

Media Release

The Hon Enver Erdogan MP
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice
Minister for Victim Support



Tuesday, 22 August 2023

NEW VICTIM SUPPORT CENTRE OPENS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A new Victim and Witness Support Centre will provide specialist support for children and young people who need to give evidence in court thanks to funding from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Victim Support Enver Erdogan today joined members of the legal community and stakeholders to open the purpose-built Garragarrak Victim and Witness Support Centre.

Garragarak means 'dragonfly' in the Woi Wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people – a symbol of transformation, power and adaptability.

The \$4.1 million centre provides a trauma informed, child and family friendly space that includes eight remote witness rooms, video evidence viewing rooms, assessment rooms and legal conference rooms.

The centre has been designed to provide a welcoming and accessible environment, with access to support from the Child and Youth Witness Service and Intermediary Program.

These programs support children, young people and adults with a cognitive disability as they embark on the often-daunting process of giving evidence in criminal justice processes about highly traumatic events.

Since its launch in 2007, the Child and Youth Witness Service has supported more than 10,000 victims and witnesses.

The Intermediary Program provides communication specialists to help police and people who work in the courts to help them communicate better with victims and witnesses.

The program also assists victims and witnesses to provide their evidence and reduces the trauma associated with going through these processes. Since its launch in 2018 the Intermediary Program has received 2,500 requests for assistance.

The establishment of the centre follows a range of improvements the Labor Government has made in supporting victims, building on what was learned from the Victim Services Review conducted by the Centre for Innovative Justice.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Victim Support Enver Erdogan

"This is an extraordinary space that has been purpose-built in recognition of the trauma that children and young people often face at the prospect of giving evidence in court."

"I thank the team who have helped create this new space and the staff who work with these children and young people to support them."