



The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General

Tuesday 24 November 2020

MASSIVE BOOST FOR COURT CAPACITY

Like all of us, our justice system has had to do things differently this year – which means our courts haven't been able to move through cases as quickly as they normally do.

That's why the *Victorians Budget 2020/21* delivers major investments in new courts and court systems – to provide a strong, efficient, cutting-edge justice system that allows matters to be heard remotely and safely.

The Budget invests \$47.3 million to improve audio-visual technology and provide greater flexibility in court and justice processes. This means matters before our busiest courts can be heard in a timely manner – building capacity in our justice system and helping reduce delays caused by the pandemic.

Not only will this investment enable safety measures like physical distancing in the short-term – it'll create a faster, more adaptable and efficient court system in the long-term too.

The Andrews Labor Government is also delivering new and upgraded court buildings for Victoria, with \$272 million to build new law courts in Wyndham.

The new precinct will include a new headquarter court with 13 courtrooms, four hearing rooms, three mediation suites and a dedicated Specialist Family Violence Court. The build will also support more Victorians back into work, creating around 400 local jobs.

The Labor Government is also delivering \$26.8 million to upgrade the Sunshine Law Courts, including building two additional court rooms and creating around 200 jobs.

The Budget is delivering \$27.2 million for the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) to continue and expand its important work – and to assist IBAC's transition to budgetary independence.

The Budget also provides \$28.5 million to ensure young and disadvantaged Victorians have access to community legal services – including more support for Victoria Legal Aid's 24/7 on-call service.

Registered Aboriginal Parties will share in \$20.2 million to ensure the rights, responsibilities and voice of Traditional Owners continues to be upheld and protected.

This includes a new commercial and cultural hub in Bendigo – providing a new home for the Dja Dja Wurrung people to share and celebrate their culture and identity with the local community.

The Labor Government is also investing in forensic medical investigation services to further improve the efficiency of our justice system and ensure families who are dealing with the devastating loss a loved one get the answers and support they need.

The Budget provides a further \$5.9 million for the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine to deliver forensic analysis for police and courts, as well as to continue the work of the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria.

The Labor Government is also investing \$2.5 million towards the Office of the Public Advocate to continue to safeguard the rights of people with disability.

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Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

“Like all of us, our courts have had to adapt this year – this investment will help them keep evolving and delivering the justice Victorians deserve.”

“Not only will this ensure the safety of our courts in the short-term, it’ll create a stronger, faster and more flexible justice system on the other side of this pandemic.”