

OFFICIAL

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

Sonya Kilkenney 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

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.



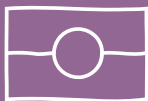
The reforms aim to reduce the risk of harm caused by repeat offending, and include:

- 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.

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).

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.

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**

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.