



Snapshot

State Budget 2022-23

As GST and stamp-duty revenue are set to increase, the newly elected South Australian Labor Government has confidently delivered a budget surplus in 2022-23 and across forward estimates. A surplus of \$233 million is a substantial increase on the previous government's forecast of \$102 million with the state budget aiming to deliver on key election promises. While attention to priority issues such as housing, cost of living, mental health, and youth participation are welcome, young people are still struggling from COVID-19 impacts and are likely to face long-term effects of the pandemic and we are concerned by the lack of targeted community-based prevention and early intervention support in the priority areas below.

Economic participation

Government has committed an additional \$238 million over the next four years to support training and study in industries that are currently experiencing skills-based shortages. This includes \$208 million for five additional technical colleges (three metropolitan and two regional) to support additional apprenticeships in trades. The Government will also provide \$12.7 million over four years to return supported high-demand courses to TAFE SA in care industries, while university scholarships of \$5,000 each will be available over four years for teaching students in a bid to strengthen and diversify the profession in South Australia. Unfortunately, young people will no longer have access to public sector traineeships as the program has been decommissioned as a cost saving measure (\$15.5 million).

YACSA's Take:

YACSA welcomes additional support for training and study including five additional technical colleges. We also welcome the return of supported TAFE SA courses so the training organisation can continue as an important pathway into the labour market and further study for young people. Given the disproportionate rate of young people in precarious employment and COVID-related job losses, YACSA believes the government needs to demonstrate a focused commitment to strengthening opportunities for secure full-time employment accessible for young people.

Housing & homelessness

Government has pledged \$177.5 million over four years to construct an additional 400 public houses to address the supply shortage while also conducting maintenance on 350 current empty public homes to bring them up to standard. Funding has been restored to St Vincent De Paul, Catherine House, and Hutt St Centre's homelessness services, to the tune of \$10.4 million over 4 years. Government will also continue to work with HomeStart to provide first homebuyers with access to low deposit loans.

YACSA's take:

Increasing public housing stock is a welcome and a much-needed investment in the community that represents a long-term benefit and allows Government to focus on urgently needed support in other areas of housing. As young people make up less than 3 per cent of social housing tenants, we would like to see a focus on ensuring young people have increased access to social housing and associated services. Additionally, as buying a home is increasingly less obtainable and the majority of young people source housing via the private rental market, the government must provide immediate support for renters to address the significant lack of affordable and accessible rental properties.

Mental health & wellbeing

A government investment of \$50 million over four years will provide 100 mental health and learning support specialists to work across the 500 public schools in the state while the health system will receive significant funding of \$157.8 million over four years to provide additional mental health beds in metropolitan and regional hospitals with Queen Elizabeth, Modbury and Noarlunga Hospitals set to gain 24 additional beds each. Further, the public community mental health crisis team will receive an additional \$3.1 million funding while the Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network (LELAN) will receive \$800,000 funding over four years to carry on their important work.

YACSA's Take:

Funding additional mental health support in schools will help young people as they experience long wait-times to access other services and is a positive start to providing the early intervention community-based care young people need.

Improved availability of mental health beds in the healthcare system is welcome as it recognises emergency departments are not conducive for anyone experiencing mental health challenges. However, our consultations with young people about the impacts of COVID-19 illustrates the need to improve access to non-clinical and community-based support for mental health and wellbeing. Investment in community-based prevention approaches that promote wellbeing would ensure young people have access to support early and locally.

Youth Participation

The budget includes \$80,000 over four years for a Minister's Youth Advisory Council to provide a direct line of communication to the State Government and facilitate the opportunity to advise the Minister for Human Services on issues relevant to young people across the state.

YACSA's Take:

Young people have a right to participate in decisions that affect them, so we welcome the investment in a formal engagement mechanism especially in relation to COVID-19 recovery. We also hope this measure will increase recognition of the importance of youth participation across government.

A strong youth sector

Government is providing \$128.9 million over the next five years to meet the costs of residential care and an expected increase to children and young people requiring a child protection statutory response. Grants for services for children and young people in care and their carers, including young people who have left care will be available, costing \$7.5 million over four years.

Non-profit organisation Gold Foundation is promised \$300,000 in funding over four years to deliver support for young people on the autism spectrum and their families while government has also pledged \$1 million over four years for family drug support including vital counselling, \$1 million over three years to establish two domestic violence prevention and recovery hubs and \$2 million funding over four years for victim support services.

YACSA's Take:

YACSA welcomes increased funding that supports children and young people to be safe after they have entered the child protection system, however, Government needs to commit funding for prevention and early intervention to strengthen families and prevent children and young people entering the overburdened system.