

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Attorney-General
Minister for Resources



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NEW FRANKSTON VCAT SET TO HEAR MORE CASES, FASTER

Victorians in Melbourne's south-east will have their cases heard and resolved faster, with the opening of a new Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) facility in Frankston.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes joined Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke at the new facility in the heart of Frankston's shopping and business district today, which will help fast track disputes and clear the backlog of cases caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new VCAT site on Balmoral Street will mainly be used to hear renting, consumer and guardianship matters – and also includes remote witness facilities to better support people affected by family violence.

The new facility will also offer alternative dispute resolution, including the Fast Track Mediation and Hearing program – a partnership between VCAT and the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.

It becomes the second VCAT site to have a Koori hearing room, which will provide accessible and culturally appropriate dispute resolution services.

This new venue will help ease the pressure on Victoria's tribunals – exacerbated by the pandemic – using digital technology in hearing rooms and Members' chambers to provide greater flexibility for online and remote access.

Work is also ongoing to support paperless file management at the tribunal where possible, which will further increase its capacity to conduct remote hearings.

Frankston is one of three new state-of-the-art VCAT venues funded as part of the Labor Government's \$11.5 million Family Violence Reform package. The first site in Oakleigh was opened in February 2020, while the development in Bundoora is on track to open next month.

This is in addition to the \$26.95 million the Labor Government recently allocated to VCAT to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and help clear backlogs.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

"The new VCAT facility at Frankston will resolve more cases, faster – allowing those who use these important services to move on with their lives and businesses."

"We know that the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on our courts system – that's why we're investing \$25 million to boost VCAT's capacity and upgrade digital systems so more matters can be heard faster."

Quote attributable to Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke

"This new VCAT facility – in the heart of Frankston – will give locals easy access to the services they need to settle their dispute in a timely manner."

Quote attributable to VCAT President, Justice Michelle Quigley

"VCAT's new Frankston venue is an important part of VCAT's vision to increase access to justice for local communities outside Melbourne's CBD – providing greater capacity for dispute resolution across the South-East."

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