

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 4 February 2022

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

The Victorian Government has supported a request from the head of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Sandy Pitcher, to step away from her role as Secretary for a period of time due to her family experiencing some difficult health challenges.

Ms Pitcher was appointed the Department's inaugural Secretary when DFFH was established on 1 February 2021. Her leadership has been instrumental in the formation of the department and its focus on vulnerable Victorians and those facing acute challenges.

Throughout this year, Ms Pitcher will lead a whole of Government project focussed on the challenges of training, recruiting and retaining the critical social services workers needed to deliver the Government's significant investments in Family Violence and Mental Health reforms, as well as reforms in child protection, youth justice, housing and homelessness.

Brigid Sunderland has been appointed interim DFFH Secretary during this time. Ms Sunderland currently oversees the Youth Justice portfolio in the Department of Justice and Community Safety and has extensive public service experience working in portfolios managed by DFFH.

Ms Sunderland will undertake the role with flexible work arrangements in place. Current DFFH Deputy Secretary Brigid Monagle will be appointed as an Associate Secretary in support of those arrangements.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Ms Pitcher is an outstanding public servant whose leadership delivered the successful establishment of DFFH. We're fortunate to retain her services in an alternative role at this time. We wish Sandy and her family all the very best."

"Ms Sunderland has an excellent track record leading key social service delivery reform supporting Victorians in challenging circumstances."

"The appointment of two key leaders for DFFH demonstrates the Government's genuine commitment to flexible working and gender equality. The Victorian public service is committed to supporting its people to hold senior roles while balancing their family and other commitments."