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Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

Sonya Kilkeny MP
Attorney-General

11 June 2025



Attorney-General Portfolio

2025-26 Budget Overview



Investment to
support a safe and
sustainable justice
and community
safety system

The 2025-26 Victorian Budget provides **over \$400 million** over five years for the Attorney-General portfolio.

This investment will continue to support a safe and sustainable justice system, including by:

- Strengthening community safety through bail reform
- Supporting improved Aboriginal justice outcomes
- Opening Wyndham law courts
- Implementing further court system improvements, and
- Delivering on our commitment to ending family violence and strengthening women's safety

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Strengthening community safety

The *Bail Amendment Act 2025* (Bail Amendment Act) passed Parliament in March 2025.

The Bail Amendment Act makes community safety the overarching principle for bail decision-making.



The reforms aim to reduce the risk of harm caused by repeat offending, and include:

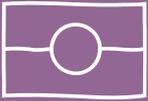
- making community safety the overarching principle for bail decision-making
- introduction of two new bail offences which attract maximum penalties of three months' imprisonment, and
- removal of the consideration of remand being an option of last resort for children.
- elevating certain offences to face stricter reverse onus bail tests.

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Supporting improved Aboriginal justice outcomes

Over \$55 million over three years for **Aboriginal community-based justice solutions** aimed at reducing over-representation.

This includes funding for:



- Development of the fifth phase of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA5)
- A new grants program providing self-determined supports for Aboriginal people on bail and exiting remand.
- Continuation of five Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) Regional Hubs at Mildura, Bendigo, Morwell, Warrnambool and the western suburbs
- Koori men's and women's diversion programs delivered by Aboriginal organisations in areas of highest need.
- Supporting Djirra to maintain community legal centre support services for Aboriginal people, and
- The review and redesign of the Aboriginal Independent Prison Visitor Scheme (an action under AJA4).

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Opening Wyndham Law Courts

Over **\$150 million** over four years has been invested to operationalise the **Wyndham Law Courts**, the largest court complex outside of the Melbourne CBD.



- Wyndham brings together the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, the Children's Court of Victoria and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) with specialist courts and services.
- The new courts feature 13 courtrooms, four hearing rooms, three mediation suites and 26 holding cells.
- Greater safety and accessibility is provided for court users, the judiciary, and staff, with separate entrances and waiting spaces, secure entry points, and active monitoring.
- Funding has been provided for Victoria Police, Victoria Legal Aid, the Office of Public Prosecutions, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra and Community Legal Services to service the courts.

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Further court system improvements

The 2025-26 Budget invests **an additional \$82 million** to meet court system demand, and to enhance access to safer, more contemporary and accessible justice services.

Funding has been provided for **initiatives right across Victoria's Courts**, including:



- to deliver dedicated **Court Security Officers** across Victoria's existing and newly built **Specialist Family Violence Court** locations
- for dedicated staff to provide specialised trauma-informed support for affected family members seeking a family violence intervention order, via **remote court hearings**
- to continue our commitment to improving access to the **Magistrates Court of Victoria** (MCV), with support for the continued delivery of the MCS Service Centre
- to continue delivery of **online hearings, in the Children's Court of Victoria**

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Delivering on our commitment to ending family violence and strengthening women's safety

The 2025-26 Budget also invests an additional **\$40 million** to support the work of Victoria's dedicated network of Community Legal Centres, which includes almost **\$19 million** for pre-court family violence services. We're also investing **\$19 million** for dedicated Court Security Officers at Specialist Family Violence Courts, making sure family violence victim survivors feel safe.

Funding is provided to:



- help resolve **family violence** matters early and outside of court, by continuing our support for the **specialist family violence Pre-court Engagement service**, delivered by Community Legal Centres (CLCs), Victoria Legal Aid and Victoria Police
- maintain funding for the CLC Family Violence and Assistance Fund
- continue 10 specialised **early intervention programs**, delivered by Victoria's dedicated network of Community Legal Centres
- support the administration of Victoria's **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM)** framework and **Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes**.

These initiatives further compliment our commitment to Victoria's **Strengthening Women's Safety Package**, which will deliver reforms to support a stronger justice response that holds offenders to account and provides support for victim survivors where it is needed most.

Thank you.

