

Media Release



Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Resources

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NEW PREMISES FOR DANDENONG DRUG COURT

The Dandenong Drug Court will now operate from a new, purpose-built facility – delivering vital services and specialist support to those who need it most in the local community.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes joined Member for Dandenong Gabrielle Williams, and Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region Tien Kieu to officially open the new site today.

The Dandenong Drug Court will supervise participants caught in the cycle of drug and alcohol dependency and substance-related offending. It will feature office space for staff and team members, dedicated interview and counselling rooms, urinalysis facilities and group workspaces.

The Court delivers specialised treatment and support, addressing the underlying factors that contribute to offending, providing participants with an opportunity to stay drug and crime free and break the cycle of offending.

Participants are required to undertake alcohol and drug counselling, comply with drug testing and regularly attend Court Review Hearing, case management appointments and clinical advisor appointments to ensure they stay on track.

Results from the Dandenong and Melbourne Drug Courts demonstrate its success – an evaluation of the Dandenong court showed re-offending over the first year after completing a Drug Treatment Order (DTO) dropped by a third.

Serious offending was also cut with a 90 per cent reduction in trafficking offences and weapons violence cut by more than half.

Building on this strong foundation, the Labor Government is investing \$35 million to expand the Drug Court to regional Victoria at Shepparton and Ballarat, as well as establishing a pilot at the County Court in Melbourne.

The former Labor Government established the Drug Court at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court in 2002 – the first of its kind in the state.

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

"We're expanding this program because we know that Drug Courts work – reducing recidivism, supporting rehabilitation and helping people get their lives back on track."

Quote attributable Member for Dandenong Gabrielle Williams

"Our community has felt the benefit of the Drug Court program for close to 20 years – and I'm delighted that this new, purpose-built facility will ensure this continues into the future."

Quote attributable to Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region Tien Kieu

"The Drug Courts give offenders a real chance to overcome their dependency issues and break the cycle with a support network around them – which benefits the entire community."

Media contact: Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 | casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au