



# NSW BUDGET 2023-24

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**Overview: Our plan for NSW**

# Acknowledgement of Country

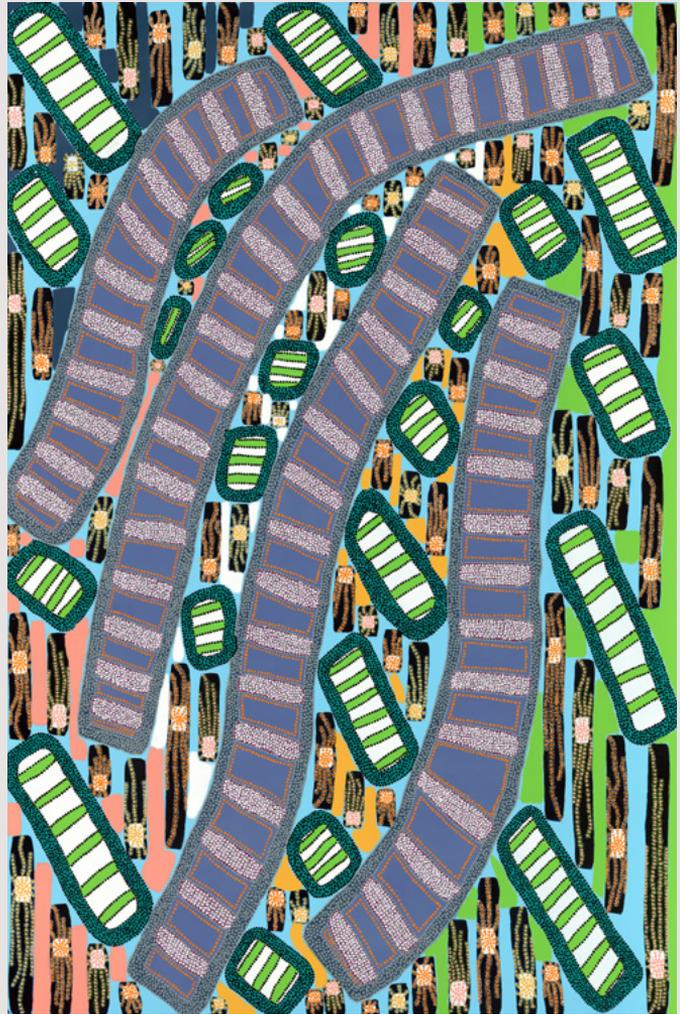
We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we walk with.

We celebrate the deep and enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and acknowledge their continuing custodianship of the land, seas and sky.

We acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices, and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.



Artwork:  
*Regeneration* by Josie Rose

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# Foreword



I'm pleased to present the 2023-24 Budget: the first budget since Labor's election in March.

We have taken office during challenging economic times.

The people of New South Wales have found their way to a new normal after COVID-19. However, we still face many of the challenges brought on by rapid technology change, climate change, and changes in global political stability.

These challenges and the lessons learned from COVID-19 are causing many societies to rethink the fiscal and economic strategies we employ to deliver a high standard of living and peaceful, stable government.

The challenges we face in New South Wales reflect these global issues. Like many people, we are transforming our sources of energy, looking for ways to house our people affordably, and working out how to improve equality and social connection.

Our greatest challenge, as always, is to live in harmony with each other, and with every living thing on the one planet we all share.

The approach of Labor in New South Wales is based on responsibility and reward, inclusion and opportunity.

Economic stability creates social stability.

Opportunity and reward rely on and enable diversity and cooperation.

Well-managed state finances are the first duty of a government which has a long-term plan to improve the wellbeing of its citizens.

## Meeting these challenges

New South Wales is a well-educated, stable, and peaceful democracy with abundant natural resources, thriving diverse cities, and a lifestyle that people envy the world over.

Even in the wealthiest state of a wealthy and lucky country, we cannot rest on our good fortune.

Every person in New South Wales should have an affordable place to call home: a secure base from which to start a family, to bring up children, and to set our next generation on a path to success.

All citizens should have access to health, education, and other essential services. We should respect and reward the people who provide those services.

Despite our wealth, many people within our State are struggling to pay for essentials, like transport, energy, and housing.

New South Wales confronts these challenges at a time when the former Liberal Government had continued pandemic-level spending well after it was needed.

Before this Budget, New South Wales debt was projected to reach \$188.2 billion by 2026, and higher interest rates are making many New South Wales debt repayments more expensive, limiting our ability to pay for important programs.

In this Budget, we reckon with these challenges and begin the rebuild.

We have made better choices. Sometimes difficult ones. But we have made the right choices, and because of them, we can deliver the programs and services that our people need.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC**  
NSW Treasurer

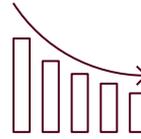


# Budget highlights



**\$844.0  
million**

surplus in 2024-25



**\$14.8  
billion**

reduction in gross debt by June 2026, without privatising public assets



**\$3.6  
billion**

to fix essential services



**\$2.5  
billion**

to recruit and retain health workers



**\$9.8  
billion**

to build and upgrade our schools and TAFE



**\$72.3  
billion**

for new and improved transport infrastructure



**\$2.2  
billion**

Housing and Infrastructure Plan



**\$1.8  
billion**

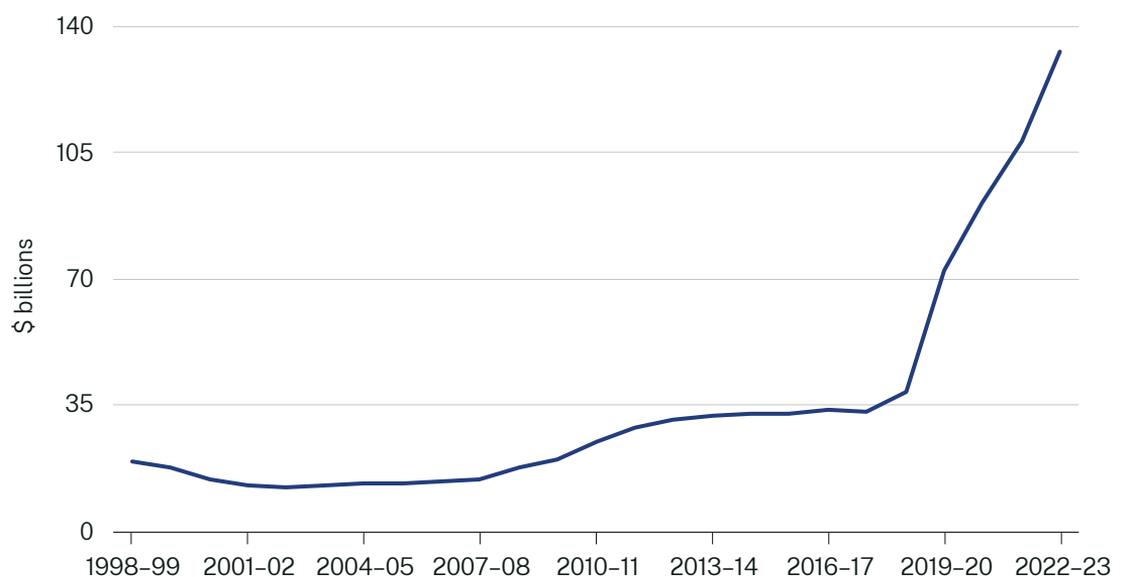
for Renewable Energy Zones and the Energy Security Corporation

# A significant Budget repair task

In the 15 months before March 2023, **\$27.7 billion** (over four years) of new policy measures were added to the Budget.

In this Budget, we have taken action to stabilise our fiscal position and lower our debt so we can sustainably deliver services and cost-of-living support for the people of New South Wales.

**Chart 1: Gross debt has risen by \$94 billion from June 2019 to June 2023**



Source: NSW Treasury

## State of the Budget upon taking office

At the change of government in March, the NSW Government was facing gross debt of **\$188.2 billion** by June 2026 (22.3 per cent of gross state product). This would have been the largest debt in the State's history, equivalent to \$22,019 per person, and projected to cost New South Wales **\$7 billion** in interest payments in 2025-26 alone as at the 2023 Pre-election Budget Update.

Upon taking office, the new government was also warned that **\$7 billion** of difficult-to-avoid pressures and important programs were without funding. These included programs to protect children who needed Out-of-Home Care, cyber security projects, and 1,112 nurses not funded after 2023-24.

The fiscal position had also been masked by returns from the NSW Generations Fund and the accounting treatment of rail spending through the Transport Asset Holding Entity.

In recent years, growth in the State's expenses has far outpaced revenues, with expense growth peaking in 2021-22 at 25.0 per cent. However, in the 15 months to March 2023, **\$27.7 billion** of new policy measures were added to the Budget over four years, worsening the State's financial position.

This high level of spending left the State with limited buffers in the event of an economic or financial future shock. Combined with the lack of funding for some ongoing programs, many essential services were at risk and under pressure.

Major infrastructure projects have been beset by substantial cost escalation and require fairer distribution of investment across the State.

By 2026-27, interest as a share of revenue will be the highest it has been since 1996, meaning more money to bondholders and less to essential services.

Without targeted and disciplined intervention, these fiscal pressures would have reduced the quality and quantity of services the State is able to deliver for the people of New South Wales.



# \$7.0 billion

difficult-to-avoid pressures



# 5 years

of deficits  
(2019-20 to 2023-24)



# \$188.2 billion

projected gross debt  
by 2026

# Economic and fiscal outlook



## Economic outlook

Economic activity in New South Wales has broadly rebounded following COVID-19. However, the benefits of increased economic activity are not being enjoyed equally and the outlook is challenging.

Income per person is not expected to grow any faster than inflation in the short-term. Family budgets are under pressure and the average household's spending is falling.

Households with lower incomes and people living in vulnerable situations are feeling this pressure the most.

While inflation has eased to 6.6 per cent in the June quarter, it remains high. Moreover, the prices of essential goods and services are growing quickly, like food and non-alcoholic beverages at 7.8 per cent and household energy costs by 24.3 per cent.

Housing costs remain a key concern for many people. Dwelling construction is below the levels needed to reach the Housing Accord target and to ease housing constraints. In particular:

- low vacancy rates and high demand have seen median rents continue to increase from the start of 2020 to May 2023 – growing at 18.9 per cent in Greater Sydney, 21.8 per cent in Western Sydney, and 34.6 per cent in regional New South Wales
- the Reserve Bank of Australia has lifted interest rates 12 times since May 2022, increasing the average new home loan repayment by \$17,300 a year
- from the start of 2020 to May 2023, dwelling prices have grown 27.6 per cent in Greater Sydney, 33.2 per cent in Western Sydney, and 47.6 per cent in regional New South Wales.

The cap on public service salaries has contributed to low wages growth, public sector vacancies, and essential service shortages. Since COVID-19, wage increases have not kept up with rising prices.

These are the challenges confronting the people of New South Wales which the Government is addressing through the long-term plans that are outlined in this Budget.

## Fiscal outlook

This Budget begins the task of repairing the State's budget position.

The Government's Comprehensive Expenditure Review has redirected around **\$13 billion** in budget measures, which will be reinvested into unfunded programs and essential services. This has allowed the Government to keep expenses in line with revenue.

This Budget projects a modest **\$844 million** surplus in 2024–25.

The Government has taken steps to reduce gross debt by **\$14.8 billion** by June 2026 relative to the 2023 Pre-election Budget Update. This is the largest set of gross debt reduction measures in the State's history, without privatising public assets.

Following the Government's Strategic Infrastructure Review, the State's infrastructure program will focus on delivering more schools, hospitals, and public transport. The program is projected to be **\$116.5 billion** across the four years to 2026–27. These improvements to NSW communities will be funded without new privatisation.

## Meeting the challenge

This Budget outlines the measures that the NSW Government will take to support households who have seen energy bills, tolls, rents, and mortgage payments rise rapidly.

It sets out our plan to invest in the essential services that are key to building a stronger economy.

# Rebuilding essential services for the people of New South Wales





# 1.1

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## Fair pay to fix our essential services



## Addressing our recruitment and retention crisis

The NSW Government is rebuilding our essential services by addressing critical staff vacancies with a new approach to engaging our public sector workforce.

In June 2023, the NSW Government took the first steps towards recognising the valuable work of our essential workers with the largest pay rise in more than a decade. The 4.5 per cent pay increase for more than 400,000 public sector employees was just the beginning of a long-term plan to support genuine wage rises and rebuild essential services in New South Wales.

The Industrial Relations Taskforce, led by former Deputy President of the Fair Work Commission, Anna Booth, and former President of the Industrial Relations Commission, Roger Boland, has been established to fulfill the NSW Government's commitment to a new interest-based bargaining framework.

By collaborating with the State's workforce, we can modernise public services and address critical staff shortages by delivering long-term wage growth.

## \$3.6 billion Essential Services Fund

The NSW Government will establish a new **\$3.6 billion** Essential Services Fund to enable the Government to improve services by negotiating workplace changes.

After 12 years, the NSW public sector has critical vacancies across its workforce:

- for the first time ever, more teachers are resigning than retiring
- 1,112 essential nurses and midwives weren't funded beyond 2023-24
- our buses need another 370 drivers to avoid service cancellations.

Rebuilding our State's essential services requires a combination of service delivery improvements and wages growth to address these critical shortages.

The Essential Services Fund reinforces our commitment to a new bargaining framework by setting aside the funds to support public service improvements and deliver higher wages for thousands of our essential workers.

**Better  
pay**



**4.5%**

fast-tracked  
pay rise

**End the  
wages  
cap**



**to retain  
and recruit**

**Respect  
and  
reward**



**interest-based  
bargaining  
reform**

# 1.2

## Health



## Rebuilding essential health services

Everyone deserves world class healthcare. To deliver better healthcare in New South Wales, we need to respect and reward nurses, paramedics, and healthcare workers in our hospitals and health facilities.

The NSW Government is investing more than **\$2.5 billion** to recruit and retain healthcare workers, including:

- **\$419.1 million** for an additional 1,200 nurses and **\$572.3 million** over three years to enable 1,112 full-time equivalent nurses and midwives whose positions were funded temporarily to June 2024 to be made permanent
- 500 new rural and regional paramedics through a **\$438.6 million** investment
- delivering the largest wage increase for healthcare workers in more than a decade
- study subsidies for 12,000 healthcare students, at a cost of **\$121.9 million** over five years. New students will receive scholarships of \$4,000 per year. Existing students will receive one-off payments of \$8,000
- delivering salary packaging benefits for more than 50,000 healthcare workers at a cost of **\$170.8 million**.

## Improving access to health services

The Essential Infrastructure Plan includes a significant investment of **\$13.8 billion** in health facilities, including 600 new hospital beds across Western Sydney. The total package includes:

- the expansion of Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital to increase bed capacity for **\$120.0 million**
- **\$190.0 million** for upgrades to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
- expanding Canterbury Hospital and upgrading existing infrastructure for **\$350.0 million**

- **\$550.0 million** for the expansion of Fairfield Hospital to deliver more beds and increase capacity of the emergency and critical care services
- **\$700.0 million** for the Rouse Hill Hospital development
- **\$1.3 billion** to rebuild Bankstown Hospital on a new site to meet the growing needs of the community.

In regional communities, **\$3.8 billion** will support new and upgraded health facilities, including:

- **\$7.5 million** for the Milton Ulladulla Hospital and upgrades to the Community Cancer Service Centre
- **\$200.0 million** for the Bathurst Hospital redevelopment to serve the Central West
- a new Eurobodalla Hospital to deliver a sustainable, modern, and purpose-built facility at a cost of **\$260.0 million**
- **\$538.0 million** for Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital to improve patient safety and increase the capability of the health service to meet future health needs
- **\$19.0 million** to support free parking at rural and regional hospitals.

## Women's health and wellbeing

This Government is increasing women's access to healthcare with more than **\$100.0 million** to support new essential services, including:

- 29 new and eight existing McGrath Foundation breast cancer nurses for **\$18.6 million**
- support for 20 Women's Health Centres providing health and mental health services for women with a **\$34.3 million** boost
- 48 new Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and medical and forensic officers to fill critical gaps in healthcare services for victims of sexual assault across New South Wales for **\$52.7 million**.

# 1.3

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## Education



## The largest education investment in a decade

The NSW Government is increasing investment in our schools, TAFE, and public preschools with **\$9.8 billion** over the next four years to provide the public education system that our growing communities need. This includes:

- 24 new and 51 upgraded primary and high schools in Western Sydney at a cost of **\$3.5 billion** over four years
- 19 new and 35 upgraded schools in regional New South Wales for **\$1.4 billion** over four years including:
  - upgrades to Vincentia and Jerrabomberra High Schools
  - new high schools at Medowie and Googong.
- a plan to deliver new and upgraded schools in fast-growing areas. This will be backed by an enrolment growth audit to allow the Government to plan where to build new schools or to provide extra classrooms at existing schools
- a thorough VET review and **\$112.0 million** to meet the TAFE funding shortfall
- 1,000 extra apprentices across the NSW Government by 2026 at a cost of **\$93.5 million**.

## Better education and schools

The NSW Government is addressing declining education outcomes exacerbated by teacher shortages and neglected schools.

This Budget begins the long-term rebuilding of our education system, with an Education Future Fund to deliver new programs, including:

- permanent literacy and numeracy tutoring programs in primary and secondary schools in a **\$278.4 million** program
- 250 additional school counsellors to support students with mental health needs and disabilities
- doubling the School Breakfast 4 Health program to 1,000 schools for **\$8.0 million**
- converting 10,000 teachers and 6,000 administrative staff to permanent positions. As of September this year, 16,000 teachers and support staff have accepted offers
- a **\$20.0 million** boost to the Innovative Teacher Training Fund to attract the best teachers
- the Community Languages Schools Program at a cost of **\$17.8 million**.

## Respecting and rewarding teachers

We are addressing the teacher shortage crisis in our public schools by recruiting and retaining high quality teachers through a historic pay rise and moving more executives back into the classroom.

The four-year agreement is a nation-leading investment in our 95,000 teachers. It will ensure our children are taught by teachers who know that their contribution is valued.

The offer that we have made to teachers will make them the nation's best-paid teachers.

**Chart 2: Entry-level teacher pay**



Source: NSW Department of Education

# 1.4

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## Transport and roads



# Delivering the Essential Transport Infrastructure Plan without privatising public assets

The Government is rebuilding our essential services, better connecting our communities, and supporting much needed housing supply to address the housing affordability crisis affecting our State. Responsible infrastructure investment means that we are rebuilding essential services while delivering the largest set of gross debt reduction measures in the State's history that didn't rely on privatisation.

The Government is investing **\$72.3 billion** to deliver new and improved transport infrastructure, including:

- investing an additional **\$1.0 billion** in Sydney Metro City and Southwest to get this project back on track after delays and cost blowouts left it unable to be completed
- delivering the Sydney Metro–Western Sydney Airport, with six new stations to service the future Western Sydney International Airport with **\$7.9 billion** over four years
- **\$302.7 million** reserved for a Western Sydney Rapid Bus network to connect the communities of Penrith, Liverpool, and Campbelltown to the future Western Sydney International Airport
- **\$200.0 million** reserved to expedite the planning for the procurement, construction, and delivery of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 for Western Sydney
- seven new Australian-made Parramatta River Class ferries for **\$43.0 million**
- **\$71.1 million** to return Freshwater Class ferries to the Circular Quay-Manly route

- an additional **\$300.0 million** to upgrade train station car parks and make stations more accessible through the installation of new lifts, ramps, and footbridges
- doubling a state-wide investment in Active Transport Infrastructure with an additional **\$60.0 million**. This will enable local councils to deliver projects that expand cycleway networks and increase opportunities for walking, including in greenfield developments in Western Sydney.

The NSW Government is making a significant investment in roads infrastructure across the State, with major roads commitments in both regional and metropolitan areas, including:

- accommodating population and employment growth in Western Sydney with **\$2.4 billion** over four years for Western Sydney roads
- a commitment of **\$770.0 million**, including reserved funding, to establish an Urban Roads Fund to build major roads in metro areas, including improvements to key corridors in Heathcote, Riverstone, and a range of road projects
- a new **\$390.0 million** Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund to provide funding certainty to regional councils damaged by recent weather events and natural disasters
- a new **\$334.0 million** Regional Roads Fund to build new roads and restore damaged roads in rural and regional areas
- **\$106.2 million** over four years to deliver the M7–M12 Interchange
- **\$95.7 million** over four years to deliver technology improvements along the Western Distributor corridor between Sydney Harbour Bridge and Anzac Bridge
- **\$100.0 million** over four years to upgrade the Bells Line of Road.

# 1.5

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## Rebuilding and protecting communities



## Rebuilding communities

Since 2019, natural disasters have impacted people all across our State from the Northern Rivers to the Central West and the South Coast.

The NSW Government is investing **\$4.0 billion** in natural disaster support and response programs, including:

- **\$3.2 billion** through the Disaster Relief Account, which is eligible for co-funding from the Australian Government
- **\$299.3 million** for Transport for NSW to restore roads damaged by disasters
- **\$128.3 million** to repair critical water and sewage infrastructure damaged in flood events
- **\$99.9 million** for the state-funded Resilient Lands Program
- **\$96.0 million** for NSW Land and Housing Corporation to deliver social housing across flood impacted locations in Northern New South Wales
- **\$58.0 million** for Flood Recovery Support for the Department of Customer Service.

The NSW Reconstruction Authority will receive **\$121.0 million** to ensure communities are better prepared for natural disasters and can recover faster.

It allows the agency to support clean-ups and damage assessments, organise safe temporary housing, and rebuild essential services and infrastructure.

The Government's flood support and response programs include:

- **\$5.0 million** in 2023-24 to Resilient Lismore and the Reece Foundation to support the Two Rooms Project to help flood survivors get back into their homes following the 2022 floods in Lismore

- **\$3.3 million** to invest in a natural disaster detection system to better protect communities in high-risk areas
- **\$2.0 million** to Tweed Shire Council urban flood resilience and mitigation projects, identified by the Murwillumbah Central Business District Drainage Study.

## Police and Emergency Services

The Government is providing additional resources where our communities' needs are growing.

### Police

We are beginning the rebuild with an immediate program including:

- 15 new police officers to achieve 24/7 policing and community safety in the fast-growing Murwillumbah area at a cost of **\$6.9 million**
- 20 new police officers in Western Sydney to keep our community safe
- enhancing the State's Forensic Analytical Science Service with **\$12.0 million**
- creating a Criminal Assets Confiscation Team at a cost of **\$15.4 million** to disrupt organised criminal activity
- continuing the Police Force Academy upgrade in Goulburn for **\$60.0 million**.

### Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW)

- a purpose-built emergency operations centre for the South Coast, bringing the total investment to **\$20.0 million**
- upgrades to FRNSW stations in Sutherland, Engadine, Helensburgh, Thirroul, and Coledale to enhance community safety with **\$5.0 million**
- **\$2.0 million** upgrades to the FRNSW station in Moss Vale to enhance community safety.



# Cost-of-living support

2

# 2.1

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## Housing



## Confronting the housing crisis

Housing affordability and availability is the biggest single pressure facing household budgets, with mortgage payments or rent the largest expense for most households.

### The affordability and supply crisis

- Dwelling prices rose 27.6 per cent in Greater Sydney and 47.6 per cent in regional New South Wales from the start of January 2020 to May 2023.
- Rents in NSW have increased by 23.2 per cent from the start of January 2020 to May 2023 and vacancy rates remain below 2.0 per cent in both Greater Sydney and in regional New South Wales.
- A typical dual-income household in New South Wales would now need 30.9 per cent of their after tax earnings to service a new mortgage, up from 21.3 per cent before COVID-19.

### Help for renters and first home buyers

People buying their first home will save up to **\$30,735** through an expanded **First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme**.

The NSW Government is providing immediate support with the rental reform package.

Addressing the chronic shortage of housing requires a long-term plan. The Faster Planning Program, Essential Housing package, and **\$2.2 billion** investment in new housing and infrastructure will begin to address the historic neglect of new housing supply.

### Better solutions for victim-survivors of domestic violence

The Government is supporting long-term housing for domestic and family violence victim-survivors with a **\$13.0 million** expansion to the Shared Equity Home Buyer Helper.

## A long term plan

- Rental reform
- Supporting First Home Buyers
- **\$38.7 million** Faster Planning Program
- **\$2.2 billion** Housing and Infrastructure Plan
- Homes NSW backed by the **\$224 million** Essential Housing Package



# \$30,735

maximum stamp duty discount for first home buyers



# \$60.0 million

Build to Rent trials

## Rental reform

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- The appointment of a state-first NSW Rental Commissioner. The NSW Rental Commissioner will work with Government to design and implement changes to make renting in New South Wales fairer, more affordable, and more secure.
- Ensuring a fair deal for renters by:
  - implementing a Portable Rental Bonds Scheme
  - protecting renters from unfair evictions by legislating reasonable grounds for ending a lease
  - making it easier for renters to have pets in homes.
- Supporting new Build to Rent trials in the South Coast and Northern Rivers with **\$60.0 million**.

## Supporting First Home Buyers

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Five out of every six first home buyers will pay no stamp duty, or a concessional rate after the Government expanded stamp duty exemptions and concessions from 1 July 2023.

The expanded First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme supports first home buyers with a stamp duty exemption for purchases up to \$800,000, and a concession for purchases between \$800,000 and \$1 million.

Preliminary figures reveal that more than 1,000 first home buyers purchasing in the \$650,000 to \$800,000 range enjoyed a full exemption from stamp duty in July under the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme.

By focusing the eligibility for the scheme on around 84 per cent of first home buyers who pay less than \$1 million for their first home, the Government has been able to re-direct **\$691.0 million** to those who need it most.

## Faster Planning Program

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- **\$24.0 million** to establish a NSW Building Commission to support high quality housing and protect home buyers from sub-standard buildings.
- **\$9.1 million** to assess housing supply opportunities across government-owned sites, including for the delivery of new social housing.
- **\$5.6 million** for an artificial intelligence pilot to deliver planning system efficiencies.
- Overhauling and simplifying the planning system by redirecting resources from the Greater Cities Commission and Western Parkland City Authority.

## \$2.2 billion Housing and Infrastructure Plan

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- **\$300.0 million** reinvested in Landcom to accelerate the construction of thousands of new dwellings, with 30 per cent for affordable housing.
- **\$400.0 million** reserved in Restart NSW for the new Housing Infrastructure Fund, to deliver infrastructure that will unlock housing across the State.
- **\$1.5 billion** for housing related infrastructure through the Housing and Productivity Contribution.

## Homes NSW backed by the Essential Housing Package

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Homes NSW will be established to deliver better outcomes for public and social housing tenants, deliver more affordable and social housing, and reduce the number of homeless people in New South Wales.

The **\$224.0 million** Essential Housing Package includes:

- **\$70.0 million** debt financing to accelerate the delivery of social, affordable, and private homes primarily in regional New South Wales
- **\$35.3 million** to continue to provide housing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through Services Our Way
- **\$35.0 million** to support critical maintenance for social housing
- **\$20.0 million** reserved in Restart NSW for dedicated mental health housing
- **\$15.0 million** to establish a NSW Housing Fund for urgent priority housing and homelessness measures to confront the housing crisis
- **\$11.3 million** to extend the Together Home program
- **\$11.0 million** urgent funding injection to Temporary Accommodation in 2023-24 to address rising homelessness
- **\$10.5 million** urgent funding injection to the Community Housing Leasing Program
- **\$10.0 million** Modular Housing Trial to deliver faster quality social housing
- **\$5.9 million** urgent funding in 2023-24 to allow Specialist Homelessness Services to address increasing demand.

In addition, the Government will permanently expand the number of social housing dwellings by around 1,500 through the **\$610.1 million** Commonwealth Social Housing Accelerator program.

# 2.2

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## Energy



## Reliable and affordable energy

The NSW Government is ensuring a secure supply of clean, affordable electricity for New South Wales with a long-term energy investment plan and immediate energy bill relief for families.

### National Energy Bill Relief

Under the National Energy Bill Relief payment, introduced in July 2023 in partnership with the Australian Government, the NSW Government is providing support to:

- 1.6 million eligible families, pensioners, low-income households, veterans, carers, and self-funded retirees with a \$500 electricity rebate that will be automatically applied to bills in 2023-24
- more than 300,000 eligible businesses using less than 100 MWh of electricity per year that will receive a one-off \$650 bill relief payment towards their electricity bill in 2023-24.

## Priority energy relief to continue

This Budget includes new funding to expand energy relief beyond 2023-24 to provide families with crucial cost-of-living relief.

Energy bill relief will be extended from 1 July 2024 for families, seniors, and households struggling with the cost of living, with a major expansion of energy rebate schemes to help support households while long term investments begins.

This includes:

- increasing the **Family Energy Rebate** to **\$250**
- increasing the **Seniors Energy Rebate** to **\$250**
- increasing the **Low-Income Household Rebate** and **Medical Energy Rebate** to **\$350**
- increasing the value for each equipment type up to **\$1,639** under the **Life Support Rebate**.

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## A clean energy future

The NSW Government will get the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap back on track with the largest investment in renewable energy in the history of New South Wales. The \$1.8 billion investment will roll out critical transmission and energy storage solutions, including:

- putting the State's Renewable Energy Zones back on track with an additional **\$804.0 million**
- establishing the \$1.0 billion Energy Security Corporation to drive investment in stable and affordable renewable energy.

A further **\$263.5 million** will support an efficient and equitable roll out of electric vehicles (EVs). This investment will accelerate the rollout of EV infrastructure, addressing the most significant barrier for the take up of EVs.

# 2.3

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## Toll relief



## Toll relief for commuters and businesses

Over the past decade, Sydney has become one of the most tolled cities in the world. The NSW Government is delivering on its commitment to introduce a \$60 weekly toll cap and truck toll multiplier relief as a first step towards comprehensive toll reform.

The two-year program will provide immediate relief through:

- a **\$60** weekly toll cap for private motorists from 1 January 2024, assisting more than 700,000 motorists
- a 33 per cent reduction in the truck toll multiplier on the M5 East and M8.

The **\$615.0 million** toll-relief program will support motorists as the NSW Government embarks on long-term toll reform to create a fair and equitable road network.

### Long-term reform

The Government has commissioned an Independent Review of Sydney's motorway network led by Professor Allan Fels AO and Dr David Cousins AM. The review is underway and will investigate reform options to reduce costs for motorists and simplify the toll road system.

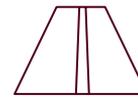
Household budgets will continue to face pressure from increasing tolls unless the road network is enhanced without handing over assets to the private sector. The current toll road network disproportionately burdens those who live furthest away from the city or have limited public transport options.



# \$60.0

weekly toll cap for private motorists

Toll



# \$615.0 million

toll-relief program



# 700,000

motorists will benefit from the toll cap

# 2.4

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## Caring for children



## The path to universal preschool

Quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has lifelong benefits for our kids and enables parent workforce participation.

The Budget maintains the **\$5.0 billion** investment over 10 years in the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund and also maintains **\$5.7 billion** in funding over 10 years for universal preschool access.

This Budget takes the first steps to deliver universal preschool access and ensure all families can benefit from early childhood education services, including:

- an **\$849.0 million** investment in new ECEC services, which will increase the number of available places and put downward pressure on prices. Initiatives include:
  - fast-tracking **\$769.3 million** for 100 new preschools on public school sites
  - **\$60.0 million** towards new and upgraded non-government preschools to increase affordable, high-quality preschool in the areas of most need
  - up to **\$20.0 million** to support the growth of not-for-profit ECEC services in high demand areas.
- **\$1.6 billion** of preschool fee relief from an expanded affordable preschool program, including:
  - saving parents and carers \$500 a year by trialling preschool fee relief for 3-year-old children in long day care
  - \$4,220 per year in fee relief for parents and carers of 3-to-5-year-olds in community and mobile preschools
  - \$2,110 in fee relief for children aged 4 years and older attending preschool in long day care centres.
- delivering additional investments to develop capability in the sector and support the ECEC workforce and as a critical precursor to universal preschool, including:
  - up to **\$20.0 million** for the Flexible Initiatives Trial to expand access to early childhood education and care, extend hours, and assist parents re-entering the workforce
  - **\$22.0 million** to recruit and retain essential early childhood workers including professional development and scholarships for tertiary education of early childhood workers
  - up to **\$6.5 million** for the business capability development program for leadership, management, and financial capability development
  - a trial of free or low cost ECEC for the children of ECEC teachers and carers.

## Supporting children and young people in need

An additional **\$200.0 million** for children who need **Out-of-Home Care** will provide permanency services and post-care support. The majority of this will go towards NGO service providers and the provision of emergency arrangements for children and young people who cannot live safely at home. Longer term, the Government is committed to implementing whole-of-system reform that ensures a financially sustainable system while improving outcomes for children.

This Budget also includes **\$17.1 million** to support **Kids Helpline**. This funding will be used to recruit more counsellors to provide additional counselling services, and increase the capacity of the Kids Helpline to ensure children and young people across the state have access to 24/7 services.

# 2.5

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## Making communities stronger and fairer



## Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The Government is committed to genuine reconciliation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of New South Wales and supporting self-determination and empowerment by establishing a treaty process. This Budget includes:

- a further **\$3.4 million** for the Stolen Generations Keeping Places project which affirms the Government's commitment to the Stolen Generations Survivors
- undertaking a 12-month consultation process with Aboriginal communities in New South Wales to inform a pathway to Treaty at a cost of **\$5.0 million**
- progressing the 28 co-developed Closing the Gap initiatives, developed in partnership with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, and delivered in partnership with local communities at a cost of **\$131.4 million**.

## Improving gender equality

In addition to major commitments for female-dominated sectors like health and education, and early childhood education and care programs that support gender equality outcomes, this Budget commits:

- **\$39.1 million** to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence, and support victim safety
- **\$30.0 million** for the Level the Playing Field Facilities Fund for new and upgraded facilities to empower women to participate in sport
- **\$300.0 million** to expand the Transport Access Program to upgrade stations to make them more accessible, safe, and secure
- **\$13.8 million** to improve women's participation and empowerment in the workforce through a Working Women's Centre and a Future Women's Jobs Academy.

## Supporting diversity

Our economic and social prosperity is underpinned by the diversity of the communities of New South Wales.

This Budget includes a range of measures to support, protect, and celebrate these communities, including:

- **\$3.0 million** to support community organisations in running significant events and festivals or delivering minor infrastructure projects to celebrate their cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity in New South Wales
- **\$15.0 million** for faith organisations to improve safety and security at religious institutions, including places of worship, schools, community centres, and buildings
- **\$47.8 million** for the Multicultural Communities Support Package which includes support for community language schools, the creation of a **\$30.0 million** Multicultural Capital Partnership Fund, the establishment of the Premier's Prevention Panel on Racism and Extremism, and a multicultural youth network platform
- **\$3.9 billion** in 2023-24 for cash and in-kind contributions for individual packages and other flexible supports under the NDIS to support people with a disability, their families and carers to achieve their goals and participate fully in the community.

## Enhancing wellbeing

- The Government has made a commitment to gambling reform with **\$100.0 million** to support an expanded cashless gaming trial, the delivery of harm-minimisation programs, and gaming reform.
- This Budget also commits **\$7.6 million** for a range of programs and important initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families.





# A responsible cost-of-living support program

# 3

In 2023-24, the NSW Government will provide more than **\$8.2 billion** to households through more than 130 measures to assist with growing cost-of-living pressures. These include:

## Housing

- concessions and exemptions from transfer duty on properties valued up to **\$1 million** for eligible first home buyers under the expanded **First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme**
- the **\$10,000 First Home Owner Grant** for eligible first home owners buying a newly built house, townhouse, apartment, unit or similar with a purchase price below \$600,000 or land and new house with a total combined cost below \$750,000
- private rental assistance through **Rent Choice, Advance Rent, Bond Loan** and other programs to help eligible persons, including those escaping domestic violence, set up and maintain a tenancy in the private rental market
- the **Pensioner Concession Rebate Scheme** which provides a rebate up to \$250 on ordinary council rates and charges for domestic waste management services to eligible pensioners, jointly funded by councils.

## Energy and Water

- delivering one-off \$500 payments to eligible households through the **National Energy Bill Relief Household Payment**
- **Energy Accounts Payment Assistance** for people experiencing difficulty paying their energy bill because of a short-term financial hardship, crisis or emergency

- the NSW **Gas Rebate** provides up to \$121 per year off the gas bills of certain Commonwealth concession card holders
- up to a \$600 saving on energy bills through the **Rebate Swap for Solar** program for eligible households
- eligible pensioners and low-income families are entitled to a concession for their water rates through the **Low-Income Households Water Rebate**.

Providing energy bill relief available for families, seniors and households through 2023-24 and increasing the value of the following rebates from 1 July 2024:

- helping eligible people with dependent children to pay their electricity bills through the **Family Energy Rebate** of up to \$250 per year
- assisting self-funded retirees who hold a valid Commonwealth Seniors Health Card with the cost of energy through the **Seniors Energy Rebate** of \$250 per year
- the **Low Income Household Rebate** provides up to \$350 per year off the electricity bills of certain Commonwealth concession card holders
- the **Medical Energy Rebate** of up to \$350 per year for eligible concession holders with medically diagnosed inability to self-regulate their body temperature in extreme environmental temperatures
- the **Life Support Rebate** provides annual assistance of up to \$1,639 per equipment type for people who need to use approved energy-intensive life support equipment at home.

## Health

- assisting eligible people in New South Wales, who have specific, short-term or ongoing health needs, by providing appropriate assistive technology through the **Aids and Equipment Program**
- providing ambulance services free of charge for certain concession holders and victims of sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse
- providing new parents with a **Baby Bundle** filled with essential items to assist in their child's early health and development
- free dental care for children attending schools participating in the **NSW Health Primary School Mobile Dental Clinics** program
- providing financial assistance towards travel and accommodation costs when a patient needs to travel long distances for treatment that is not available locally through the **Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme**
- free glasses and vision aids for financially disadvantaged residents through the **NSW Spectacles Program**
- the **Pre-IVF Fertility Testing Rebate** of \$250 which helps eligible NSW residents cover the costs of fertility testing.

## Education

- making preschool more affordable by providing \$500 per child fee-relief for 3 year olds attending eligible preschool programs in long day care centres from January 2024
- continuing to save families up to \$4,220 in community, mobile and public preschool fees or \$2,110 in long day care fees through preschool fee-relief programs
- fee-free training for the formal training component of apprenticeships and traineeships
- fee-free vocational education places for training in-demand skills and industries and fee concessions for Commonwealth welfare beneficiaries and people with a disability to undertake Certificate IV and below qualifications through the **Smart and Skilled program**
- the **Vocational Training Assistance Scheme** travel and accommodation allowance for apprentices or new entrant trainees who are required to travel more than 120 km round trip to attend day or block-release training.

## Recreation

- a new means-tested \$50 **Active and Creative Kids** combined voucher issued twice per year beginning on 1 February 2024 to enable kids to participate in sports and creative programs
- the **Learn to Swim Active Pre-Schooler Voucher** provides \$50 per child aged between 3 and 6 years not yet enrolled in school to attend swimming lessons
- **discounted or concessional National Park passes** for eligible seniors, pensioners, veterans, and visitors who renew their New South Wales vehicle registration.

## Transport

- introducing a **\$60 weekly toll cap** for private motorists
- continuing the existing **Toll Rebate Scheme** providing a 40 per cent rebate of up to \$802 to eligible drivers who spend more than \$402 on tolls in 2023-24
- the **M5 South-West Cashback Scheme** which enables residents to claim back the value of tolls (excl. GST) paid while using a vehicle registered in New South Wales for private, pensioner, or charitable use on the M5 South-West Motorway
- daily, weekend and weekly **Opal Card Travel Caps** for adults, children, youths, and concession holders, and the \$2.50 daily Gold Opal Cap for seniors and pensioners
- the **School Student Transport Scheme** which provides subsidised travel to and from school for eligible students on government and private bus, rail, and ferry services, long-distance coaches, and in private vehicles where no public transport services exist
- **Concessional Driver Licence Renewal** fees for eligible concession holders.
- exemptions to vehicle registration for selected social security recipients including pensioners
- the **Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme** which provides transport support for NSW residents who can not use public transport because of a severe and permanent disability
- providing a \$100 rebate to first and second year apprentices through the **Apprentice Vehicle Registration Rebate**
- **Free places to Safer Drivers Course** are available each year for learner drivers from disadvantaged backgrounds
- reducing the cost of towing privately registered caravans, boats, and horse floats on certain toll roads through the **Large Towed Recreational Vehicle Toll Rebate** for up to eight trips per month.

## Other

- giving carers of people with significant and permanent disabilities the **Companion Card** to access free entry into participating venues and events
- **Land Tax Early Payment Discount** provides a 0.5 per cent early payment discount where the full amount is paid within 30 days of issue of the notice of assessment in the land tax year
- the **NSW Seniors Card** and **Seniors Saver Card** which enable permanent residents over the age of 60 to receive discounted products and services
- the NSW Trustee & Guardian offering free preparation of Will and Power of Attorney documents for individuals eligible for a full Centrelink Age Pension and for those receiving Department of Veterans' Affairs Pension or Disability Support Pension and would otherwise be eligible for a full Centrelink Age Pension.

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# NSW Treasury

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## NSW Budget 2023-24 publications include:

Budget Paper No.01 Budget Statement  
Budget Paper No.02 Agency Financial Statements  
Budget Paper No.03 Infrastructure Statement  
Budget Paper No.04 Appropriation Bills  
Gender Equality Budget Statement  
Overview: Our plan for NSW  
Our plan for Regional NSW  
Our plan for Western Sydney

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52 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

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GPO Box 5469  
Sydney NSW 2001

