

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Attorney-General

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

Minister for Workplace Safety



Saturday, 9 May 2020

DELIVERING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR MORE VICTORIANS

More Victorians will have access to justice thanks to a funding boost from the Victorian Government to support legal assistance services to continue to operate during the coronavirus crisis.

Attorney-General Jill Hennessy today announced \$17.5 million in additional funding for frontline legal assistance services in response to coronavirus.

The funding will also support legal services to upgrade technology so that more Victorians receive the help they need remotely and digitally.

The funding will flow immediately to Victoria Legal Aid and every Community Legal Centre and Aboriginal legal service in the state – supporting Victorians with a range of issues including family violence related matters, employment rights, debt and consumer credit, and tenancy and housing matters.

Victoria's legal assistance services are responding to increased demand due to the impacts of coronavirus. These services are vital to supporting Victorians during the crisis and get back on their feet if they are affected by it.

The Victorian Government has also signed up to the new National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25 Agreement – which will deliver funding certainty for Victoria's legal assistance services and community legal centres over the next five years.

The Government welcomes the recent announcement by National Cabinet of additional funding to respond to demand for legal services due to coronavirus.

The Victorian Government is also providing a \$575,000 funding boost for community legal centres to deliver projects that support homeless women and children, recent arrivals, refugees and asylum seekers.

The funding will support Justice Connect, WEstJustice and Refugee Legal as part of the government's Integrated Services Fund.

Justice Connect will receive \$175,000 for tenancy, housing, legal assistance and other support services to women and children experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

WEstJustice will receive \$200,000 to provide settlement services to newly arrived people in Melbourne's western suburbs – a cohort with significant and complex needs.

Refugee Legal will also receive \$200,000 to support people seeking asylum who are subject to the Commonwealth's Fast Track Assessment process.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

"We have continued to deliver increased and long-term funding for our legal assistance providers – these services are crucial to supporting our most vulnerable Victorians."

"Our community legal centres are on the frontline, helping Victorians who need support every single day – this funding will ensure they provide this support virtually, to more Victorians."

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