

# Centring early intervention, wellbeing and future generations

## Significant initiatives

- **Continued investment through the Early Intervention Investment Framework (EIIF)**

\$702.2m over 5 years across 30 initiatives designed to achieve diverse outcomes including improved health and wellbeing, education, skills and employment outcomes, and reduced acute services use. It's estimated that these programs will collectively support 375,000 Victorians and enable \$300 to \$600m of economic benefit over the next 10 years. Example programs funded through the EIIF include:

- **Strong Families, Safe Children: connecting, strengthening and restoring families**

\$86m in 2025-26 (\$161m/2 yrs) for a range of early intervention programs that strengthen and restore families and divert clients from acute statutory Child Protection services.

- **Supporting Aboriginal women on their journey into motherhood**

\$3.8m in 2025-25 (\$15.8m /4 yrs) to provide Aboriginal women with culturally-safe care and support in their journey into motherhood.

- **Victorian Social Investment Model (VicSIM)**

\$2.7m in 2025-26 (\$5.4m /2yrs) for the VicSIM data modelling tool that enables analysis and insights about service usage to inform policy development and social investment.

## What's good

- While the total volume of funding provided for early intervention initiatives through the EIIF is a significant reduction on last year's \$1 billion investment, it's positive that the Government is maintaining its commitment to maturing the EIIF model and continuing funding for essential programs that were lapsing.
- Working collaboratively with communities, community organisations and people with lived experience to develop programs enables better outcomes to be achieved. VCOSS is pleased to see that some initiatives funded through the EIIF were designed in close collaboration between departments and community organisations, including the *Supporting Aboriginal women on their journey to motherhood* initiative. While there is still a long way to go to see

50 per cent of EEIF initiatives co-designed with communities and organisations (as called for in VCOSS' pre-Budget submission), efforts have been made to encourage collaboration.

- Using data and outcomes to develop, test and refine social programs is an important part of understanding what works for whom in intervening early and improving wellbeing. The continued funding into VicSIM is a welcome investment to bolster government practice in this area. Likewise, the introduction of additional information about outcome areas, the number of people supported, avoided costs and economic benefits of EEIF initiatives in Budget papers improves transparency about the framework's purpose and intent.

## What's missing

- While the government continues to back the EEIF, this Budget did not provide the funding required to strengthen the model by enabling effective partnerships between the community sector, Treasury and commissioning departments to develop community-led, evidence-based, impactful early intervention initiatives. This could have been achieved by continuing and expanding the Empowerment Fund, which provided grants to organisations to build capability, measure impact and codify knowledge – essential for effective collaboration and innovation.
- Alongside working to improve outcomes for Victorians today, the government must also protect and promote the wellbeing of future generations. Best Start Best Life – Victoria's \$14bn 10-year transformation of early childhood education and care – is nation-leading, but should be augmented by connected policies and investments across whole-of-government that centre the wellbeing of children.
- Mitigating the worst impacts of climate change, enabling adaptation and taking steps to build resilience in the face of escalating disasters is a form of early intervention, and an investment into the wellbeing of current and future generations. This Budget did not make funding available for these areas that match the scale and urgency of the challenge before us.