

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Resources



Friday, 23 April 2021

## **NEW BUNDOORA VCAT TO HELP FAST-TRACK DISPUTES**

Bundoora locals will be able to get their everyday legal matters heard and access services faster at a new Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) facility, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes officially opened the new facility today, which will resolve more cases faster in Melbourne's north-east and help clear the backlog caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The new site boasts the latest technology to enable more matters to be heard online, providing greater flexibility and capacity for hearings.

Remote witness facilities for family violence cases will ensure victim-survivors can engage safely and comfortably with the tribunal.

It will provide alternative dispute resolution, including the Fast Track Mediation and Hearing program – a partnership between VCAT and the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.

Dedicated in-person assistance by Aboriginal support officers will be available as part of the Koori Engagement Program to improve Aboriginal access and participation at VCAT. The venue also features a Koori hearing room, and Aboriginal design elements are incorporated throughout the building's public spaces.

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

As the busiest tribunal of its kind in Australia – finalising more than 85,000 cases a year – VCAT's pending caseload was significantly impacted by the pandemic. These new facilities will help to clear more cases and ensure timely and effective resolution of matters for Victorians.

### **Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes**

*"We're rolling out new VCAT venues to deliver faster and easier access to justice for Victorians – helping them to resolve matters quickly and move on with their lives."*

*"We know the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on our justice 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 Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt**

*"This new purpose-built venue boasts the latest technology and facilities – providing the specialist assistance our local community needs to settle disputes and reach timely outcomes."*

### **Quote attributable to VCAT CEO Mary Amiridis**

*"With our new community-based venues, we're transforming the way we deliver VCAT services – making sure efficient and modern facilities are more readily available to those that need it most."*

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