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# State Budget Analysis

2022-23



**JUNE 8, 2022**

# Overview

SACOSS has prepared this analysis of the 2022-23 South Australian State Budget for the benefit of our members and other community organisations, as well as to help advance broader understanding and discourse around various budget measures, and their impacts for vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians. It also provides some commentary on where measures need to go further, or other actions are needed.

Delivered only months after the election of a new Labor Government in South Australia, this Budget delivers on many promises made by Labor during their election campaign. In the lead-up to the state election, SACOSS advocated on a platform based on the principle that every South Australian should be able to access life's basics. Our *Cover the Basics* policy prescriptions have focussed on measures to help ensure that people's basic needs are met, through a range of state-level actions that would help reduce inequality, and make a genuine difference for people who are struggling.

The call to 'cover the basics' is ever more important as we grapple with the effects of, and recovery from, the COVID pandemic. We know that COVID-19 has amplified inequality and fed off people's existing vulnerabilities – low incomes, housing insecurity, poorer health and insecure work. Some progress is being made; but there is much more to do.

This analysis looks at key areas of the State Budget through the lens of our 'cover the basics' themes, as well as examining other budget measures of interest and relevance for vulnerable or disadvantaged South Australians, which reflect areas that are 'basic'. We look at budget measures that will assist in areas of need (or the converse), and highlight some of the areas where more action is still needed. These areas will continue to be a focus of SACOSS' advocacy, and we look forward to ongoing dialogue with the new State Government on all these areas.

The first section of our State Budget Analysis provides the broad political-economic context of the Budget, followed by sections summarising key Budget initiatives in the relevant areas of SACOSS' *Cover the Basics* framing, providing readers with a quick reference to new budget measures. The final section includes analysis of other basic measures relevant to disadvantaged South Australians. Further detail on all these initiatives is available in Budget Paper No. 5. Cost figures are for four years, unless otherwise referenced.

Key areas highlighted in our ongoing *Cover the Basics* advocacy include:

- Improving rental affordability by significantly investing in the net stock of public housing
- Increasing investment in disease prevention, public health and health promotion
- Urgently ensuring that everyone in SA has access to safe, reliable and affordable drinking water
- Ensuring fair access to concessions
- A planned and sustained investment in digital inclusion, to ensure that no South Australian is left behind as we move into an increasingly digital world
- Safeguarding people most at risk from the impacts of climate change and natural disasters
- A suite of other proposals to protect and support people facing poverty, financial hardship, and vulnerability.

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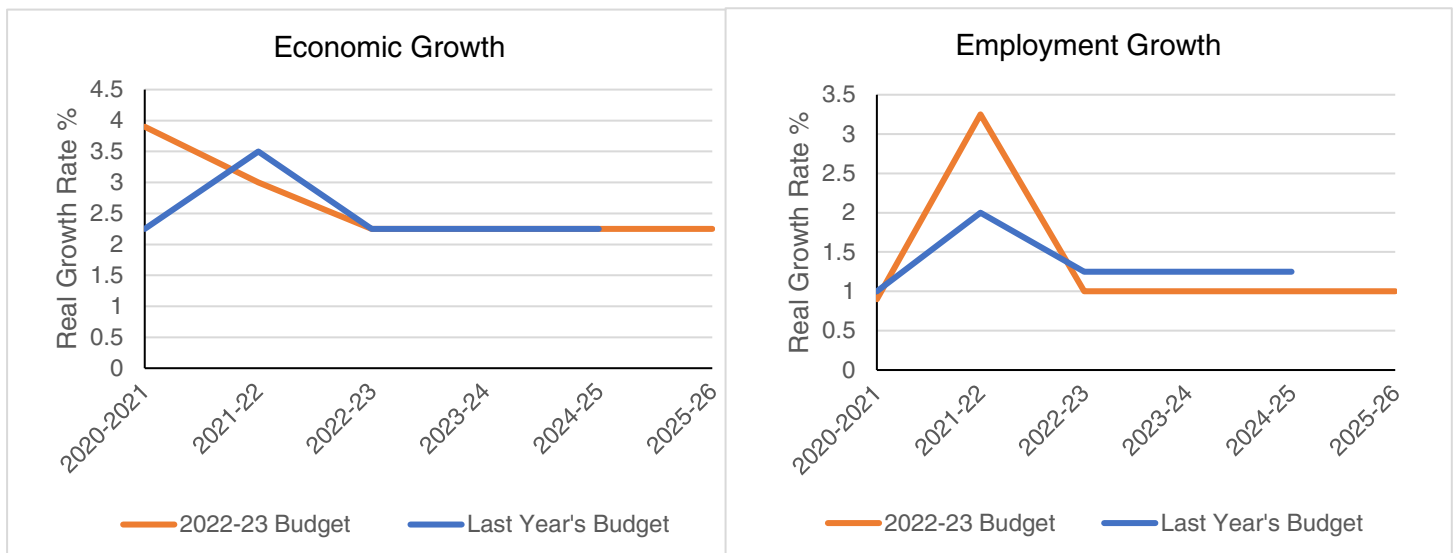
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# 1. Economic Context and Budget Outcomes

This Budget comes against a background of over 2 years of COVID impact, including lockdowns, working from home, and a reluctance by many people to venture out of home more than they regard as necessary. Natural disasters across Australia, and the war in Ukraine, have heavily impacted the provision and price of some goods and services, including those impacted by supply chains with international suppliers.

The graphs below show that rates of economic activity are broadly in line with what was expected in the last State Budget. They continue to reflect best estimates in extremely uncertain times. Economic growth of 2.25% per annum and annual employment growth of 1% from 2022-23 are both modest estimates which are reasonable, but there is potential for both to be stronger with post-COVID recovery and a hoped-for end to the war in Ukraine.

*Figure 1: Economic and Employment Growth*



The budget is projected to return a \$233m surplus in 2022-23, following an operating deficit of \$1.73bn in 2021-22. The budget projects a growing surplus over the forward estimates to \$643m in 2025-26. The revenue side of the Budget was boosted significantly by higher GST revenue than was initially anticipated, an alarming spike in gambling taxes, and stamp duty from rising house prices also provided big increases in revenue. The projected budget surpluses over the next 4 years meant that the COVID-incurred debt is projected to be lower than last year's budget estimates. Table 1 sets out the budget projections for debt and deficit.

*Table 1: 2021-22 Budget Debt and Deficit Projections*

	<b>2021- 22 \$m</b>	<b>2022- 23 \$m</b>	<b>2023- 24 \$m</b>	<b>2024- 25 \$m</b>	<b>2025- 26 \$m</b>
Operating Balance (i.e. surplus)	-1,733	233	487	606	643
Net Debt <sup>1</sup>	16,930	19,003	21,606	23,441	25,220

The level of interest rates will impact on future debt repayment rates. Interest rates are expected to rise from recent low levels and in-line with international money market trends. These are reflected in recent Australian interest rate increases and market expectations are that the Reserve Bank will continue to increase interest rates over the coming years.

*Table 2: Interest Expenses – General Government Sector (\$m)*

	<b>2021-22 \$m</b>	<b>2022-23 \$m</b>	<b>2023-24 \$m</b>	<b>2024-25 \$m</b>	<b>2025-26 \$m</b>
Last year's Budget	528	645	768	984	n.a.
This year's Budget	516	780	988	1129	1219
Difference	12	-135	-220	-145	n.a.

## Revenue

The collection of government revenue is the means by which governments fund the goods and services we need as a community. Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are particularly reliant on government services as they have fewer private and market options available to them. Accordingly, SACOSS seeks to ensure that governments always have sufficient and reliable revenue to properly fund these vital services.

While the growth in state tax revenue (\$556m in 2021-22 compared to estimates) is a boost for the budget bottom line, overall revenue growth is a concern over forward estimates. However, the budget papers note that total government revenue is expected to decline in 2022-23 by 3.0%, though in nominal (not adjusted for inflation) terms, revenue increases by \$441m compared to estimates in the 2021-22 financial year. This is largely because of the uneven economic growth, both in South Australia and nationally, and uncertainty about impacts of rising interest rates. Taxes from stamp duty on property sales has been substantially revised up from 2021-22 budgeted figures (\$395m increase) with a heightened

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<sup>1</sup> General government debt, not including the debt of government-owned businesses or financial corporations.

property market. Revenue from gambling taxes have significantly increased from 2021-22 forecasts by \$62m, despite the extended closure of pokies venues during COVID-19.

As seen in Table 3 below, revenue is expected to fall in real terms in 2022-23 by 3.0% in 2023-24 before levelling out in 2023-24 to 2025-26 with modest projected increases of 0.6%, 0.3% and 1.0% respectively. Recent revenue growth and reallocation of some expenditure (e.g. shelving plans for the new stadium for health funding) has allowed for the major expenditure initiatives in this budget.

**Table 3: Revenue Growth**

	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
Revenue (nominal) \$m	23,346	23,787	24,719	25,475	26,426
Real Revenue Growth	3.7%	-3.0%	0.6%	0.3%	1.0%

The modest revenue growth, for 2021-22 and from 2023-24 hides a long-term problem in the South Australian State Budget, namely the diminishing contribution of the state's own tax base and an increasing reliance on GST revenue to underpin the budget.

Conveyance duties collected were 33% higher for 2021-22 than were forecast in last year's state budget. This substantial increase in conveyance duties is unlikely to be maintained as house and property prices cannot be expected to continue to increase, or even maintain current levels (June 2022) over the next couple of years.

Of continuing concern is the likely increase in gambling tax collections. As per Figure 2, there was an 11% increase in tax collection from poker machines in 2021-22, in part driven by the agreement of both major parties to allow note acceptors for poker machines in this state, a move strongly opposed by our sector for the increase in gambling harm associated with this decision. This increase sat against a backdrop where venues were closed for substantial parts of the year. In total, there is a projected \$33m increase in total gambling revenue from the 2021-22 to 2025-26 budget years. Gambling taxes are amongst the most regressive of all tax measures and action is needed by the SA Government to wean itself from revenue that is so closely associated with harm.

The graph on the next page (Figure 2) shows the percentage change in taxes actually collected last year and budgeted this year.

*Figure 2: State Tax Collection Changes*

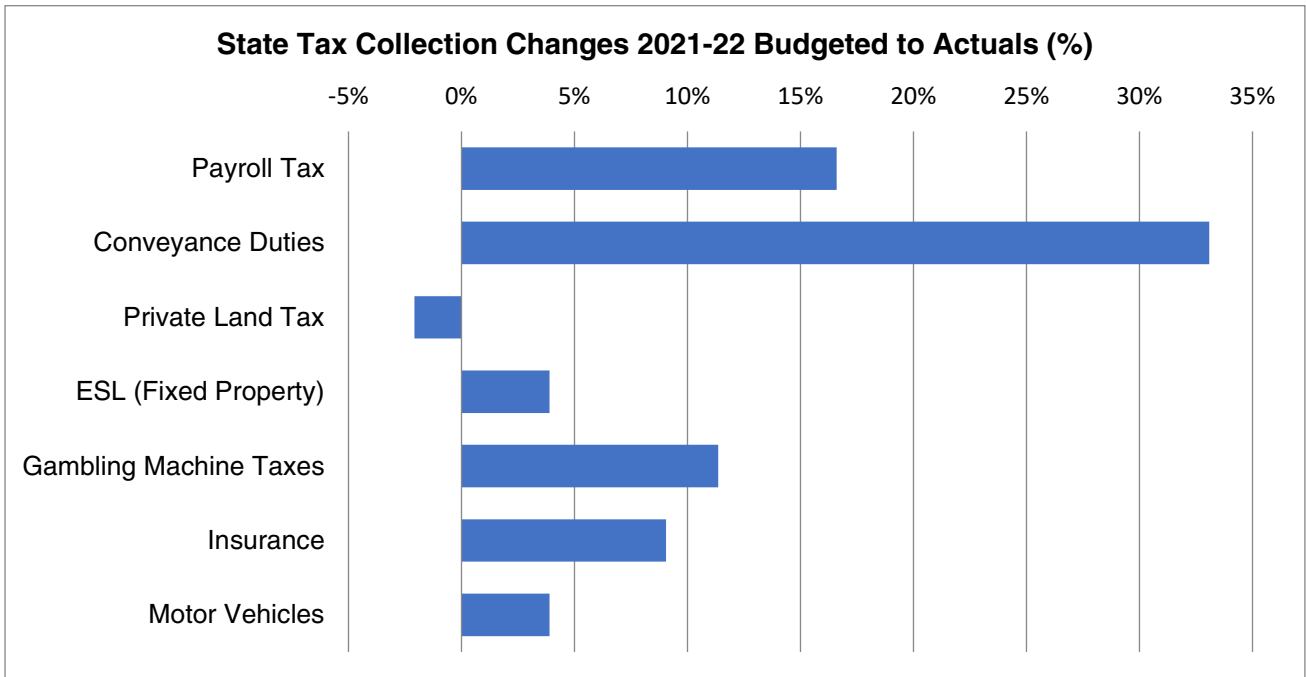
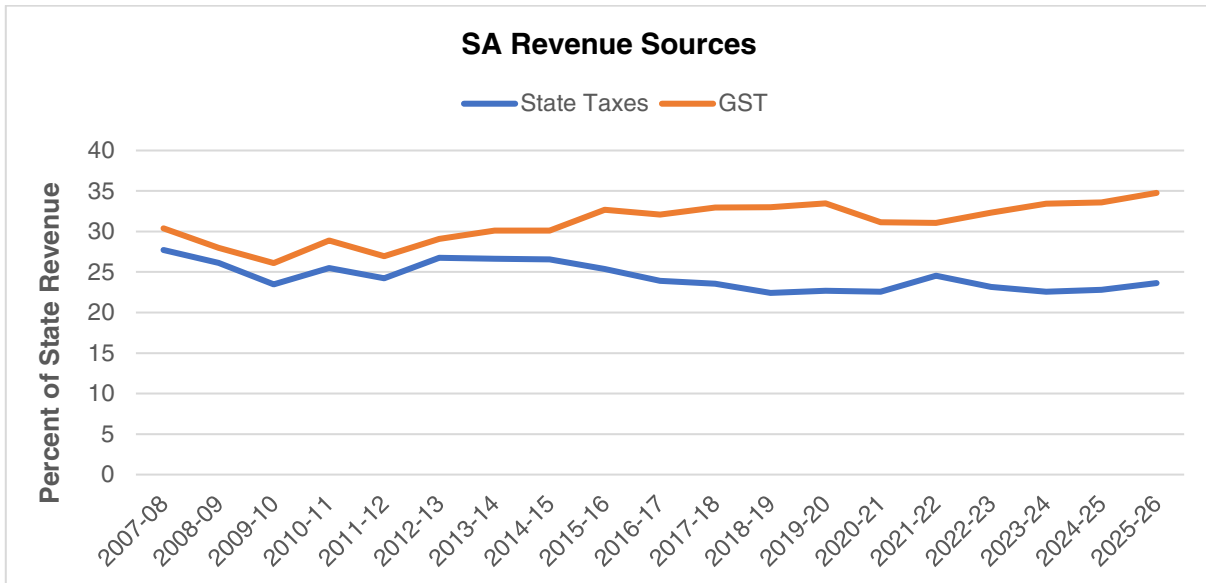


Figure 2 shows a modest increase in GST as a proportion of state revenue from 31.1% in 2021-22 to 34.8% in 2025-26. Conversely, state taxes as a proportion of state revenue is projected to level out from 2022-23 onwards, following the COVID-related boosts in 2021-22, as highlighted above. The relative stagnation in the state tax base matters because as a flat rate tax, the GST impacts disproportionately more on low-income households (although the exemption for food stuffs makes it a little more progressive).

By contrast, state taxes such as property taxes, stamp duty and insurance taxes (which collectively account for around half of state tax revenue) are relatively progressive, impacting proportionately more on households higher up the income scale. Further, an increased reliance on GST revenue is potentially problematic because the state government has no control over the rate or distribution of GST from the national pool.

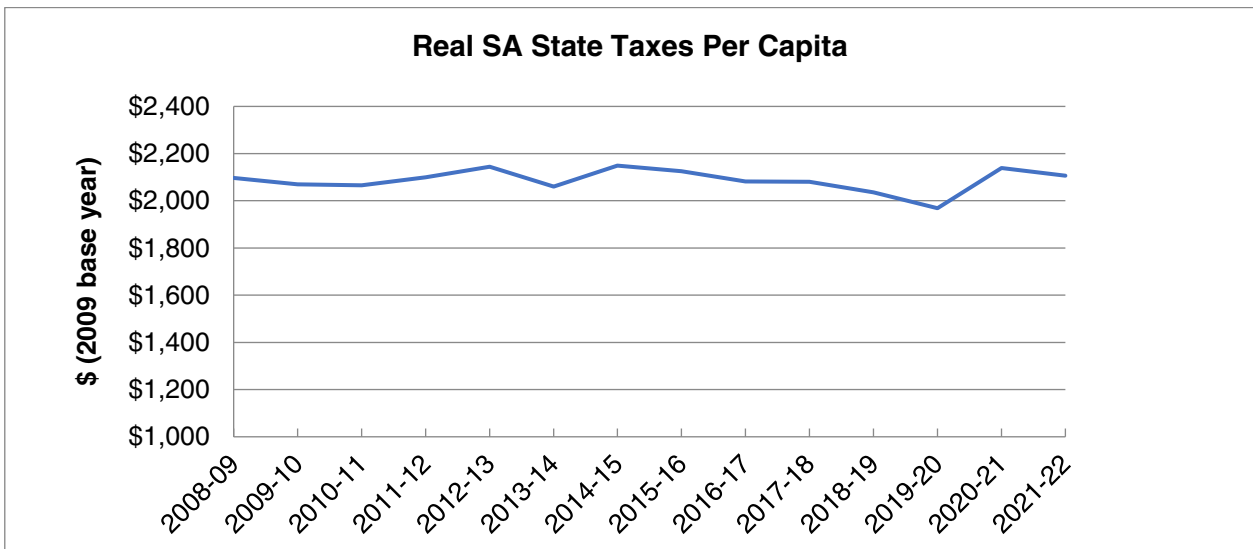
The rate is set by Commonwealth legislation, and the state's share of the national pool is set by the Commonwealth Grants Commission using a complex (and sometimes controversial) formula. We note that the SA Government will again challenge the level of GST allocation to WA and argue for a higher share for South Australia.

**Figure 3: State Taxes and GST as a Proportion of State Revenue**



In pointing to the decline of the state tax base, it is also important to remember that there is room to build a stronger local tax base. South Australia is still a relatively low-taxing jurisdiction by Australian standards (and Australia is a low-taxing country in comparison with most of the OECD countries). South Australia has now dropped behind Tasmania to become the second lowest rate of state taxes per capita of all Australian jurisdictions, and as the following graph shows, the real amount of tax has been steady or declining.

**Figure 4: Real SA State Taxes Per Capita**



This state budget has been focused on meeting election commitments (primarily around health) and has been hamstrung by the commitment around not introducing any new taxes. Going forward, the government will need to be prepared to address the problems in South Australia’s gradually declining revenue base.



## Expenditure

Government expenditure is the means by which the government provides the public infrastructure and services that the community needs. There are three different expenditure stories in this budget. The first is about acute health services, hospital bed, and ambulance response times; the second is about economic stimulus, including skills development, with a focus on potential / likely future industry growth areas; and the third is responding to major drivers of disadvantage, including public housing. Major expenditure announcements include the following (all figures are over 4 years, except the first):

- \$2.4bn over 5 years; additional health expenditure, including \$837m for hospital expansions
- \$897m for new initiatives for jobs and economic stimulus
- \$593m to boost the hydrogen industry in SA
- \$630m for education, including 5 new “technical colleges”
- \$177.5m for a public housing improvement program
- \$128.9m for children and young people in care

In total, the budget papers note some \$2.5bn in new operating and investing (capital) expenditures over the next four years, but as Table 4 below shows, the actual growth in operational expenditure (which is the day-to-day business of government) is modest. Expenditure actually decreases in 2022-23 when many of the one-off stimulus measures end.

**Table 4: Expenditure Growth**

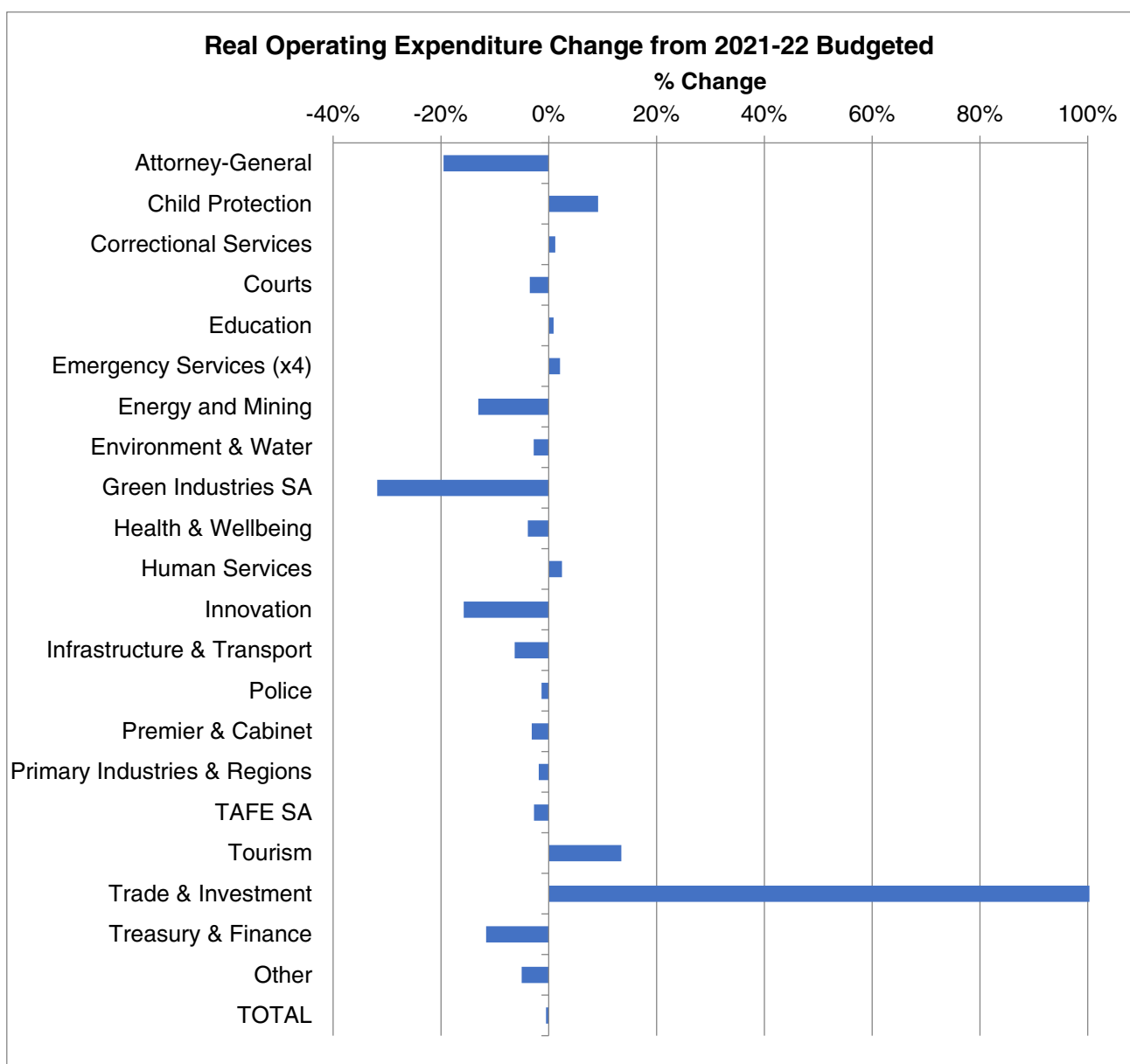
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Expenditure (nominal) \$m	25,079	23,554	24,232	24,868	25,783
Real Expenditure Growth	22.7%	-6.1%	2.9%	2.6%	3.7%

Beyond spending to meet election commitments, this is not a big spending budget. In the context of the current economic challenges (rising inflation, continued recovery from COVID), a cautious approach has been taken. To help cover the costs of election commitments, this budget sees the application of an additional efficiency dividend of \$714m in agency cuts and saving measures over 4 years. SACOSS has previously raised concern around the use of “efficiency measures” in past budgets, with the risk of operational savings resulting in fewer or poorer-quality services. Further, it is important to note that these cuts are cumulative, and come on top of efficiency measures from previous budgets.

The following graph (Figure 5) shows the end result of changes in expenditure (new measures and savings) compared to the 2021-21 budget. It shows the difference between the actual expenditure last year and the projected expenditure this year in selected

government agencies. Embedded in the changes are also reallocations of some programs between Departments, so it is difficult to be certain about impacts on some programs, so soon after the budget has been presented. For example, the significant changes for the Department for Trade and Investment reflect the transfer of Planning and Land Use Services, the Office of the Valuer-General, and Office of the Registrar-General from the Attorney-General’s Department. Also of concern to our sector is the reality that for department CEs with responsibility for finding percentage cuts to global budgets, the easiest cuts to make are those that involve spending by others, specifically community sector organisations. The risk continues that very effective, lower-cost services delivered by NGOs are always at risk of being cut to meet departmental budget savings targets.

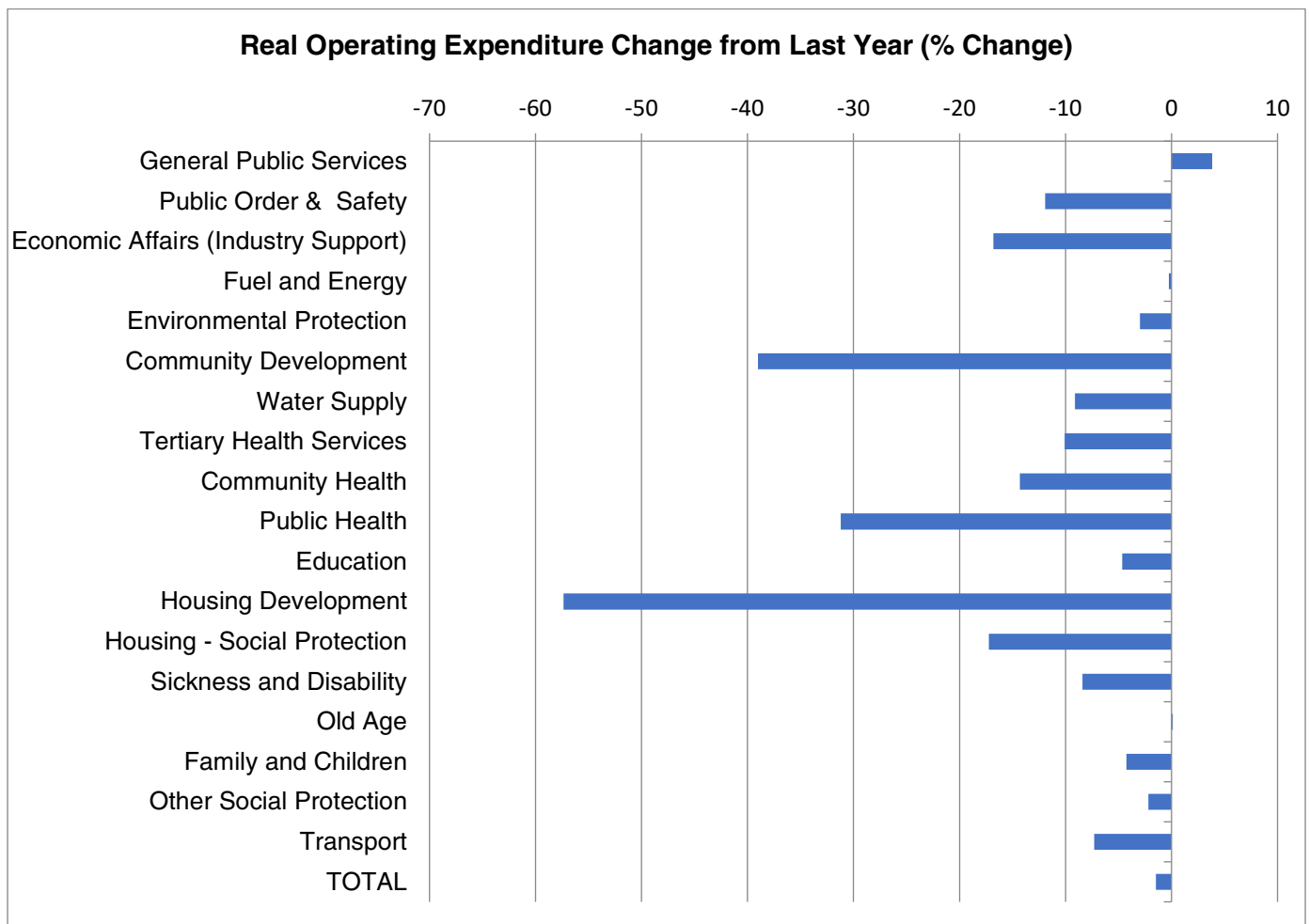
**Figure 5: Real Operating Expenditure: Percent Change from Last Year**



Note: This is a change for budget year 2022-23 from the estimated expenditure in 2021-22, adjusted for inflation at 4%.

The figures represent the total agency expenditures, which includes expenditure funded by the Commonwealth or other incomes sources that goes through the department. In that sense, some of the final expenditure outcomes may be beyond the control of the state government, but the data does reflect the overall impact on those agencies' ability to provide services to people in South Australia.

**Figure 6: Real Operating Expenditure: Percent Change from Last Year**

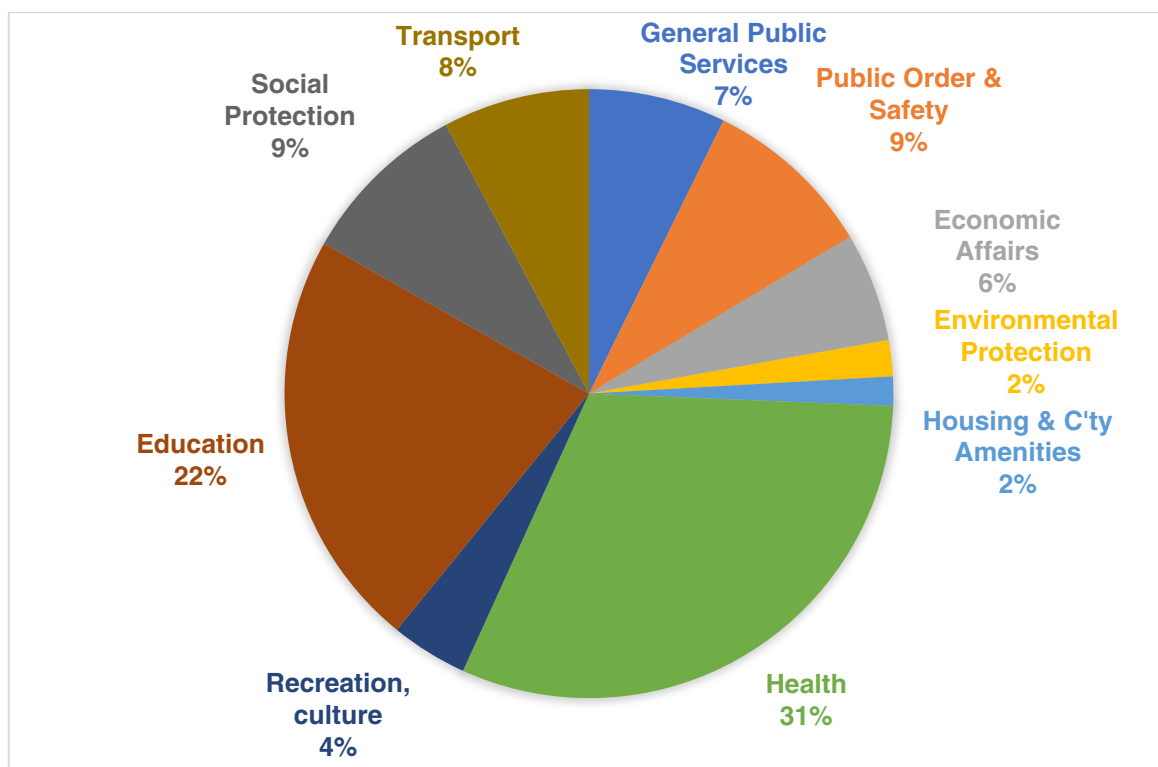


The decreasing expenditure in most categories partly reflects the agency cuts highlighted above, but also reflect the previous budget's significant COVID-related health and economic stimulus (via grants, tax concessions and other direct supports to businesses). SACOSS notes the importance of continued investments to lead recovery in areas where need remains. Critically, while housing development appears to decrease in real terms from the 2021-22 Budget, arguably the \$177.5m under Housing – Social Protection for public housing announced in this year's budget is better targeted to address housing affordability for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, compared with industry-focused housing stimulus measures of previous budgets.

SACOSS has argued in previous budget submissions that a significant investment in public housing would provide a stimulus to the construction industry, and provide direct and guaranteed jobs in building and maintenance (with flow-on demand and stimulus to other industries) as well as providing much-needed social infrastructure to support vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians. It could also relieve pressure on the private rental market and make renting more affordable for those at the lower end of the market. The announcements to reverse the years of cuts to public housing are welcome, with the provision of affordable housing continuing to be a priority for further government investment.

SACOSS remains concerned by the decrease in expenditure on community development, which covers government expenditure on administration of community development affairs and services (e.g. zoning laws and land-use and building regulations; planning of new communities) and development in Indigenous communities, although it is unclear what specific cuts have driven this result. Finally, it is not just the quantum of spending that is important for vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians, but also what it is spent on. Figure 5 shows the share of total operational expenditure going to different government functions.

**Figure 5: Share of Budget Expenditure**



While the expenditure categories are broad, the figure does underline the importance of state government expenditure on vital services, with health and education accounting for more than half of the budget expenditure, and social welfare spending accounting for another 9%. These proportions are little changed by measures in this budget but, as evident in the next section, there were a range of budget measures relevant to SACOSS' concerns.

## 2. Rental Affordability and Housing

The quality and security of housing is fundamental to a person's life chances, their health and general wellbeing, and there are a range of issues connected with housing, including availability, affordability and location (i.e. proximity to employment, transport and other services). The current housing crisis has been building incrementally over many years, fuelled by government policies that encourage multiple-property ownership by investors. During the time the state has been combatting COVID-19, pressures have worsened, leaving many people seeking rental accommodation grappling with potential homelessness.

SACOSS has been calling on the government to invest in public housing as a key measure for addressing rental affordability, and to make commitments to improve the thermal and energy efficiency of rental homes, to help residents' health and hip pockets. We are also asking the government to address the inequity in concession payments to renters by lifting payment amounts for tenants to the same rate available to homeowners.

Specifically, we have been asking the government to:

- Make significant new investment to increase the net stock of public housing (\$1.4bn over 4 years).
- Implement minimum energy efficiency standards for private and public rental properties, and mandatory disclosure of energy efficiency ratings for all rental properties in SA.
- Commit additional funding of \$64m over four years for Housing SA and other community-based organisations to deliver a targeted energy efficiency program for public and community housing tenants.
- Increase the Cost of Living concession for renters to the homeowner level.

### Commentary

SACOSS was heartened see funding for new public housing places and upgrades to existing houses in this State Budget, but continues to reiterate that much more investment is needed in public housing over the coming years, in order to take the pressure off the rental market and address issues of affordability. Public housing is a key segment of the housing market, so it is unsurprising that as house prices have gone up and public housing has become less available, private renters have been squeezed.

We have also been advocating for policies that will improve the thermal and energy efficiency of rental homes. Renters often live in homes that are uncomfortable during cold and hot weather, and are costly to keep at a safe and comfortable temperature. We want to see the implementation of minimum standards for the energy efficiency of all rental homes and for mandatory disclosure of energy efficiency ratings. This should be coupled with a targeted energy efficiency program for public and community housing. We were disappointed to see that there was no action taken in this budget to improve thermal and energy efficiency for renters, and will continue to call for action in these areas.

## Budget Measures

Govt Dept/Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
South Australian Housing Authority (SAHA)	Public housing expansion  <i>\$177.5m</i>	400 new public housing places and upgrades, and maintenance of 3350 existing houses (BM p.116).	We are pleased to see the government deliver on its commitment to reverse the decline in the number of properties held by SAHA and the commitment to build new public housing. We note that this commitment should be considered the first step in addressing rental affordability and more is needed.
South Australian Housing Authority	Homelessness services  <i>\$10m</i>	Funding for homelessness services outside of the existing consortia funding agreements (to Hutt Street Centre, Catherine House, and St Vincent De Paul). Includes funding for those allocated one of 50 new public housing places for people experiencing homelessness (BM p.115).	We welcome this funding commitment and particularly the wrap-around support being offered to people experiencing homelessness. We hope to see an expansion of funding of this nature that supports people to exit homelessness in the next budget.
South Australian Housing Authority	Funding cuts  <i>\$4.1m cut</i>	Funding to SAHA will be reduced by - \$1m/year (indexed) and incorporated through operating efficiencies across the agency (BM p.115).	SACOSS is concerned that cuts to SAHA's operational capacity will undermine the public housing builds and maintenance promised in this budget. SAHA provides housing as an essential, frontline service to those most in need and should be quarantined from operating efficiencies. We seek assurances that SAHA will have the funding and staffing necessary to deliver on these projects, as well as responding to the needs of people residing in SAHA homes.

### 3. Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing sector is critical in ensuring all South Australians can live healthy lives. SACOSS seeks to ensure the sector is accessible, equitable, and focuses on health promotion and disease prevention, alongside curative services.

SACOSS' health-related campaign policy calls developed through our role in the Public Health Consortium focused on disease prevention, public health and health promotion.

These are to:

- Increase public health, disease prevention and health promotion expenditure to 5% of the health budget.
- Build the capacity of the public health workforce.
- Introduce a floor price for cheap alcohol.
- Establish independent state-wide monitoring for health inequalities.
- Create healthier environments for children, particularly in relation to healthy diets

Recently, SACOSS also conducted work investigating the need to establish a structure to support equitable public involvement in the health system (a 'patient voice') following the defunding and closure of the Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia. We have also called for the extension of Ambulance Cover concessions for pensioners to all those on equivalent/lower incomes (an area also highlighted in our 2022 insurance report).

#### **Commentary**

Health is the biggest portfolio in the budget, both in terms of spending on new operating initiatives (\$341m out of a total of \$660m in 2022-23, \$984.5m out of a total of \$2072.4m over the next four years), and in terms of the Budget measures (a total of 57 operating initiatives and investing initiatives).

Unfortunately, the overwhelming focus of this expenditure has been on the state's tertiary health system, funding beds and hospital based workforce. This reflects the primacy of tertiary health issues during the state election campaign; but such measures fail to stem the demand for the tertiary health system by investing in upstream health promotion and disease prevention measures. SACOSS welcomes the community-based care initiatives, and the few prevention and health promotion measures in the budget.

There are also commendable budget measures covered under other portfolios, such as the mental health and autism supports for schools, and we note the continued funding for Wellbeing SA (AS Vol. 3, p. 66), which undertakes health promotion, as well as hospital avoidance work. The government has committed to establishing a new Preventive Health Agency, which is not included in the current budget. SACOSS looks forward to the establishment of this agency heralding a greater emphasis and resource allocation to health promotion and disease prevention in future budgets.

In terms of SACOSS’ advocacy calls, none of them were specifically met in the current budget, although some may be addressed through a redirection of effort. There were only a few public health, health promotion, or disease prevention measures identified, and these are unlikely to approach 5% of the total health budget. The workforce investments were overwhelmingly in tertiary health, with little evidence of increases in a public health workforce. Importantly, there remains no evidence of an overarching workforce plan that embraces tertiary as well as primary and preventative health services. Similarly, there were no measures to act on alcohol supply, but there was an investment in alcohol and other drug treatment – in particular detox and rehabilitation beds. There were also measures to support the health and wellbeing of children in the budget, including mental health and autism support in schools, as mentioned above, and extra child psychiatrists and child psychologists for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. There was no mention of the Health Performance Council, which the government committed to strengthening during their election campaign, or of statewide monitoring of health inequities.

The tertiary health sector measures show a positive emphasis on health services for rural and remote areas, which will support equity of access to health care for non-metropolitan areas. The support for patient voice initiatives (Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network and a new patient voice body), though small amounts of funding, are a step in the right direction. The closure of the Health Consumers Alliance left South Australia as the only state without a government-funded independent health consumer body. This funding is also occurring alongside broader (non-health sector) investment in public voice structures, including an LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council, the Minister’s Youth Advisory Council, and funding to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

### Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure <sup>2</sup>	SACOSS comments
Health and Wellbeing	Measures increasing the health workforce  \$239m	350 paramedics and ambulance officers, 101 doctors, 10 child psychologists, 76 new nurses in priority areas, medic nurses for 24/7 services in watch houses, 12 FTE nursing support for children with cancer or mental health	SACOSS acknowledges the need for these investments in the health workforce, and the package’s consideration of regional areas.  The watch house nursing service and Adult Safeguarding Unit in particular have the potential to support some of the most vulnerable South Australians.

<sup>2</sup> Some individual items in the Budget measures table have been collapsed to a single category for brevity



		needs, increased staffing for public community mental health teams, and 13 extra FTE for the next two years to support the Adult Safeguard Unit to meet demand, as legislative requirements expand (BM p. 52-61).	
Health and Wellbeing	New metropolitan hospital beds and other metro hospital infrastructure investments  <i>\$381m</i>	Extra hospital beds: Gawler (16), Flinders (24), Lyell McEwin (48), Modbury (48), Women's and Children's (50); Flinders Medical Centre and Repat upgrades (160) (BM p. 51-56). Upgrades: Modbury Hospital Cancer Centre, 9 chair Renal haemodialysis service, Women's and Children's Hospital (BM p. 58-63).	SACOSS acknowledges the need for this investment in critical health care infrastructure, particularly for hospitals such as Modbury and Lyell McEwin which are located in areas of relative socioeconomic disadvantage.
Health and Wellbeing	Investments in regional hospitals  <i>\$178m</i>	Investment in the following hospitals: Keith and District; Mount Gambier emergency department; Kangaroo Island; Mount Barker; Naracoorte; Port Augusta; and Port Pirie emergency department (BM p. 57-62).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in health care infrastructure in regional areas.

Health and Wellbeing	Investments in regional hospitals  <i>\$178m</i>	Investment in the following hospitals: Keith and District; Mount Gambier ED; Kangaroo Island; Mount Barker; Naracoorte; Port Augusta; and Port Pirie ED (BM p. 57-62).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in health care infrastructure in regional areas.
Health and Wellbeing	Nganampa Health Services – support for Gayle's Law  <i>\$5.2m</i>	Supports the implementation of Gayle's Law to safeguard nurse safety in remote areas (BM p. 61).	SACOSS welcomes this funding commitment to the remote area health workforce, and its potential to improve Aboriginal health.
Health and Wellbeing	Pharmacists training package and 24-hour pharmacy support  <i>\$2.65m</i>	Funds training for pharmacists on medication reviews, mental ill-health, palliative care medication, and respiratory illness, and supports three 24/7 metropolitan pharmacies (BM p. 52-61).	This training has the potential to improve community care for a range of populations with health needs, and 24-hour pharmacies may support accessibility.
Health and Wellbeing	Ambulance stations and headquarters  <i>\$187m</i>	Eight new ambulance stations, and upgrades for 10 stations, in regional and metro areas, plus funding for a new CBD ambulance headquarters (BM p. 53-60).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in health infrastructure, and the inclusion of regional areas.
Health and Wellbeing	COVID-19 public health functions  <i>\$128.9m</i>	Funds COVID-19 functions to continue at a reduced level for the next two years, including testing, vaccination, a call centre, and health services (BM p. 55).	SACOSS welcomes the continuation of these vital public health services.

Health and Wellbeing	Investments in regional hospitals  <i>\$178m</i>	Investment in the following hospitals: Keith and District; Mount Gambier emergency department; Kangaroo Island; Mount Barker; Naracoorte; Port Augusta; and Port Pirie emergency department (BM p. 57-62).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in health care infrastructure in regional areas.
Health and Wellbeing	New mental health beds  <i>\$181.9m</i>	These measures include 72 metro hospital mental health beds, 20 hospital-in-the home beds, and 6 mental health beds in Mount Gambier Hospital (BM p. 58-59).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in mental health care, including in a regional area. However, we would hope to see equivalent investment in community mental health supports that prevent the need for hospital-based care.
Health and Wellbeing	New alcohol and other drug detox beds  <i>\$24m</i>	These measures include new alcohol and other drug detox beds: two in Mount Gambier Hospital, and rehabilitation beds: 12 in Adelaide, 4 in Port Augusta, and 4 in Mount Gambier (BM p. 54-59).	SACOSS welcomes the investment in alcohol and other drug treatment, particularly in regional areas, but again would like to see equivalent investment in public health measures aimed at reducing harmful alcohol consumption.
Health and Wellbeing	20 homelessness discharge beds  <i>\$4.5m (over two years from 2024-25)</i>	A homelessness discharge support service provided in partnership with the not-for-profit sector (BM p. 51).	SACOSS welcomes this initiative in answer to a crucial gap in health care support for people experiencing homelessness. However, we do not understand why this measure would be delayed.
Health and Wellbeing	Men's and women's sheds  <i>\$1m (for 2022-23)</i>	Funding for a grant program to promote mental health and wellbeing (BM p. 65)	SACOSS welcomes this mental health and wellbeing health promotion initiative.

Health and Wellbeing	Independent voice for patients and Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network (LELAN)  <i>\$1.6m</i>	Includes funding to re-establish an independent patient voice body, and for the advocacy network for people with lived experience of distress or mental health issues (BM p.57).	SACOSS welcomes the funding to support public participation in our health system as this input is critical to create equity, accountability and quality outcomes.
Health and Wellbeing	Family Drug Support  <i>\$1m</i>	Funding to provide counselling and support to families of drug users (BM p.56).	SACOSS welcomes this needed service to families.
Health and Wellbeing	Cancer Council anti-tobacco strategy  <i>\$400k</i>	Funding to support the Cancer Council's tobacco control strategy (BM p.54).	Positive as it is, SACOSS notes this is one of the few health promotion measures in the budget.
Health and Wellbeing	Yadu Health Clinic  <i>\$2.5m over two years</i>	Funds for construction of dental and other allied health services (BM p.63).	SACOSS welcomes this investment in an Aboriginal health service.
Health and Wellbeing	Support for SIDS and Kids SA, and HeartKids  <i>\$1.8m</i>	Supports families affected by the loss of an infant and families affected by heart disease (BM p.62-63)	SACOSS welcomes this funding to support families with these needs.
Health and Wellbeing	Motor Neurone Disease South Australia funding  <i>\$2.4m</i>	To provide services to over 65s to loan equipment such as breathing and mobility devices (BM p.59)	SACOSS welcomes this funding to support the needs of people with motor neurone disease, some of whom may not be eligible for NDIS.
Health and Wellbeing	Mates in Construction  <i>\$240k</i>	A suicide prevention and mental health program for the building, mining, energy, and construction industries (BM p.12)	SACOSS welcomes this program as one of the few prevention or health promotion initiatives in the budget.

## 4. Water Security

Water is a basic human right. It is essential for life, health, social, economic and cultural wellbeing. Yet not all South Australians have reliable access to safe and affordable drinking water. This is particularly an issue for some regional and remote communities. These communities face specific issues and challenges when it comes to the provision of water services, including small economies of scale, poor quality water sources, ageing infrastructure, and high operating costs. Fragmented arrangements for service delivery in remote and regional water services contribute to policy inconsistencies, leaving some under-serviced communities with poor (sometimes unsafe), unreliable and high-cost water services.

To ensure that everyone in SA has access to safe, reliable and affordable drinking water, SACOSS has called for:

- an extension to the scope of the planned water security stocktake of self-supplied remote communities to all remote communities, both inside and outside of SA Water's network
- the development of a policy that outlines a basic level of service to apply to all remote communities, both inside and outside of SA Water's network
- water security planning in regional and remote communities to be undertaken together with communities
- the extension of the application of the Community Service Obligations (CSOs) to all residential drinking water service providers
- a commitment to interim measures to deliver clean and safe water to communities in need, until such time as sustainable access to safe water is established.

### Commentary

There have been no new budget commitments that specifically provide for remote and regional access to safe, reliable and affordable drinking water in line with SACOSS' policy recommendations. The budget provides measures reflecting the government's focus on delivering the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, the Northern Water Supply Project and an allocation to accelerate the development of the Water Allocation Plan for the Limestone Coast. Whilst these are welcome measures, SACOSS is concerned to ensure the renewed focus on the River Murray and a largely exploration and mining sectors Northern Water Supply Project does not leave the water supply issues facing residents in remote areas of the state unaddressed. SACOSS notes and welcomes the government's Climate Emergency Declaration and in that context access to affordable drinking water in remote and regional communities remains a growing concern.

Key agency outputs for the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) include engaging with Aboriginal people on their water needs and interests, and identifying and addressing the state's current and future water security priorities through securing sustainable water supplies (AS Vol,2 p. 136), but no specific budget measures have been identified to support these outputs. DEW's current water security stocktake of self-supplied remote communities is likely to uncover short-term and long-term water security risks, which will require additional resourcing to address. An indication of future budget priorities and needs may be clearer following this body of work.

## Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
Department of Environment and Water	Commissioner for the River Murray  <i>\$2.76m</i>	Funding to establish the new role of Commissioner for the River Murray in South Australia (BM p. 42)	This initiative forms part of the Government's commitment to reassert the priority of the River Murray in South Australia, and is welcomed by SACOSS. However, we are concerned that additional funding to address water security issues in remote SA have not specifically been provided for within the budget measures.
Department of Environment and Water	Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan  <i>\$800k (over three years)</i>	Measure to accelerate the review and development of the next Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan (WAP) (BM p.44)	SACOSS supports the timely completion and review of all Water Allocation Plans in the state, but we are disappointed a state-wide analysis of water supply issues and requirements have not been provided for under the budget.
Department of Environment and Water	Northern Water Supply Project  <i>\$4m (over one year)</i>	Funding for Infrastructure SA to deliver a business case for a desalination plant servicing the Far North and Upper Spencer Gulf of South Australia (BM p. 98)	\$10m in total has been allocated to fund the business plan, with \$6m provided in 2021-22. This is a joint project with Oz Minerals, BHP and SA Water. It is unclear to what extent the project will focus on the need to deliver a sustainable water supply to local communities.
Department of Environment and Water/ Environmental Protection Authority	DEW Operating Savings  <i>\$11.4m cut</i>  EPA Operating Savings  <i>\$1.9m cut</i>	Cuts to department budgets.	It remains to be seen what impact these operating efficiencies will have on the achievement of key water and environmental program outputs

## 5. Cost of Living/Concessions

Concessions are one way the state government can assist with cost of living pressures faced by low-income South Australians. In a report on the concession system released last year, SACOSS identified a number of built-in poverty premiums and barriers to low-income people accessing concessions in our state. We are calling for reform of the system, with three big actions and 10 smaller changes to make the concessions system fairer:

- Initiate a broad review of all state government concessions.
- Extend all concessions available to age pension recipients to other Centrelink recipients receiving lower payments.
- Implement an additional low-income eligibility criteria for all concessions which is not based on receipt of Centrelink benefits.

### *Ten further specific concessions proposals:*

- Recognise both the Health Care *and* Low-Income Health Care Cards as valid forms of eligibility for a range of concessions.
- Recognise a range of concession cards for public transport, and waive concession-related transport fines after issue if the person can show that they were eligible.
- Introduce free public transport for all South Australian children and young people until the end of their secondary education.
- Extend public transport concessions for seniors to all concessions holders.
- Lift the income cap for low-income eligibility for the Cost of Living Concession.
- Increase the Cost of Living Concession for renters to the level applying to home owners.
- Shift from a flat rate to a percentage-based energy bill concession.
- Increase the shared-householder income limit for the energy bill concession to at least the \$18,000 limit set for the Cost of Living concession, but preferably to the Low-Income Health Care Card thresholds.
- Introduce a partial energy bill and Cost of Living concession for people on low incomes sharing a house with people unrelated to them earning over \$18,000, with the amount based on the number of household members.
- Introduce an additional concessions eligibility criteria to allow access for asylum seekers.

### **Commentary**

We were heartened to see an expansion of the concessions system in this budget and note that cost of living pressures arising from rent, grocery, fuel and energy costs will all create major challenges for low-income households over the coming years. We also note that current budget measures are either short-term or are not yet targeted to be inclusive of all those on the lowest incomes. For example, we strongly urge the government to extend

public and private transport concessions to those on the lowest incomes, for example other social security recipients, who will miss out on the announced measures. We welcome the government's agreement to undertake a comprehensive review and look forward to the outcomes.

## Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
Department of Education	Subsidised school fees  <i>\$12m</i>	\$100 discount on the Material and Services Charge for the 2022-23 financial year (BM p.26).	This measure is welcome, but fees should be reviewed for the future with concern paid to those on low incomes who are particularly impacted by cost of living pressures.
Department of Human Services	Cost of Living concession  <i>\$39.3m</i>	Doubles the Cost of Living concession amounts for the 2022-23 financial year (BM p.66).	We welcome the concession increase but would like to see renters having parity with homeowners, and access for those on very low incomes who are currently ineligible for the concession.
Department of Infrastructure and Transport	Free public transport for seniors  <i>\$5.2m</i>	Extends free public transport for Seniors Cardholders to include peak travel times (BM p.73).	This is a welcome measure, although SACOSS has long called for this entitlement to be extended to all others on equivalent or even lower incomes. We note also that there are opportunities to better target transport support to South Australians living on very low incomes, since the Seniors Card is not means tested.
Revenue Foregone	Outer Areas Registration concession  <i>\$12m</i>	Reinstatement of the Outer Areas Concession, a 50% reduction in motor vehicle registration fees for residents of some outer regional areas, e.g. Kangaroo Island (BM p.5).	We welcome support for those living in eligible regional communities who will receive this discount but similar concessions should also be available and targeted to those living on the lowest incomes in any part of the state.



## 6. Digital Inclusion

As more and more aspects of our lives involve internet-based platforms and engagement, those who struggle to participate digitally are at risk of being left behind. The ubiquity of the move to go digital across various aspects of our lives, whether social, economic or in education, health and employment, means there are multiple sites for responsibility in this area and a need for broad leadership. For this reason, SACOSS is calling for a planned and sustained investment from the State Government in digital inclusion. We provided input into the Digital Inclusion Strategy developed by the previous government (yet to be enacted) and asked for a commitment to a set of digital inclusion goals or benchmarks outlined by SACOSS (see below).

### *Digital inclusion goals for SA*

- All South Australians:
  - have access to internet connections beyond their mobile phone
  - have a base level of digital competency as measured by an agreed framework
  - are able to access South Australian government websites and information without barriers of disability, language, cultural background or data cost.
- All South Australian children in secondary school have their own access to devices and data at home to enable them to do school work, research and assignments, and online-schooling where necessary.
- All South Australians living with disability have access to adequate affordable data to enable the use of assistive technology appropriate to them.
- Public access points:
  - Every suburb and regional town has at least one all-weather public internet access facility with computers, printers and long opening hours
  - All Local Government Areas have at least one secure, non-commercial public wi-fi network accessible from multiple public venues.

These goals were developed in recognition of key gaps in support and access for those South Australians who are most likely to struggle to keep up with the digital transformation and subsequently be left behind, unable to access or engage with key basic services like education and health. We are calling for a significant (\$120m) state government investment to implement actions that ensure all South Australians have the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies.

### **Commentary**

We are again disappointed to see a distinct lack of funding to support South Australians who are most likely to struggle with the increasing digital transformation. We were critical of the previous government for directing funding to the digitisation of government services, without also providing similar investment to ensure that South Australians would be able to access those services.

However, we are heartened to see the government act on their commitment to retain Service SA centres and extend their opening hours so that more people in our communities can access these in-person services.

We note that there was no funding commitment within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to deliver on the Digital Inclusion Strategy that was completed by the previous government. We call for the government to urgently build upon this Strategy, so that South Australians experiencing poverty and inequality are not excluded from engaging in education and employment, and receiving support from government and social services.

We are also deeply concerned about efficiency dividends within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the impact of this on libraries, a vital frontline service that delivers tailored support to community members to participate online through skills training and access to internet and digital devices. We are concerned that communities will miss out on the volume and quality of the programs and resources that we currently enjoy, with no opportunity to expand and enhance these invaluable services.

Additionally, the previous government had allocated \$1m of the libraries' budget towards development and delivery of the 'being digital' program to boost digital skills in the community. We had hoped to see ongoing funding for this program, in addition to current library funding, to support its continuation; instead we understand it will now be wound back.

### Budget Measures

<b>Govt Dept/ Agency</b>	<b>Item/Costing</b>	<b>Description of Budget Measure</b>	<b>SACOSS comments</b>
Department of Premier and Cabinet	Extending Service SA opening hours and expand digitisation of government services  <i>\$11.9m</i>	Funding over two years for Service SA outlets, including the extension of operating hours for five Service SA outlets. Also included are funds to further digitise a range of government services (BM, p.100).	We welcome the Government's intention to extend access to Service SA centres, which remain crucial connection points for people who might otherwise struggle with online services. However, we note also that some of this funding will continue the digitisation of government services, despite significant monies already spent to do so. Importantly, this budget makes no mention of any initiatives likely to enhance digital inclusion for South Australians who are struggling to engage online due to barriers related to affordability, access or capability.
Department of Premier and Cabinet	Departmental Operating savings  <i>\$14.5m cut</i>	Cuts to department budgets.	Substantial cuts which may place at risk vital frontline services such as those provided through public libraries, decreasing opportunities for citizens without digital skills and access to participate using digital interfaces and platforms.

## 7. Climate Change

Climate change is of great concern to South Australians, and while threatening us all, the impact will be most rapidly felt by those on low-incomes, who are less able to protect themselves from the risks of a changing climate. SACOSS hoped for a range of climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives to support people most at risk from climate change and related disasters, as well as to protect and enable low-income households to access the benefits of energy efficiency products such as solar panels.

SACOSS has advocated for:

- Establishing and funding a disaster resilience and risk reduction fund to be managed by the People at Risk in Emergencies Action Group.
- Implementing a percentage-based concession scheme for home, contents, and vehicle insurance for people on low incomes, and resourcing non-government organisations to facilitate access to the concessions for communities that would benefit.
- Amending the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007* to include a representative of the non-government health and community services sector on the Premier's Climate Change Council.
- Changing the eligibility criteria for EEPS (the Emergency Electricity Payment Scheme) to abolish the debt cap and ensure those on payment plans and hardship programs, as well as embedded network customers are not prevented from eligibility or referral.
- Legislating to void any requirement for mandatory gas connections in new residential developments.

None of these initiatives have been funded in the current Budget; we will continue to advocate on these areas, and look for further measures that would constructively address this critical area.

### **Commentary**

SACOSS was looking for a serious commitment to climate adaptation and mitigation to be addressed across government in this Budget, particularly in light of the Government's declaration of a Climate Emergency on 31 May, 2022. Climate is a key risk in the areas of energy, environment and water, and natural disasters. The hydrogen plant, if green and successful, could be a game changer for SA's energy production and carbon emissions reduction, but there is little else in this Budget to address climate change or build resilience to the climate impacts that are already locked in. Schemes aimed at enabling access to solar for people who otherwise couldn't afford it, including the 'Switch to Solar' and Home Battery Schemes, have been axed, and better targeted schemes have not been funded.

Access to low-cost sustainable energy options for renters and low-income households is of critical importance, both in addressing the impacts of climate change and ensuring an equitable energy transition. It is unclear whether the government's calculated risk to focus significant resources on green hydrogen, while cutting the grid scale storage fund, as well as solar schemes and Departmental cuts, will deliver those benefits, or serve to empower and protect South Australian energy consumers into the future.

## Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
Department for Environment and Water	Conservation Council  <i>\$1m</i>	Funding for the Conservation Council (BM . 42)	SACOSS welcomes this because it will enhance community voice in environmental decision making.
Department for Environment and Water	The Greener Neighbourhoods and Greening Adelaide's Heart programs  <i>\$14.5m cut</i>	The Greener Neighbourhoods and Greening Adelaide's Heart programs designed to enhance natural greening and cooling have been cut. (BM p. 43)	If these programs were not effective, they should have been replaced with better targeted climate mitigation strategies.
Department for Environment and Water	Aboriginal Rangers  <i>\$5m</i>	Employ 15 Aboriginal park rangers by 30 June 2025. (BM p. 42)	This very welcome measure will provide Aboriginal employment and improve climate resilience in natural environments.
Department for Environment and Water	Port Pirie Greening program  <i>\$7.5m</i>	Lead abatement and planting programs (BM p. 45)	SACOSS is alarmed that this chronic health issue continues and welcomes efforts at abatement. However, we remain concerned that primary responsibility for these costs should potentially fall to the smelter's operators.
Department for Environment and Water	Funding for private landholders and friends of parks for nature restoration  <i>\$9m</i>	Measures to preserve and improve existing natural environments on private land and parks (BM p. 43).	Measures to restore the environment are welcome.
Department of Energy and Mining	Cutting the subsidies for electrical vehicle (EV) smart charging and home batteries  <i>\$30.2m cut</i>	These measures will see the EV Smart Charging Subsidy scheme cut and the phasing out of the Home Battery Scheme (BM p. 39)	The budget papers state the government has \$41m of other measures supporting take-up of electric vehicles, but it is not clear exactly that refers to.

Department of Energy and Mining	Discontinuing the 'Switch to Solar' program  <i>\$nil impact on budget</i>	This initiative allowed eligible concessions holders to exchange 10 years of energy and Cost of Living concession for a solar PV system.	The axing of this initiative as not been costed in the budget as the program was slated to start in July 2022 after a trial period in 2021. SACOSS is concerned there are no alternative programs proposed to enable access to solar for low-income households.
Department of Energy and Mining	Hydrogen jobs plan  <i>\$593m</i>	Funding to establish a new hydrogen facility in the Whyalla region (BM p. 38).	SACOSS recognises the ambitious nature of this project which could be of significant benefit in clean energy transition. However it is unclear what this investment may deliver for low income households.
Department of Energy and Mining	Grid scale storage fund  <i>\$20m cut</i>	Discontinuing the Grid Scale Storage Fund (BM p. 38).	The extent to which the Hydrogen plant will assist with grid stability and demand balance is unclear, as is the timing and long-term outcomes for consumers of the Hydrogen project.
Emergency Services	Australian Fire Danger Rating System  <i>\$600k (over two years)</i>	Implement the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System across South Australia (BM p. 31).	This welcome measure will ensure a consistent fire danger rating system is used in all Australian jurisdictions.
Emergency Services	Grants for farm firefighting units  <i>\$2m</i>	Regional capability community fund grant program for farm firefighting equipment (BM p. 32).	This will increase the resilience of communities at high fire risk.
Department of Infrastructure and Transport	Flood resilience  <i>\$10m (over two years)</i>	State expenditure to match Commonwealth funding (yet to be approved) to repair and improve the state's outback road network impacted by recent flooding (BM p.72).	These necessary works will improve flood and supply chain resilience on the outback road network.

## 8. Protecting Disadvantaged South Australians

There are a number of people across our community who are struggling to make ends meet and whom our support systems are failing. They are likely to be in urgent need of increased protections and support, including improved social services and financial assistance. In addition, it is important in a post COVID-19 recovery context that the non-government health and community services sector is able to optimise its ability to support communities in the years to come – this requires ongoing support for organisations which work in this sector. Through its *Cover the Basics* advocacy, SACOSS has called for a range of additional protective and supportive measures. These include:

### *Social protections:*

- Commit to passing legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14 years of age, without exception.
- Provide more detail and regular public reporting about meeting *Closing the Gap* commitments to reduce the incarceration of young and adult Aboriginal people by 30% and 15% respectively by 2031.
- Provide the option of extended care from 18 to at least 21 years for all young people leaving care, including those in residential care.
- Review the impact of the introduction of the ‘fee for service’ model on access to (and use of) the Communication Partner Service in police interviews and court hearings.

### *Financial assistance:*

- Remove the \$20.90 charge imposed on payment plans for state government fines.
- Remove the Victims of Crime Levy on expiation notices for those in receipt of Centrelink payments or an SA Government concession.
- Requiring all energy retailers to participate in pre-disconnection for non-payment site visit programs for all customers prior to disconnection, irrespective of meter type

### *Sector support:*

- Legislate and provide seed-funding for a portable long service leave scheme for all SCHADS workers in SA.
- Fix the definition of electoral matters and political expenditure in the Electoral Act, and/or exempt ACNC-regulated charities from SA election expenditure disclosure
- Implement a broad-based, collaborative review of the Associations Incorporation Act.

### **Commentary**

SACOSS is encouraged to see that a number of the Budget measures have indicated a response to the protective and supportive initiatives that have been highlighted in our *Cover the Basics* advocacy. In particular, we welcome the support to enable advocacy and support for carers and young people in care and transitioning from care. However, we are concerned that these could potentially be undermined by the lack of available public

housing and employment opportunities, as well as the below-poverty rate of the Commonwealth Youth Allowance – it is critical that these issues are addressed if all young people in this state are to be able to live good lives.

The significant allocation of funding to respond to the needs of children in non-family-based care remains a serious concern. SACOSS has long campaigned for a shift of emphasis towards early intervention and prevention, and keeping children out of care and with their families and communities. However, the Budget has directed significant funding to the crisis-management of keeping children safe. It is hoped that the proposed Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, and yet another review of the Child Protection system, will this time prompt a move in this direction.

SACOSS notes that our call to review the impact of the introduction of the ‘fee for service’ model on access to (and use of) the Communication Partner Service in police interviews and court hearings has not received attention, and we would welcome further attention being paid to this. Other measures we have recommended for additional financial assistance for people who sorely need it include waiving charges such as the Victims of Crime Levy on expiation notices for those who are on Centrelink payments, and the removal of the additional \$20.90 charge for choosing to pay a fine in instalments as part of a hardship plan. Also, requiring pre-disconnection site visits by energy retailers. We still seek to have these changes implemented.

The initiatives which focus on Aboriginal reconciliation and recognition are welcomed and long-overdue: monuments celebrating significant Aboriginal leaders; the establishment of a Commission on Aboriginal Incarceration; and funding to embark on the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* initiative. The Commission will require considerable resourcing and effort across government if we are to meet the Closing the Gap targets of reducing the adult and youth incarceration rates by 2031. The realisation of the targets would be further enabled by raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14 years, thereby keeping young people out of contact with the criminal justice system, and reducing the likelihood of their further involvement in later life. This would be further enabled by ensuring that children in the child protection system do not get caught up in the criminal justice system, as ‘dual-involved’ children.

## Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
Department of Child Protection	Child protection grants  \$7.6m	For services for children and young people in care and their carers, and young people who have left care, including \$4m for post-care support and carer advocacy services, \$800k to CREATE Foundation, \$800k to Grandparents for Grandchildren, and \$1.8m for a residential care Child and Young Person's Visitor Scheme (BM p.17).	SACOSS has lobbied for increased levels of advocacy and support for carers and young people in care and transitioning from care. This initiative is welcomed and it is hoped that <i>all</i> young people with experience of the care system will benefit from this additional support.
	Children in non-family-based care  \$108m	An additional allocation to provide funding for an ever-increasing number of children in non-family-based care and an expected higher growth of children and young people in care over the forward estimates (BM p. 16).	While it is necessary to respond to the needs of children in non-family-based care, it is critical that increased resources and efforts are also directed to early intervention and keeping children out of care and with their families and as a last resort in high quality forms of care.
Department of Human Services	Disability Community Visitor Scheme  \$1.8m	To extend the Disability Community Visitor Scheme to improve safeguarding and oversight for people who receive disability services (BM p.64).	This is a welcome initiative to ensure that some people who require support and advocacy get access to appropriate and quality services, and the necessary safeguards are in place.
	LGBTIQA+ Advisory Council  \$80k	This funding supports the LGBTIQA+ Advisory Council to investigate/report on issues impacting the LGBTIQA+ community (BM p.65).	While welcomed, this funding will probably be insufficient to undertake all the varied and time-consuming tasks outlined for the Council.



Minister's Youth Advisory Council  <i>\$80k</i>	This allocation funds the Minister's Youth Advisory Council to report to the Minister on issues impacting young South Australians (BM p.66).	It is hoped that this support will enable more young people to participate in sharing ideas, providing advice and actively engaging in democratic processes.
Domestic violence prevention and recovery hub  <i>\$1m</i>	To establish a northern and a southern domestic violence prevention and recovery hub to support people experiencing domestic violence, empower women, and raise awareness of domestic violence (BM p. 65).	This is a welcome initiative but an increased allocation of funding is required if we are to curb the current domestic violence crisis.
Victim Support Services  <i>\$2m</i>	This funding will enable the Victim Support Services to support victims of crime, and programs such as the Court Companions and Safer Places initiatives (BM p. 13).	This is a positive and supportive measure.
Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service  <i>\$800k</i>	This funding restores the previous cut to the service (BM p.14).	The restoration of these funds is welcomed and further resourcing for this service would serve to strengthen it.
The Gold Foundation  <i>\$1.2m</i>	This expenditure is directed towards supporting young people on the autism spectrum and their families, through the Gold Foundation (BM p.65).	Support for young people on the autism spectrum and their families is long overdue and welcomed. This complements initiatives for young people on the spectrum in primary schools.

Attorney-General's Department	Women in Small Business  <i>\$4m</i>	Funding to support female-owned businesses by providing programs, training and support via the Women in Business program (BM p.14).	With women being most affected by job losses during COVID, as well as the persistence of gendered employment inequities, this initiative is welcomed.
	Design and delivery of Aboriginal monuments  <i>\$1m (over two years)</i>	The design and delivery of monuments to mark the contribution of six Aboriginal leaders (BM p.10).	It is appropriate that significant Aboriginal leaders are being recognised and honoured, and it is hoped that further action and resourcing will be made to advance self-determination and the recognition of the history and contribution of Aboriginal leaders in SA.
	Commission on Aboriginal incarceration  <i>\$500k (in 2022-23)</i>	Establishment of a Commission on Aboriginal Incarceration to develop options to reduce the rate of Aboriginal people in custody (BM p.11).	The realisation of the government's commitment to Closing the Gap on Aboriginal disadvantage and to reducing the adult and youth incarceration rate by 15% and 30%, respectively, by 2031, will require considerable effort and commitment across government. It would be further supported by raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14 years, thereby keeping young people out of contact with the criminal justice system and reducing the likelihood of further involvement in later life.
	Uluru Statement from the Heart initiative  <i>\$2.1m</i>	This initiative provides funding to commence the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament, restarting the Treaty process, and establishing a truth telling process (BM p.13).	SACOSS wholeheartedly supports this overdue initiative; however, expects it will be necessary to allocate increased resources in order to realise this significant process.
	Continuation of mandatory fuel price transparency scheme  <i>\$1.8m</i>	This Scheme requires that all fuel retailers publish their fuel prices (BM p. 11).	In a bid to reduce the cost of living, wherever possible, this initiative is welcomed.

Courts Administration	Fee-free intervention orders  <i>\$160k</i>	This funding enables the removal of the initial lodgement fee for private intervention order applications where domestic abuse is alleged (BM p. 21).	This initiative is both a worthwhile protective measure as well as offering financial assistance to those who may need it.
Attorney-General	Fairness at work measures – extension of portable long service leave  <i>\$1.5m (over three years)</i>	This funding enables the extension of portable long service leave for the community services sector (BM p.11).	The extension of portable long service leave has been a long-term campaign led by SACOSS. This measure is a very welcome outcome.

## 9. Other Basics: Education and Transport

SACOSS considers education and access to transport as basic needs. We believe that a strong continuing education system, across the lifespan, is vital to ensure all South Australians can live decent lives and have pathways to employment, and economic and social inclusion. Similarly, transport is fundamental in enabling mobility and gaining access to education, employment and other services, such as health.

### Commentary

We were pleased to see significant investments in all levels of education in this Budget, with the aim to ensure that people have the support that they need to engage in education, and access to a range of learning options.

Transport access has long been an issue for regional communities, and SACOSS is pleased to see budget measures that address this through planning projects, incentivising maintenance or regional services, and delivery of new transport services in the rapidly-growing Adelaide Hills.

### Budget Measures

Govt Dept/ Agency	Item/Costing	Description of Budget Measure	SACOSS comments
Department for Education	Early childhood education  <i>\$74.3m</i>	Funding to establish midyear intakes of preschool and reception, and a Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education (BM p.27).	SACOSS welcomes investments in early education and we pleased with commitments made pre-election to extend public early education to 3-year olds. We are unsure why a Royal Commission is needed but we hope this will contribute to the design and implementation of a high-quality preschool system in 2024-25.
Department for Education	New technical colleges  <i>\$208.8m</i>	Establish five new technical colleges (BM p.25).	We welcome investments that support access to a range of learning and training options and particularly welcome investment in regional infrastructure in Port Augusta and Mount Gambier.
Department for Education	Upgrades and school expansions  <i>\$145.4m</i>	Upgrades for 19 public schools and expansions of two public secondary schools (BM p.25- 26)	We were pleased to see necessary maintenance and upgrades to public education facilities.

Department for Education	School-based autism, mental health and learning support  \$78.8m	Funding to establish specific autism support in public primary schools and 100 more staff for mental health and learning support in public schools (BM p.25-26).	These are welcome measures to address the need for skilled staff in our schools, provide targeted support to students in need, and ensure our education system is made more inclusive.
Department for Education	Teaching scholarships  \$2m	400 university scholarships in teaching courses intended to diversify course applicants (BM p.28).	Measures to support teaching students are welcome to bolster workforce and encourage diversity.
TAFE SA	TAFE facilities  \$5m in 2023-24	Upgrades to the Mount Gambier TAFE facilities (BM p.104)	We were pleased to see necessary investments made in this regional education facility.
TAFE SA	TAFE training courses  \$20.8m	Reinstate training courses in aged care, disability and early childhood, and investment in courses where skill shortages have been identified, including construction and hospitality (BM p.104)	SACOSS was especially glad to see the reinstatement of key training opportunities for the social service sector workforce. This may go some way to addressing skill shortages affecting the sector. The investment in other key skill areas is also welcome.
Department of Innovation	Adult and community education  \$4m	Reversal of cuts imposed on adult and community education (BM p. 87).	SACOSS welcomes the reinstatement of education programs for people who might otherwise be disengaged from mainstream learning, embedded in communities, which promote learning opportunities and career and future education pathways.
Department for Innovation	Tauondi Asset Sale  \$8m	Transfer of ownership of Tauondi College land and buildings to ensure the college is owned by Aboriginal people.	SACOSS welcomes Tauondi College transferring to Aboriginal ownership.
Department Infrastructure and Transport	Reverse privatisation of the train and tram network  \$1m	Review methods to bring South Australia's train and tram networks back into public hands	SACOSS supports public ownership of essential services and assets.

<p>Department for Innovation</p>	<p>National skills partnerships</p> <p><i>\$25.3m</i></p>	<p>Expenditure in 2022-23 to extend work of the Skilling Australians Fund, while negotiations are undertaken with federal government to continue the partnership (BM p. 87). Also, funds for a two-year extension of the JobTrainer Fund National Partnership to increase free or low-fee training places via the JobTrainer Aged Care Boost (BM p. 88).</p>	<p>We will be pleased to see these national partnerships continue, in support of greater training opportunities in our communities and to address skill shortages.</p>
<p>Department Infrastructure and Transport</p>	<p>Reverse privatisation of the train and tram network</p> <p><i>\$1m</i></p>	<p>Review methods to bring South Australia's train and tram networks back into public hands</p>	<p>SACOSS supports public ownership of essential services and assets.</p>
<p>Department Infrastructure and Transport</p>	<p>Improve public transport for Mount Barker and the Adelaide Hills</p> <p><i>\$29.4m (over two years)</i></p>	<p>Public transport improvements for the Adelaide Hills, including an express service fleet and depot, planning a Bridgewater Park 'n' Ride and expanding the Crafers Park 'n' Ride (BM p.74).</p>	<p>SACOSS supports improving the public transport offerings in the hills to increase usage of public transport.</p>





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