

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Attorney-General

Minister for the Coordination of Justice and Community Safety – COVID-19

Minister for Workplace Safety



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GETTING VCAT MOVING REMOTELY DURING CORONAVIRUS

The Victorian Government is ensuring the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) can hear important planning and other matters remotely, ensuring billions of dollars' worth of projects can continue and Victorians can still access the justice they deserve during coronavirus.

Work has already started on the \$5.2 million upgrades required for the change, which will be rolled out over the next 12 weeks.

The upgrades will include project management software, software programmers, software licenses, information technology hardware and digitisation and scanning of paper files. VCAT will also consider how these upgrades can also help ensure others matters can be heard digitally.

Only injunctions and other urgent matters have been scheduled since late March because of the coronavirus. This has meant that current and pending matters, especially Planning and Environment List issues were on hold.

With these matters able to proceed, businesses and individuals will have certainty on their planning and development matters. These projects help create jobs and will support economic activity during the coronavirus crisis.

The Victorian Government passed new laws this week making procedural and process changes to enable the courts, corrections and wider legal system to continue to deliver vital justice services while complying with coronavirus related restrictions.

This includes a temporary power to make further procedural changes by regulation, so that justice processes can be quickly adapted to changing public health requirements.

The Government has also set up the Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce to further ensure the building and development industry is a driving force for the states economy through this pandemic and beyond.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

"VCAT delivers critical services that Victorians rely on – this is about ensuring vital projects can continue during coronavirus – helping to create jobs and economic activity."

"We're giving VCAT the resources and the ability to continue their vital work remotely – delivering access to justice for all Victorians while we respond to the challenges of physical distancing during coronavirus."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

"This funding will prevent building projects from becoming held up in the system at a time when we need them most."

"The taskforce will help deliver important projects more efficiently, support jobs and assisting new projects to get off the ground faster."