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Victorian Labor Conference Faces Tax Hike Backlash

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The Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) opened its state conference on August 2, 2025, with delegates set to debate a range of policy motions, including proposals for tax reform and public sector initiatives. The conference, held in Melbourne, involves over 600 party members and union representatives, who will vote on non-binding resolutions that may influence the party's 2026 election platform.

Among the proposals under discussion are reforms to replace stamp duty with a land tax, the establishment of a publicly-owned wind energy company, and a permanent Aboriginal

truth-telling commission. Delegates will also debate health, education, and justice policy recommendations. The motions, submitted by grassroots members and affiliated unions, do not automatically become government policy but can be considered by the party leadership when shaping future platforms.

Business groups have raised concerns about the economic implications of the proposed tax changes. The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) warned that any increase in taxes could place additional pressure on small and medium-sized enterprises already managing cost challenges. VCCI Chief Executive Paul Guerra stated that maintaining a competitive business environment is essential to sustaining investment in the state.

A senior ALP official, speaking to local media, clarified that the motions are part of the party's internal democratic process and are not binding on the government. The proposals are being discussed in the context of broader debates about state revenue, energy transition, and Indigenous policy development.

The timing of the policy discussions comes as Victoria prepares for its next state election in 2026. Analysts note that while the conference may shape future priorities, the state government is likely to assess public and stakeholder feedback before advancing any significant reforms. The outcomes of the conference will be monitored closely by both supporters and critics as the party navigates economic and social priorities.