



# Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Attorney-General  
Minister for Workplace Safety  
Minister for the Coordination of Justice and Community Safety – COVID-19

Wednesday 26 August 2020



# Emergency response and legal assistance

- ▼ Emergency legislation – *the COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* – to ensure the justice system is best-placed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic
- ▼ Emergency regulations to support:
  - electronic signing and witnessing of key legal documents (e.g. wills)
  - tribunals and courts to hear matters remotely
- ▼ Additional funding allocated to:
  - Family violence
  - Front line legal assistance services
  - Office of the Public Advocate



**\$40.2 m**

**FAMILY VIOLENCE PACKAGE**



**\$17.5 m**

**FIRST FUNDING TRANCHE  
FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR**



**\$0.321 m**

**FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE  
DIRECTED LEGAL ASSISTANCE  
SERVICE IN MELBOURNE'S WEST**

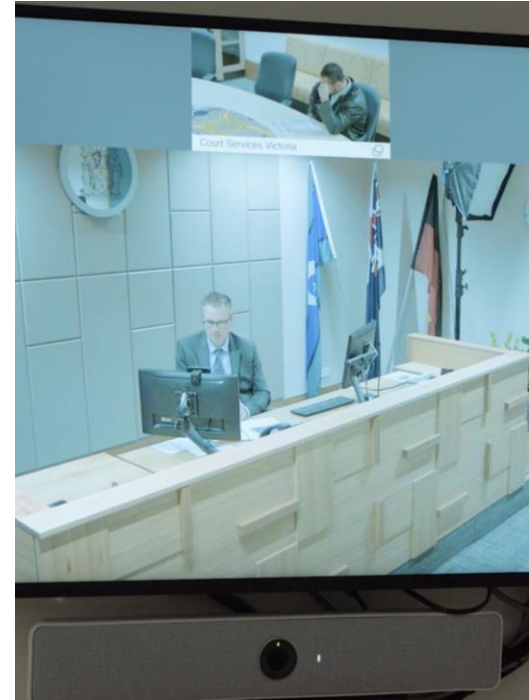
# Courts, VCAT and Aboriginal Justice

## Courts and VCAT

- ▼ Courts and VCAT continue to operate, performing safe essential services
- ▼ New civil and criminal jury trials remain suspended
- ▼ Family violence, remand, warrants, guardianship and human rights matters prioritised
- ▼ New online Magistrates' Court hear more matters remotely and greater use of audio-visual hearings has reduced in-court appearances

## Aboriginal Justice

- ▼ Established the Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund
- ▼ Targeted funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to expand remote service delivery for Aboriginal family violence, legal and support services



# Corrections and Youth Justice

- ▼ All facilities are operational and any impact of COVID-19 on operations is assessed on a daily (or more frequent) basis
- ▼ All prisoners and young people entering custody are subject to a 14-day quarantine period. Specialist isolation protocols for all suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases
- ▼ Screening and temperature checks for prisoners, young people, staff, professional visitors and contractors entering correctional facilities
- ▼ Personal face-to-face visits remain suspended
- ▼ Enhanced cleaning procedures, strong focus on personal hygiene, physical distancing protocols and use of PPE
- ▼ Telehealth to support primary and mental health services
- ▼ More opportunities for prisoners to interact with family and friends through virtual meetings



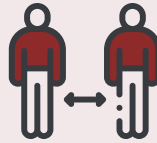
# Supporting rental fairness and Victorian businesses to reopen and rebound

- ▼ Temporary laws introduced to protect Victorian tenants, landlords and the rental market have been extended
- ▼ Ongoing relief measures including fee waivers and refunds are supporting businesses during pandemic
- ▼ Delays in charges, tax relief and payments are assisting the hospitality businesses during closures
- ▼ Ongoing work with the hospitality industry to support safe reopening at the appropriate time



# Workplace safety

- ▼ WorkSafe is taking compliance and enforcement action to ensure employers are meeting their Occupational Health and Safety obligations
- ▼ A total of 194 compliance notes have been issued in relation to COVID-19
- ▼ 130 workers' compensation claims have been accepted related to COVID-19
- ▼ Medical Panels and Accident Compensation Conciliation Service have adapted their operations to align with Stage 4 restrictions, including virtual assessments and conciliation over the phone



**3667**

**WORKSAFE COVID-19  
SPECIFIC INSPECTIONS**



**821**

**BLITZ PHYSICAL  
INSPECTIONS**



**2921**

**MANDATORY INCIDENT  
NOTIFICATIONS  
(COVID RELATED)**



**4738**

**CALLS TO  
WORKSAFE'S  
ADVISORY LINE**



**Thank you.**

