Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Round 3 – COVID-19 Inquiry Hearing

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

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

Tuesday 15 December 2020
Funding in response to COVID-19 impacts

Funding has been announced for the following initiatives to respond to COVID-19 impacts:

- **$103.6 million** for Corrections and Youth Justice COVID-19 response
  - AND **$2.5 million** in asset for Addressing COVID-19 related delays across the justice system
  - AND **$20.8 million** in output
  - AND **$9 million** in asset for the whole of government Building stimulus package
  - AND **$43.6 million** in output

- **$10.5 million** in output

- **$10.6 million** asset funding for the upgrade of the temporary community residential facility in Maribyrnong to provide short-term accommodation for men exiting the prison system.

- **$17.5 million** for additional legal assistance services and ICT investment (state component).
Funding in response to COVID-19 impacts

Funding has been announced for the following initiatives to respond to COVID-19 impacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$6.0 million</td>
<td>for Operating the Residential Tenancies Dispute Resolution Scheme and the Residential Tenancy Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>to support for Victoria’s Aboriginal community</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>to support Victoria’s multicultural and faith communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2.0 million</td>
<td>for Commercial and Residential Tenancies</td>
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<td>$14.9 million</td>
<td>for a Bushfire Mental Health package</td>
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<td>$0.4 million</td>
<td>for financial counselling to support mental health &amp; wellbeing.</td>
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Supporting Justice Sector Response and Recovery

All courts and VCAT have remained open and operational during COVID-19. Rapid response to enable continuation of justice services include:

- Legislative reforms
- Emergency Case Management Protocol
- Trial of remote bail justice hearings
- Funding for front line legal assistance services in response to COVID-19
- Funding to OPA to address critical risk to Victorians with disability during COVID-19
- Rapid uplift in technology solutions including AVL
Support for victims of crime during COVID-19

Victims of Crime Helpline and the Victims Assistance Program have continued to support victims of crime.

Child Witness Service (CWS) and the Intermediary Pilot Program (IPP) also continue to support child victims, family members and other vulnerable witnesses.
Youth Justice and Corrections
Safely easing restrictions across all custodial settings, including:

Youth

• return to face-to-face mental health service provision, criminogenic and psychosocial programs
• face-to-face delivery of education from Term 4
• increased in-person personal and professional visits and temporary leave arrangements available
• Additional supports for Aboriginal children and young people in custody to support them to remain connected to their families, community and culture

Adult

• A Roadmap to COVID Normal in adult prisons has been approved which includes:
  • resumption of personal visits
  • COVID Safe plans with service providers
  • Primary and mental health services have continued operating
  • Virtual interactions with family and friends have occurred at each prison
Supporting rental fairness and Victorian businesses to reopen and rebound

- Temporary laws introduced to protect Victorian tenants, landlords and the rental market
- Ongoing relief measures including fee waivers and refunds
- Delays in charges and significant gaming machine tax payments help support the liquor and gaming industry during closures
- Targeted packages and measures for the hospitality industry, to help licensed venues reopen safely
Workplace Safety during the COVID-19 pandemic

- **624 notices** related to COVID-19 safety issued by WorkSafe
- **3,750** mandatory incident notifications from employers received regarding positive cases of COVID-19 in the workplace
- **11,594** related physical inspections
- **648** COVID-19 claims
- **AND**
  - **6,715** and virtual enquiries relating to COVID-19
- **AND**
  - **306** COVID-19 related claims have been accepted
Workplace Safety during the COVID-19 pandemic

Implementation of additional workplace safety measures to support the COVID-19 pandemic response, including:

• extending termination notice periods for long-term injured workers.
• recognising COVID-19 as an immediate risk for the purposes of certain compliance and enforcement actions under the OHS Act
• appointing WorkSafe Inspectors as Authorised Officers
• establishing the High Risk Industries Engagement and Enforcement Operation
COVID-19 Accommodation Services

DJCS assumed responsibility for COVID-19 related accommodation programs in July and August 2020. Since then:

- 222 people have entered mandatory quarantine
- 0 returned travellers have tested positive for COVID-19
- 684 frontline workers have been supported in the Frontline Worker Accommodation program
- 335 Victorians have accessed Emergency Accommodation so they could safely isolate outside their home