

# Media Release

The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP  
Attorney General  
Minister for Planning



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## DEDICATED FAMILY VIOLENCE COURT OPENS IN GEELONG

Victim-survivors of family violence in the Barwon South West region will have greater access to justice and support services with the opening of a Specialist Family Violence Court based out of the Geelong Magistrates' Court – backed with funding by the Allan Labor Government.

Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny today officially opened the new court, which has been designed to support the wellbeing of people affected by family violence and promote greater accountability for perpetrators.

It will hear a variety of matters including bail applications, pleas in criminal cases and family law parenting matters.

The Government provided more than \$77 million to establish the facilities. Separate entry and exit points will minimise interactions between court users with four separate zones for the public, staff, judiciary and those in custody.

Safe waiting areas, remote witness facilities and private interview rooms have been included at the Geelong Law Courts as well as child friendly spaces for victim-survivors and their loved ones as they navigate the court system.

There has been a high demand for specialised family violence facilities in the Barwon South West region, with the Geelong Magistrates' Court hearing more than 15,000 cases last year including 3,478 family violence intervention orders.

Specialist courts have been established in 13 locations including Shepparton, Ballarat, Moorabbin, Heidelberg and Frankston Magistrates' Courts, with the most recent facility opening at Wyndham in November.

The delivery of SFVCs across Victoria responds to a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Victoria continues to lead the nation in strengthening the prevention and response to family violence – the Labor Government has invested more than \$4 billion and implemented all 227 recommendations from Royal Commission.

This investment includes supporting family violence victim survivors through the rollout of the statewide Orange Door Network to more than 60 locations, which have helped more than half a million Victorians, including more than 200,000 children.

A further \$172 million was invested in the last Budget to help keep women and children safe, hold perpetrators to account and support victim survivors, including through improved access to legal services, case management and therapeutic support.

### Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny

*"The Geelong Specialist Family Violence Court will provide invaluable support for victim-survivors and their loved ones whilst holding perpetrators to account."*

*"Specialist Family Violence Courts are a safe, comfortable space for those affected by family violence to receive dedicated support as they navigate the court system, which we know can be a daunting experience."*