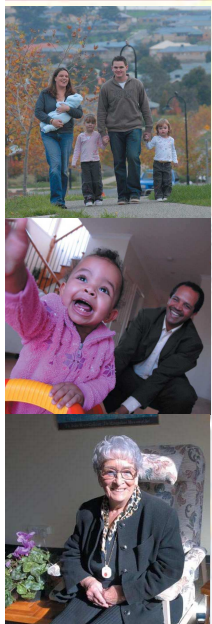


CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY

**Hon John Thwaites MP,
Deputy Premier and Minister for Victorian Communities**

Communities in Control presentation

FAIRNESS UNDERPINS SMART POLICY



A Fairer Victoria

- **Why are we emphasising fairness?**

- 1. Values**

- We believe in governing for all Victorians and giving each person a fair opportunity to participate in social and economic life.

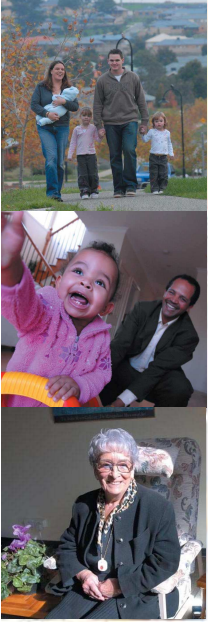
- 2. Economic productivity**

- Giving more people opportunity to participate allows us to harness more of the human capital in our State. Allowing people to miss out means we are wasting their talent and contribution.

- 3. Sound financial policy**

- Prevention is cheaper than cure. By investing in early intervention and prevention, we can avoid putting even more money into dealing with the problems in the long-run.

A FAIRER VICTORIA FOLLOWS MASSIVE RE-INVESTMENT IN UNIVERSAL SERVICES



A Fairer Victoria

Education

- 6,200 extra teachers and staff, 28 new schools built

Health

- 6,400 extra nurses, 29 hospitals being rebuilt

Police

- Over 1400 more police, 145 police stations upgraded

Transport

- \$10.5 billion plan for next ten years

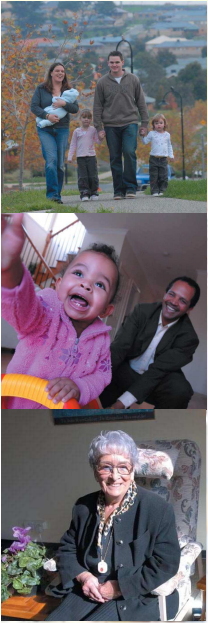
RE-INVESTMENT DELIVERING RESULTS



A Fairer Victoria

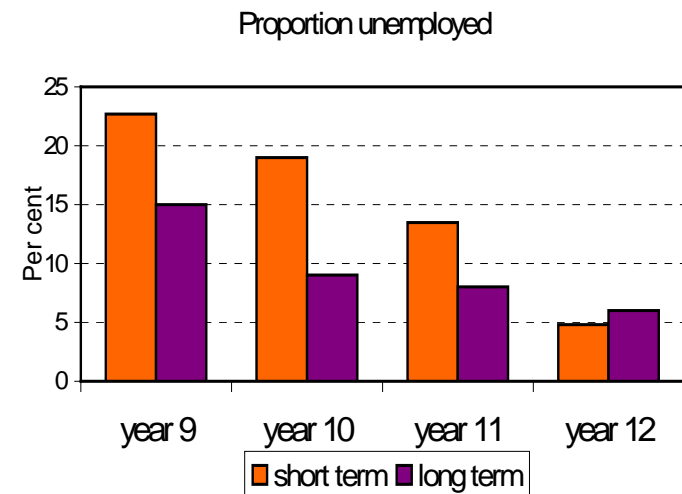
- **Strong results – Victoria now leading Australia on important social indicators:**
 - Kindergarten participation rate 96.4% vs national average 83.4%
 - Year 12 or equivalent retention rate 85% vs national average 82.7% (Victorian rate up from 82.9% in 1999)
 - Highest number of apprentices of any State
 - Crime rate down by 21.5% since 1999
 - Child protection notifications are down by over 4% in areas where Family Support Innovation projects established and substantiated cases of child abuse are down by more than 12% statewide

A FAIRER VICTORIA



A Fairer Victoria

- Despite these substantial improvements, the Bracks Government recognises that some Victorians still experience disadvantage
- We released *Challenges in Addressing Disadvantage* to outline this. For example:
 - Around 150,000 Victorian children live in families where no one has a job
 - Students leaving school before Year 12 have much higher rate of unemployment
 - Life expectancy of Indigenous Victorians is 20 years lower
 - People from the Middle East and North Africa have lower labour force participation rates



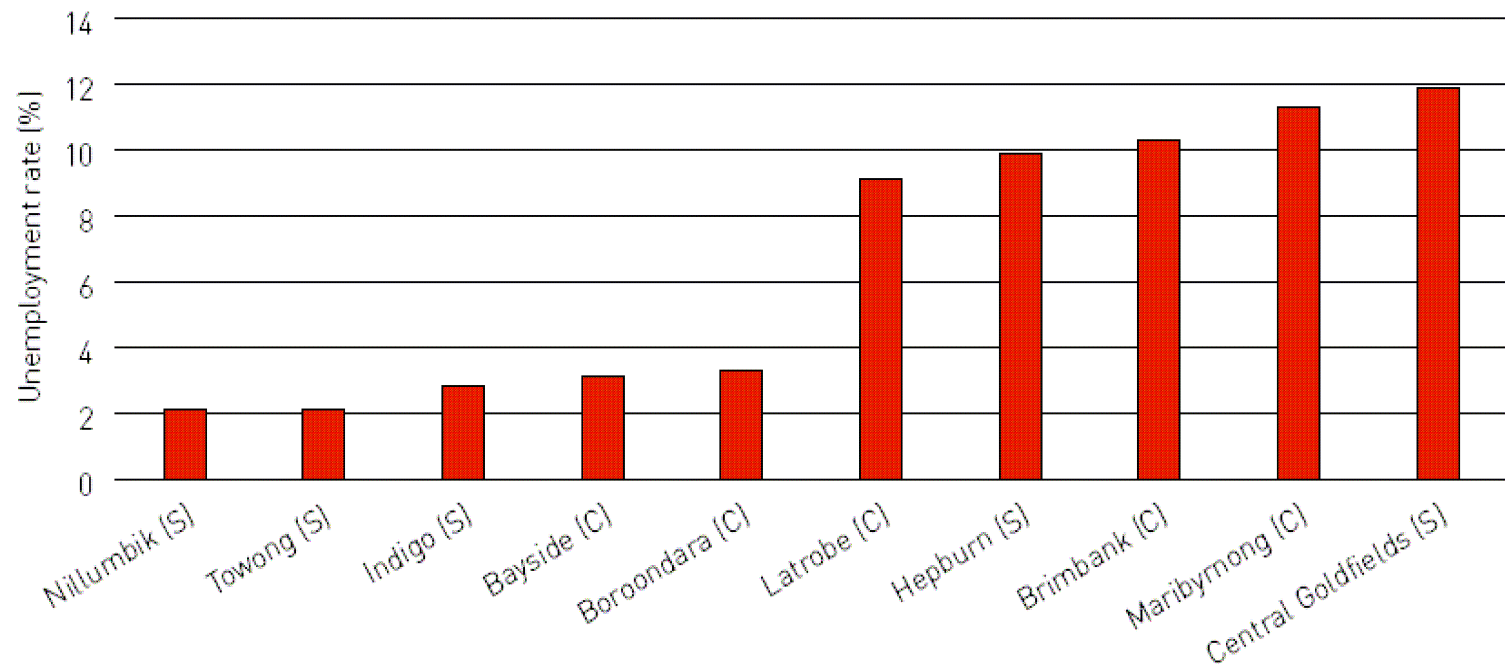
CONCENTRATION OF DISADVANTAGE



A Fairer Victoria

Disadvantage affects some places and people more than others

Example: Variation in unemployment across Local Government Areas



Source: Small Area Labour Markets Australia, Dept of Employment and Workplace Relations, Sept Quarter 2004

A FAIRER VICTORIA – SOCIAL & ECONOMIC BASIS

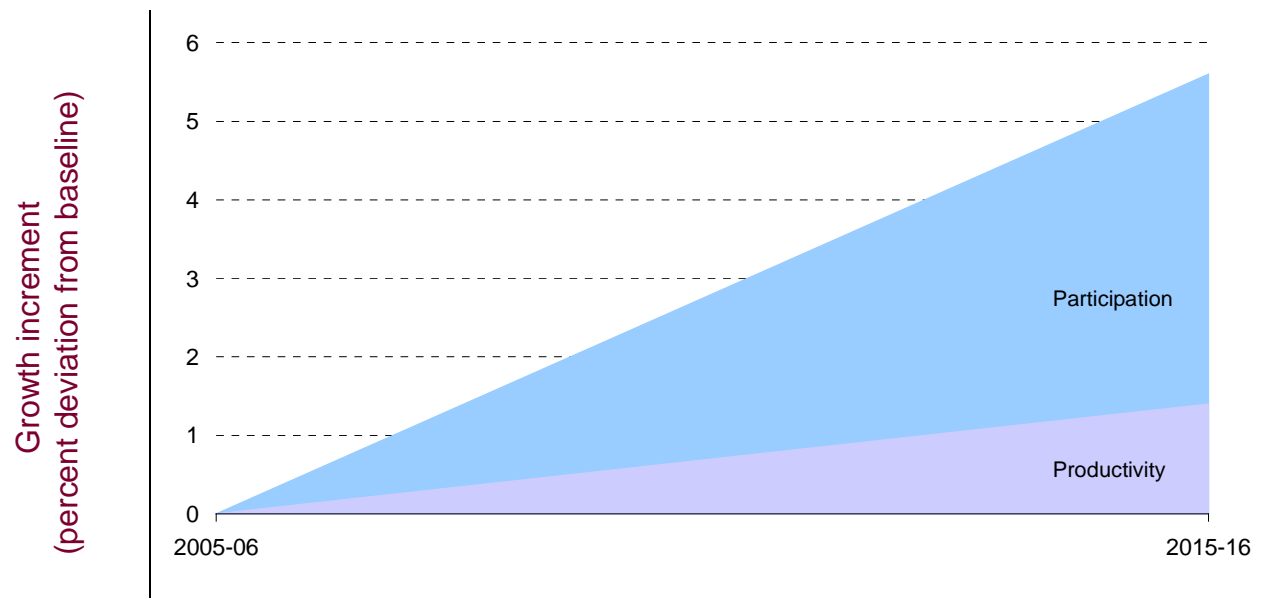


A Fairer Victoria

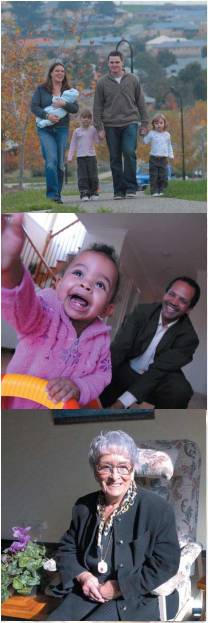
Strategic response to addressing disadvantage:

- rationale based on:
 - fairness
 - improving individual lives
 - Investing early to avoid spending more later
 - harnessing the State's human capital

Figure: Contribution of productivity and participation to future growth



A FAIRER VICTORIA – PARTICIPATION IS KEY



A Fairer Victoria

Why participation matters so much now:

- New challenges to our economy:
 - Ageing population
 - Skills shortage
 - International competition (China, India)
- Boosting participation in our workforce and society is best way to boost our economy

A FAIRER VICTORIA – OUR FRAMEWORK



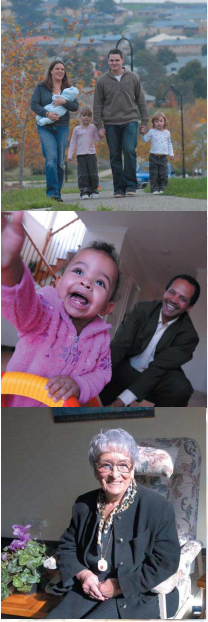
A Fairer Victoria

Framework launched last year, being maintained:

1. Access to universal services
2. Reducing barriers to opportunity
3. Support for disadvantaged groups
4. Support for disadvantaged places
5. Making it easier to work with Government and involving communities in decisions affecting their lives

Community input and decision making at heart of new approach to creating a fairer society

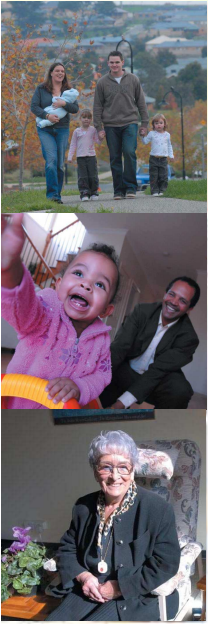
A FAIRER VICTORIA – REFORMS FOCUS



A Fairer Victoria

- Early intervention & prevention
- Community capacity to make decisions
- Linking infrastructure with social development goals
- More localised services and local partnerships
- Making Government easier to work with

A FAIRER VICTORIA – ROLE OF COMMUNITY

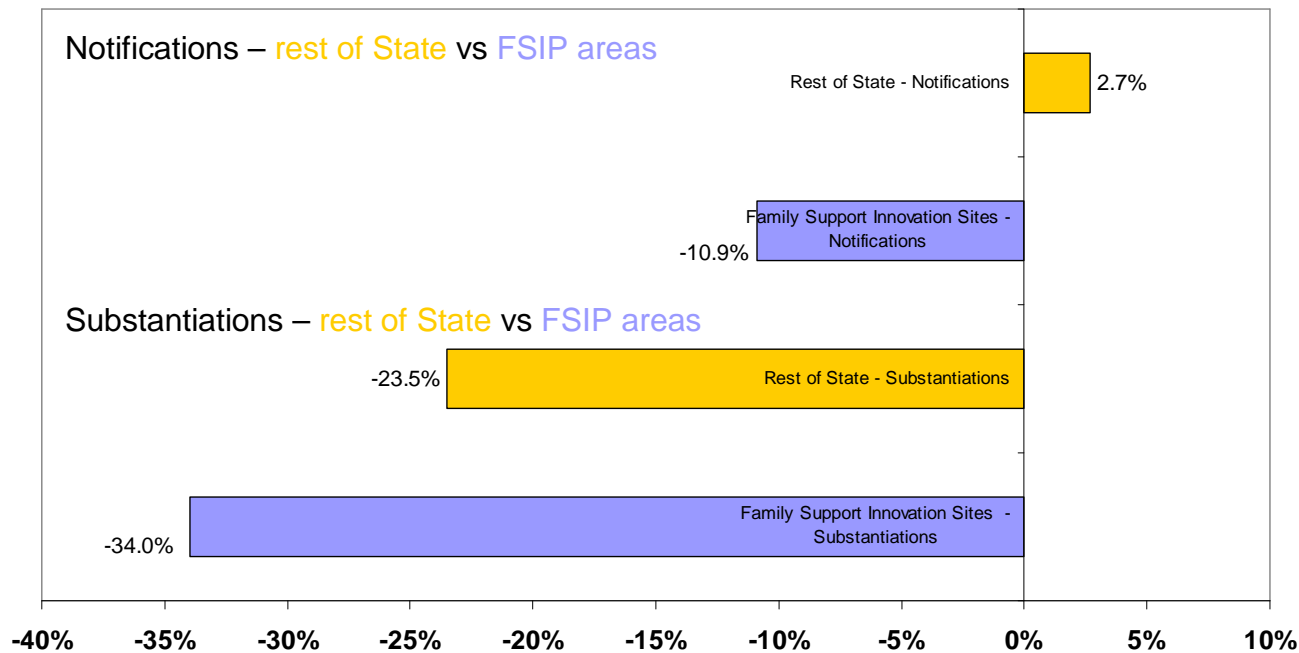


A Fairer Victoria

Community is central to the major reforms:

- Early intervention & prevention:
 - Communities are best placed to identify problems early
 - Eg: Family Support Innovation Program

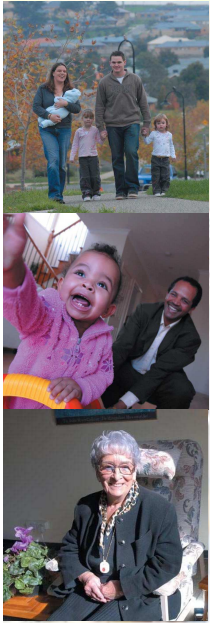
Changes in Child Protection Activity Levels - Round 1 Family Support Innovation Sites and Rest of State:
2002/3 compared to 2004/5
(Source: La Trobe University Evaluation)



A FAIRER VICTORIA – ROLE OF COMMUNITY

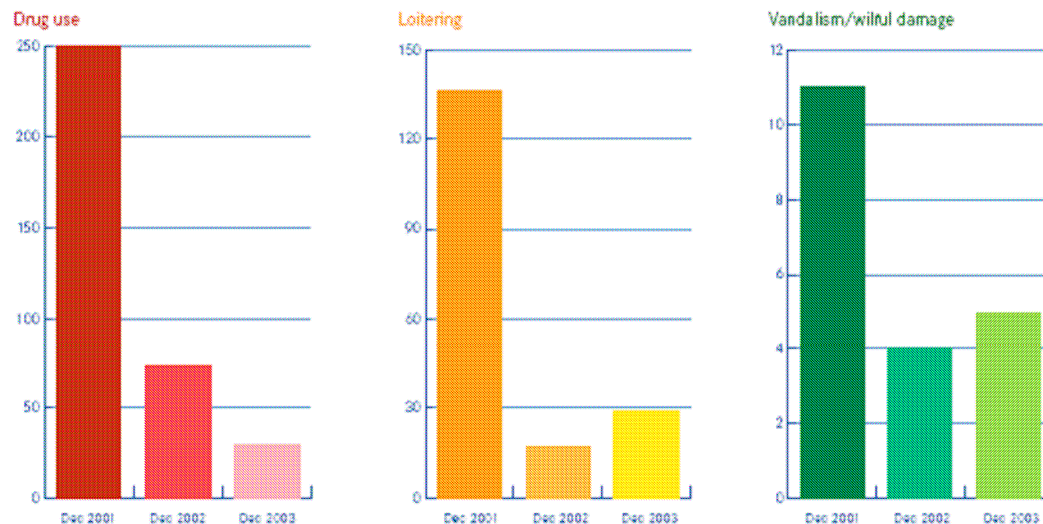
Community is central to the major reforms:

- Community capacity to make decisions:
 - Increasing community decision-making brings multiple gains
 - Eg: Neighbourhood Renewal Program



A Fairer Victoria

Security incidents at Atherton Gardens, Fitzroy

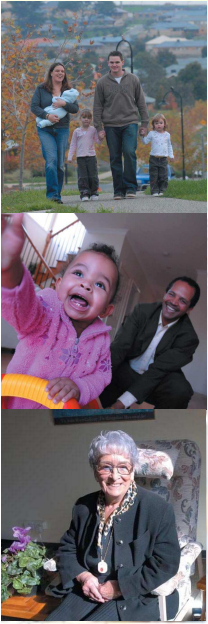


Source: security incidents (Office of Housing)

Department of Human Services



A FAIRER VICTORIA – ROLE OF COMMUNITY



A Fairer Victoria

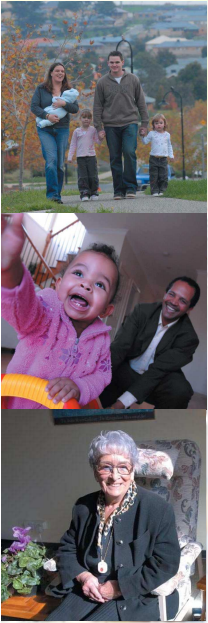
Investments centred on communities making own decisions:

- Neighbourhood Renewal – extended to 4 new areas
- Community partnerships – Frankston, Whittlesea
- Building Stronger Communities grants package – four grants joined up and offered to the LGAs in most need
- Local area planning funding – grants to councils up to \$150,000
- Volunteer resource networks expanded
- Funding to upgrade neighbourhood houses
- Establishing new U3As in areas of need
- Best Start program expanded to 14 more LGAs, to 27 total
- Regional Management Forums

FIRST INSTALMENT ALREADY SHOWING RESULTS

Example: Bendoc's new Community Bus – flexible community transport for a small remote community in north east Victoria

→ *community decided own needs, Govt supported their solution*



A Fairer Victoria

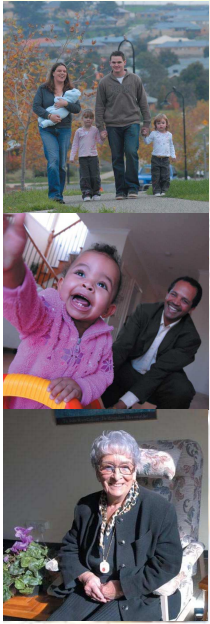


Derek
Manning,
from Bendoc
Progress
Association

FIRST INSTALMENT ALREADY SHOWING RESULTS

Example: New community enterprises providing employment and training opportunities in disadvantaged communities

→ *Women decided on best use of their skills, Govt supported them*



A Fairer Victoria

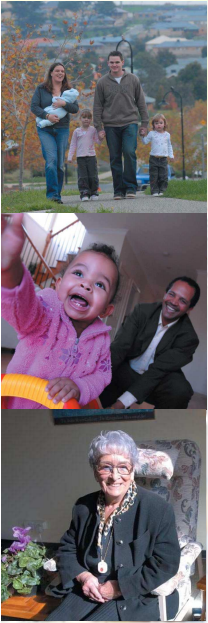


Sorghum
Sisters

FIRST INSTALMENT ALREADY SHOWING RESULTS

Example: Funding to help recruit and train new mentors and develop mentoring programs

→ *Giving local people their own ways to help local youth*



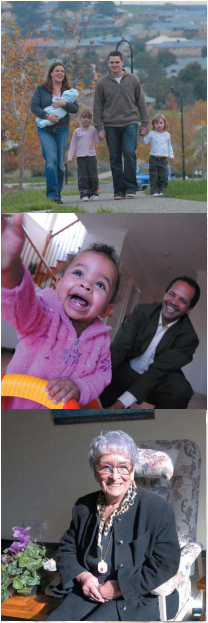
A Fairer Victoria



Shelley
[mentor] &
Vanessa
[Year 10] from
the Gippsland
Mentoring
Alliance in
Trafalgar

FIRST INSTALMENT ALREADY SHOWING RESULTS

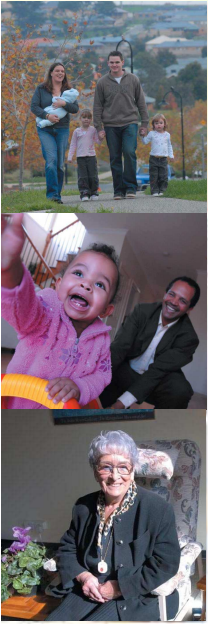
Example: Lake Tyers Breakfast Program is reducing absence days from school and providing jobs for local residents including vocational training qualifications



A Fairer Victoria



A FAIRER VICTORIA – OUR INVESTMENT



A Fairer Victoria

Substantial funding backs the reforms:

\$788 million last year across whole framework, including record boosts for:

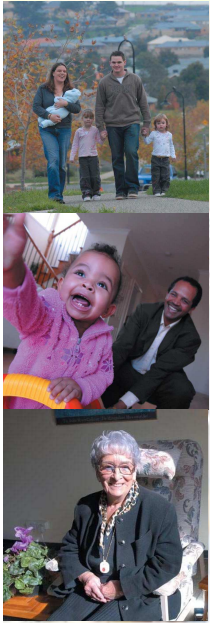
- Mental health,
- Disability,
- Indigenous Victorians,
- Family violence,
- Neighbourhood Justice

\$851 million this year, through 82 new initiatives, to build on reforms with particular focus areas ...

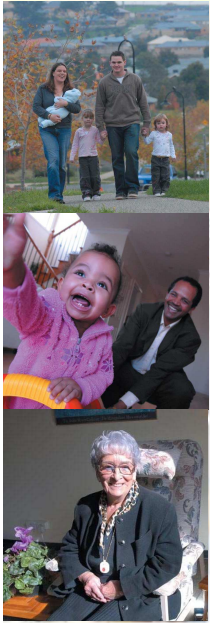
A FAIRER VICTORIA – NEXT STEPS

Particular focus this year to:

- giving children the best start possible in life
- meeting the needs of Melbourne's growth areas and Victoria's disadvantaged places
- homelessness
- multicultural communities
- improving community transport

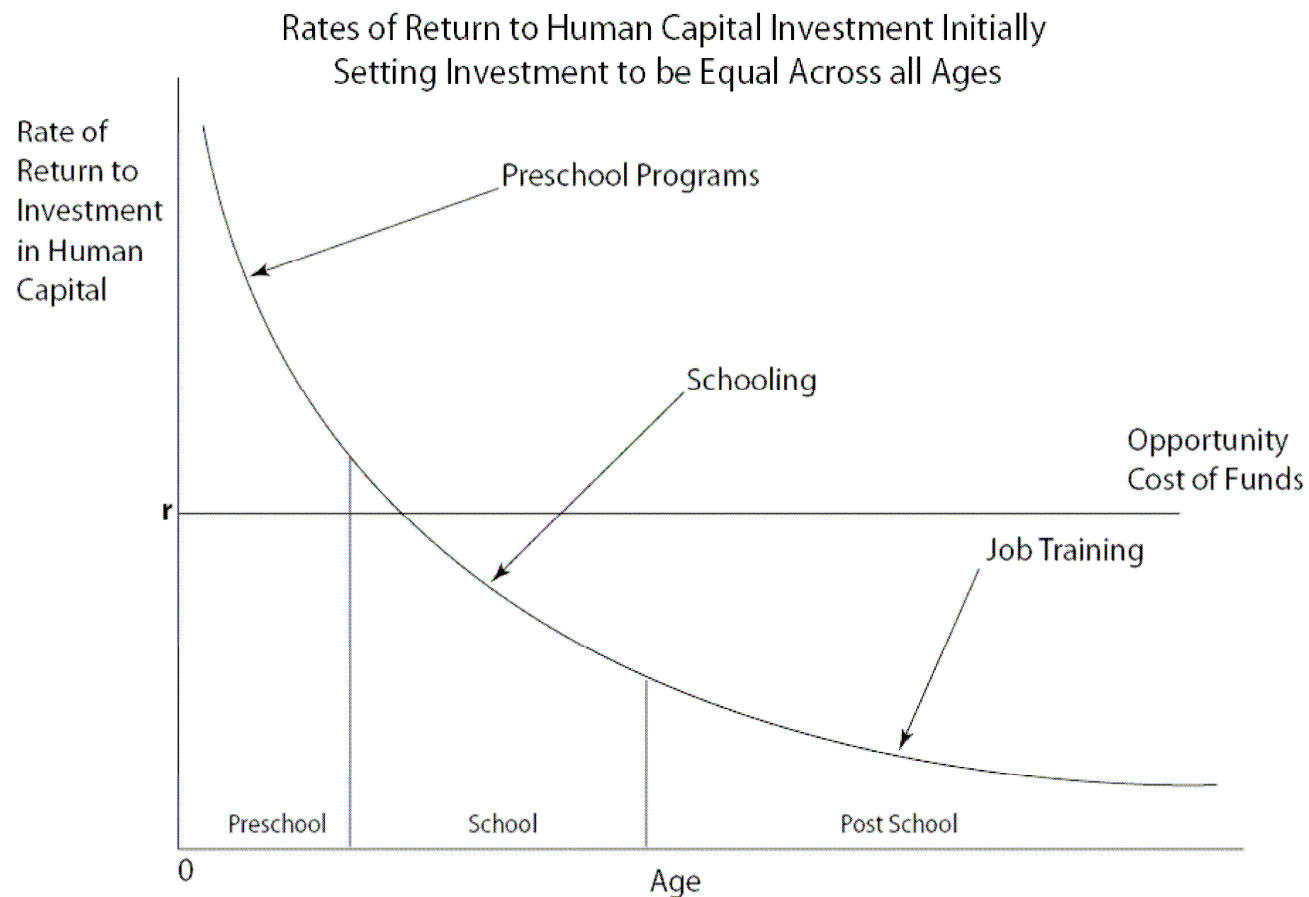


Focus – children's services



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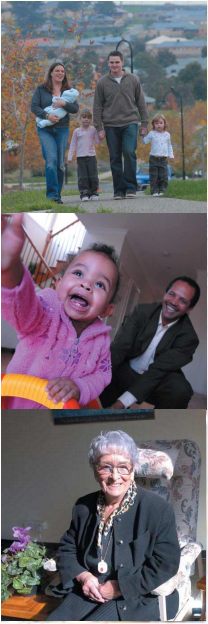
The value of investing early



Rates of Return to Human Capital Investment Initially Setting Investment to be Equal Across all Ages

Source: Professor James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in economics in 2000

Focus – children's services



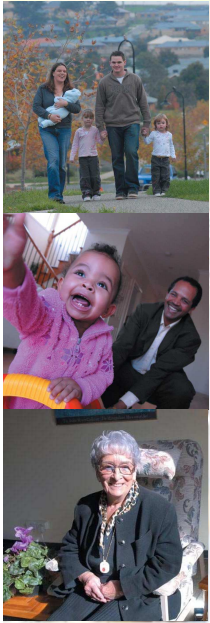
- **The value of investing early:**

Professor Jack Shonkoff M.D. confirms that:

- Brain architecture and skills are built in a “bottom-up” sequence, so:

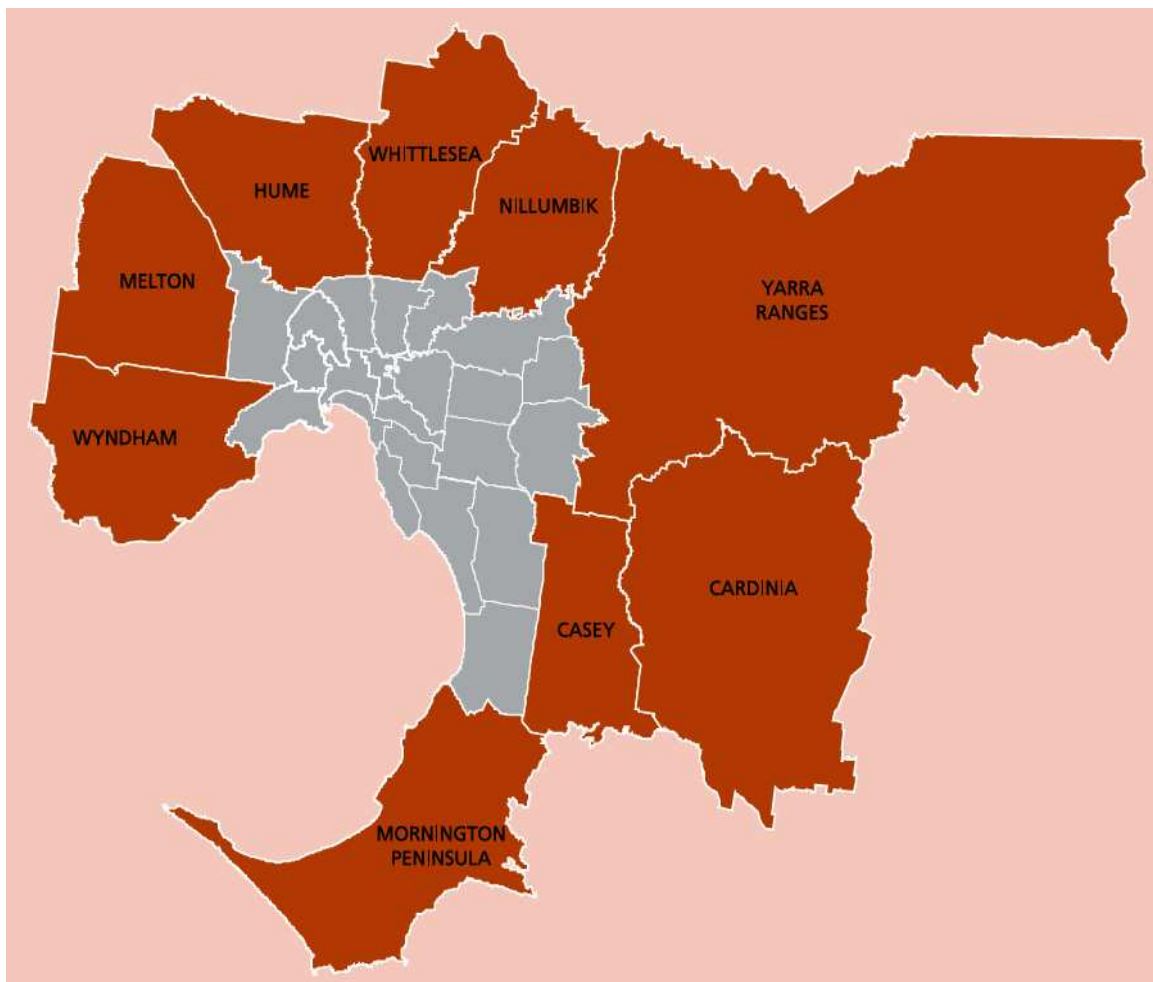
“Services for vulnerable, young children can have positive impacts on brain development that generate a significant return on investment over a lifetime”

Focus – disadvantage in specific places

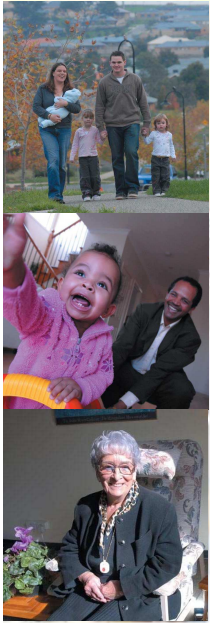


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**Example – Changing locations of disadvantage...
Growth areas of Melbourne**

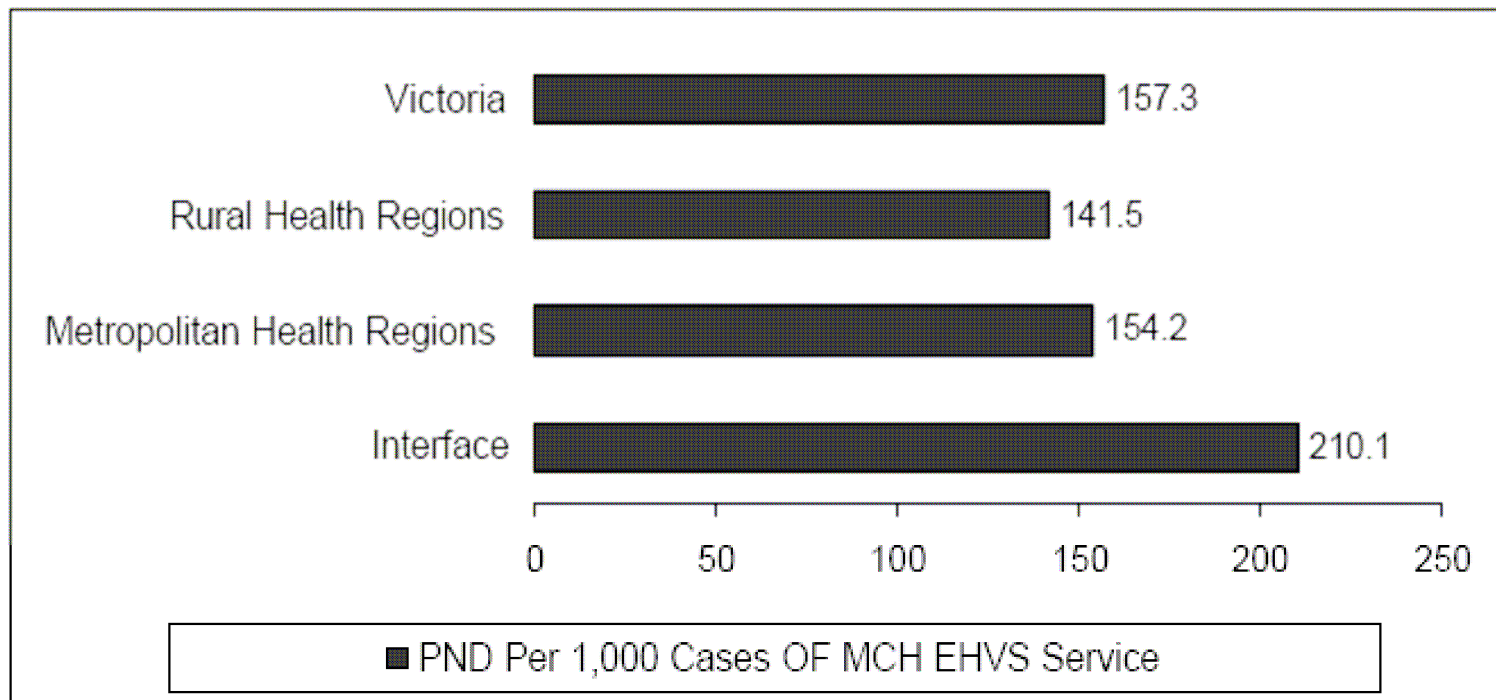


Focus – disadvantage in specific places



A Fairer Victoria

Example – Disadvantage on the edges of Melbourne... Post Natal Depression



Source: Department of Human Services Victoria, Community Care Unit, MCH Enhanced Home Visiting Service, 2001/2

Focus – homelessness



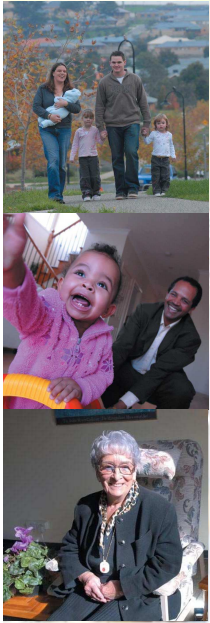
A Fairer Victoria

Homelessness is one of the major barriers to participation

New action in *A Fairer Victoria* includes:

- Increase and upgrade housing stock
- Boost youth homelessness services: outreach, purpose-built facilities and private rental brokerage
- Help low income families build their own homes
- Fund weekly street soccer program and bid for Homeless World Cup

Focus – community transport

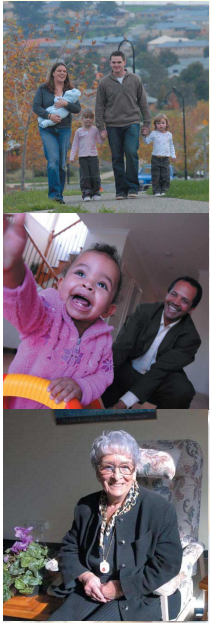


\$10.5 billion statewide transport plan, including:

- More bus services – for outer suburbs and country
- Massive rail upgrade – biggest since City Loop built
- Accessibility for people with a disability, prams (\$250m)
- Community transport boost:
 - New projects to cover all LGAs outside Melbourne
 - Helps communities get better use of existing transport such as school buses, taxis, community buses



Focus – multicultural communities



A Fairer Victoria

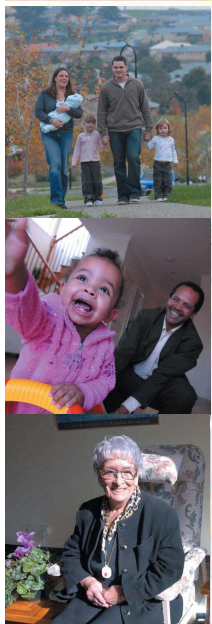
Supporting our multicultural diversity boosts our human capital too

New actions in *A Fairer Victoria* include:

- Promote multicultural harmony with multi-faith events
- Community based refugee health nurse services
- Vocational ESL services
- Community grants
- Interpreter services
- Cultural awareness training



Focus – involving community in solution



New initiatives increasing the input from communities:

- Community renewal – local partnerships to set local priorities
- Neighbourhood House funding boost – more hours & support
- Youth Transition Workers for youth disengaged from work or study
- Extension of No-Interest Loans Scheme to 77 more locations
- Working with the RSL and CFA to convert underutilised assets into community centres
- Establishing 15 Youth Foundations across Victoria, to give young people experience in financial management and decision making about grants for youth projects

COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF A FAIRER VICTORIA

SUMMARY:

- Fairer society improves human capital
- Human capital boosts economy as well as society
- Community capacity is key to improving human capital
- Communities are at heart of our new progress

