improve the energy efficiency of rental properties. Tenants of public as well as private housing pay this through higher power bills and lower levels of comfort.

As climate change increases the frequency and severity of heatwaves, the poor standard of rental properties also presents a serious population health risk.

5. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government protect renters from the health risks of heat waves and create the conditions for more efficient use of water and energy in rental properties by:
 - a. Reforming the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to introduce minimum standards for the energy efficiency, safety and amenity of rental property, and
 - b. Funding a one-off public and community housing renewal program over a 10 year period.

Human rights

The protection and promotion of human rights is fundamental to achieving a fairer Victoria, and is one of the three main drivers of 'liveability'.³⁰

Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner

Currently there is no independent overseer to measure the effectiveness of initiatives to support and promote improved outcomes for Indigenous Victorians. This has contributed to the lack of sustained and coordinated programs across departments. The creation of an independent Aboriginal Social Justice Commission role in Victoria would enable monitoring of progress on key policy frameworks, such as the *Aboriginal Justice Agreement*, the *Close the Gap* commitments, and the implementation of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* recommendations.

An independent Commissioner could also support all parts of Government to contribute effectively to shared outcomes and bring attention to overcoming systemic structural discrimination faced by Indigenous Victorians.

Review of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights

The scheduled four year review of the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* in 2011 provides an opportunity to strengthen and develop community support for the Charter. In honouring the Government's commitment to conduct a genuine, open, transparent and consultative review of the Charter, the participation of community members must be ensured.

Recommendations

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government establish an independent Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner and an appropriately resourced support team.
2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government adequately fund an inclusive, open and comprehensive four-year review of the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*, including funding to ensure that Indigenous peoples and disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups are included in this process.

Transport

Transport plays a critical role in linking cities and regions to support economic development across Victoria. It is also the means by which individuals can access employment, education, community life and services.

As the Global Financial Crisis recedes a key priority must be reducing concentrations of disadvantage, both in geographic areas with high unemployment and among disadvantaged population groups, including people with disabilities.

Investing in equity in metropolitan Melbourne

Many outer suburbs continue to have major gaps in transport services or to have infrequent transport services. This prevents people accessing social and economic opportunities, and also compounds the financial stress of households forced to own multiple cars.

The proposed expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary will require a massive new investment in train and bus services to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, where poor planning combined with inadequate public transport entrenched disadvantage on Melbourne's fringe.

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government improve access to opportunities for outer suburban residents by:
 - a. Accelerating the roll-out of the orbital *SmartBus* routes,
 - b. Extending the *SmartBus* level of service to more priority routes on the bus network, and
 - c. Implementing a minimum service standard of 30 minute frequencies for all bus services.
2. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government prevent the risk of entrenching disadvantage in suburbs inside the expanded Urban Growth Boundary by committing to major and significant new investment in train and bus services in these areas.

Investing in equity in rural and regional areas

The Victorian Transport Plan included welcome increases in public transport services in rural and regional areas. However public transport links from small towns to regional cities continue to be scarce, compromising many residents' ability to participate economically.

This scarcity sits alongside the regional school bus service which provides a comprehensive network linking small towns with regional cities. With minimal extra investment, integration of mainstream and school bus services could deliver a quantum leap in service access and participation for rural Victorians.

3. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government build an integrated rural transport network for all users, including school bus services. A minimal extra investment would be necessary to extend existing school bus routes and enhance the carrying capacity and accessibility of some services.

Planning to manage the challenge of climate change

A new generation of public transport will be necessary to manage greatly increased levels of patronage following from the Federal Government's proposed *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)*.

4. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government renew *The Victorian Transport Plan* in 2010 to ensure public transport can cope with the expected shift to public transport driven by the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Accessibility

The number of people with disabilities is rapidly growing as more Victorians continue to live longer. By 2042, almost 26 per cent of Victoria's population will be aged 65 years and over.³¹ In this context, affordable and accessible transport has never been more important to maintain people's connections to opportunities.

5. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government link people with disabilities with opportunities by:
 - a. Investing to meet its legislative obligation under the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT)* to make 50 per cent of public transport services accessible by 2012, and
 - b. Investing \$6.4 million in constructing a footpath to every bus stop near schools, shops and workplaces.

Transport affordability for young people

For people on low incomes, even concession public transport fares are expensive, with a daily Zone 1 and 2 concession Metcard costing 20 per cent of the daily income of a young person on Youth Allowance. For young people who need to travel regularly to access Centrelink, training programs, job interviews and casual employment or shift work, lack of affordable transport can compromise their connection to job opportunities. In the United Kingdom, the *Travel to Interview Scheme* provides young people receiving unemployment or other benefits access to subsidised travel when attending job interviews.³² As youth unemployment has markedly increased following the economic downturn, the introduction of a similar program in Victoria would be timely to support young people to reconnect with jobs.

6. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government subsidise transport for young people accessing job interviews and employment training programs.

Young people

Federal Treasury Secretary, Dr Ken Henry, has noted that investing in the capabilities of children and young people delivers significant benefits for Australia's future prosperity.³³ Despite their importance, youth services have suffered a serious lack of investment in recent years. In the 2009-10 State Budget youth affairs funding decreased by 7.9 per cent in real terms.

VCOSS has advocated for an integrated and high quality continuum of youth services structured along a prevention – early intervention – secondary – tertiary service continuum to ensure that young people, particularly those who are experiencing disadvantage, remain engaged in their communities, in education and training and are best placed to transition to the labour market.

This is particularly important in 2010, as the OECD has highlighted that young people will disproportionately feel the effects of the Global Financial Crisis, with youth unemployment projected to escalate.³⁴



Generalist youth services

Early intervention or generalist youth services provide a strong link to other supports that young people may require. Yet in Victoria there are large gaps in the availability of early intervention youth services, such as mental health services, resulting in many young people not being able to access services until they reach crisis point.³⁵

Rural and regional young people

Young people living in rural and regional Victoria often experience disadvantage because of lack of access to locally-available supports and opportunities.³⁶ This disadvantage is compounded by the impact of drought, high levels of tertiary deferral, poor access to public transport and large gaps in service availability.³⁷

A focus on ongoing and emerging issues, alongside the development of innovative youth services, is needed to deliver greater equity of outcomes for these young people.

Supporting same sex attracted young people to feel safe in their communities

Currently, same-sex attracted and transgender young people report high levels of discrimination and abuse based on their sexuality.³⁸ These young people are also more likely to self-harm and use illegal and legal drugs, often as a result of this abuse³⁹.

Urgent investment is required to ensure that same sex-attracted and transgender young people feel safe and connected in their communities, have opportunities to participate and lead the lives of their choosing, free from abuse.

Youth justice

While Victoria has the lowest rate of young people under youth justice supervision in Australia⁴⁰, many disadvantaged young people continue to have excessive and preventable ongoing contact with the justice system. Indigenous young people, those from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and those in out-of-home care are particularly over-represented.

To better support young people in repeated contact with youth justice, a rights-based approach to crime prevention and legal support should be adopted to protect and assert the rights of young people experiencing disadvantage.

Investing in building the skills of Victorian young people

The OECD has recommended Australia needs to capitalise on young people's propensity to remain in education longer during economic uncertainty to raise levels of education attainment and build skills for the nation's future.⁴¹

Yet despite the critical nature of education for continued economic success, the recent reforms of Victoria's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector through the *Securing Jobs for Your Future: Skills for Victoria* agenda will further alienate young Victorians from the VET sector and contribute to them disengaging from the workforce.

Recommendations:

1. VCOSS proposes that the Victorian Government better support vulnerable young Victorians by:
 - a. Accompanying the *Vulnerable Youth Framework* with an implementation plan supported by substantial new investment,
 - b. Investing in generalist youth services,
 - c. Funding a rural youth sector project, with a specific policy, advocacy and sector development focus on rural and regional young people,
 - d. Strengthening the program of same sex-attracted and transgender youth support services across Government and providing ongoing funding for existing services and investing in professional development for education professionals and youth service workers,

- e. Increasing targeted support for young people through Community Legal Centres, particularly in rural and regional areas,
- f. Committing on-going funding for the *Youth Referral and Independent Person Program*,
- g. Adopting the recommendations of the *Inquiry into Strategies to Prevent High Volume Offending and Recidivism by Young People*, and
- h. Improving access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) for young people by developing information for young people about the changes to VET, maintaining VET concession fees at January 2009 rates, and expanding the eligibility criteria for government-subsidised places to include students up to the age of 25.

References

-
- ¹ K Pickett & R Wilkinson, *The spirit level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always do Better*, Penguin UK, United Kingdom, April 2009.
- ² Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), *Action for Victoria's Future*, Victorian Government, launched August 2008 at www.action.vic.gov.au.
- ³ B Gregory, Employment and income support in Australia – The Challenges for Social Policy in Financial Crisis and Recession, paper presented to the *Australian Social Policy Conference – An Inclusive Society? Practicalities and Possibilities*, 8-10 July 2009.
- ⁴ Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), *Victorian Population Bulletin 2009*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, May 2009, p 1.
- ⁵ Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), *Victorian Population Bulletin 2004*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, March 2004, p 2-3; DPCD (2009)... p 2-3.
- ⁶ DPCD, *Victoria in Future 2008: Fertility Background Paper*, Victorian Government, July 2009, p 2, [http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/194C197EA55467E3CA257639001E5A15/\\$File/VI F+2008+Fertility+Background+Paper.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/194C197EA55467E3CA257639001E5A15/$File/VI F+2008+Fertility+Background+Paper.pdf), accessed 23 September 2009.
- ⁷ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), *The State of Victoria's Children 2008*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 2009.
- ⁸ Sustainability Victoria, *Green Light Report*, Sustainability Victoria, Melbourne, 2008.
- ⁹ G Dufty, *Winners and losers: The Relative Price Index*, St Vincent De Paul, Melbourne, 2008.
- ¹⁰ J Carnie, *January 2009 Heatwave in Victoria: An Assessment of Health Impacts*, DHS, Melbourne, 2009.
- ¹¹ 'in the event that a proposed unit price is not sufficient to maintain current levels of service delivery, other solutions such as a reconfiguration of the service model or target changes should also be considered' in Human Services Partnership Implementation Committee (HSPIC), DHS, *Price Review Framework*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 29 October 2007.
- ¹² This section is a joint submission by VCOSS and PilchConnect. PilchConnect is a legal service pilot which combines the pro bono resources of the private legal profession, with specialist in-house expertise, to deliver free legal advice and assistance to not-for-profit community organisations.
- ¹³ DPCD, *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 2008, p 18.
- ¹⁴ R Teese & J Polesal, *Undemocratic Schooling: Equity and Quality in Mass Secondary Education in Australia*, Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne, 2003.
- ¹⁵ Centre for Community Child Health, *Evaluation of Victorian Children's Centres: Literature Review*, DEECD, 2008.
- ¹⁶ DEECD (2009)...
- ¹⁷ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), *Issues paper: Parent and Community Engagement*, unpublished, 2009.
- ¹⁸ VAEAI (2009)...
- ¹⁹ Commission on Social Determinants of Health, *Achieving Health Equity: From Root Causes to Fair Outcomes*, World Health Organisation, 2007.
- ²⁰ For details of specific illness see: B Pink & P Allbon, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Canberra, 2008.
- ²¹ Department of Human Services (DHS), *Aboriginal Services Plan Key Indicators 2005-06*, Victorian Government, May 2008.
- ²² Conditions were: cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, injury and mental conditions.
- ²³ DPC, *A Fairer Victoria 2009: Standing Together Through Tough Times*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, May 2009
- ²⁴ National Health and Hospital Reform Commission (NHHRC), *A Healthier Future for all Australians: Final Report*, June 2009, Australian Government, Canberra, p 97.
- ²⁵ DHS, *Restoring the Balance: Victoria's Alcohol Action Plan 2008-2013*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, May 2008, p.9.
- ²⁶ DHS, *Rental Report: March quarter 2009*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, August 2009, p 8.

-
- ²⁷ DHS (2009)
- ²⁸ National Housing Supply Council, *State of Supply Report 2008*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2009, p 98.
- ²⁹ <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/state-of-government-intentions/victorias-plan-for-housing.html>.
- ³⁰ Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, *A State of Liveability: An Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, October 2008.
- ³¹ RACV, *Connect Outer Melbourne*, RACV, Melbourne, October 2008.
- ³² Social Exclusion Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion*, UK Government, London, 2003.
- ³³ Dr. K. Henry, *Prevention: How Do We Build Tomorrow's Capabilities Today?*, Presentation to the ARACY Conference, 3 September 2009.
- ³⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), *Jobs for Youth: Australia 2009*, OECD, 2009.
- ³⁵ J Rose & C Atkins, *Who's Carrying the Can? A Report into Youth Services Gaps in Victoria*, VCOSS & YACVic, 2006.
- ³⁶ YACVic, *Youth Affairs Council of Victoria's Priorities for the 2009-10 State Budget*, YACVic, January 2009.
- ³⁷ YACVic (2009) ...
- ³⁸ DEECD & the DPCD, *The State of Victoria's Young People*, Victorian Government, 2008.
- ³⁹ L Hillier, A Turner & A Mitchell, *Writing Themselves in Again: 6 years on*, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 2005.
- ⁴⁰ DEECD (2009) ...
- ⁴¹ OECD (2009) ...

