The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Attorney-General  
Minister for Workplace Safety

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# A STRONGER JUSTICE SYSTEM AND SAFER WORKPLACES

Specialist courts will be expanded, regional legal services improved and court security enhanced, thanks to new investments from the Andrews Labor Government.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* will invest $267.5 million to support and expand specialist courts and programs designed to reduce reoffending, improve community safety, support victims and provide better court services for regional areas.

The Budget includes $152.4 million to build a new regional court headquarters in Bendigo. Delivering on the Labor Government’s commitment, the new court facility will have eight courtrooms, as well as hearing rooms, mediation suites and custody holding cells. It will also include a specialist family violence court.

The Office of Public Prosecutions will receive $23.3 million to support its important work – prosecuting criminals, supporting victims and witnesses, and implementing a new IT system to improve efficiency.

Aboriginal women who are victim survivors of family violence will receive further support, with $2.3 million to support the Koori Women’s Place, which provides family violence services to Aboriginal women.

Funding will be provided for Family Violence Perpetrator Intervention grants, with $8.5 million going to strengthen perpetrator accountability and protect family violence victims.

The Budget also includes:

* $12.4 million to improve audio-visual links to a further 28 Magistrates’ Courts and 26 police stations to reduce the need to take prisoners to court, reducing the burden on court officers and Victoria Police
* $12.3 million to strengthen court safety, including CCTV upgrades and duress alarms
* $9.3 million to support forensic medical capacity at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, including an additional pathologist, mental health and wellbeing initiatives for staff and to support the operations of the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria
* $8.9 million for the continuation of the Fast Track Remand Court in the Children’s Court to reduce the time young people spend on remand awaiting trial
* $8.1 million for the Family Drug Treatment Court in Broadmeadows to support parents address addiction and promote family reunification
* $6.1 million to extend the Court Integrated Services Program to the County Court via an 18-month pilot program to help reduce reoffending and improve community safety
* $4.8 million for the Coroners Court to help respond to increasing demand.

While the Budget strengthens our justice system, we are also investing to make Victorian workplaces safer because no one should go to work and not come home again.

That’s why WorkSafe Victoria’s ability to hold employers to account for unsafe workplace practices will be boosted with the Budget including $16.6 million to expand the specialist capacity of WorkSafe inspectors.

The funding will also allow WorkSafe to introduce new infringement notices for a range of occupational health and safety offences, adding to the suite of compliance and enforcement tools available.

For our brave emergency service workers, the Budget includes $2.5 million for a provisional acceptance payment scheme pilot so they get the support they need, when they need it.

The scheme will enable emergency workers and volunteers who lodge a claim for a mental injury to be compensated for medical and similar expenses while their claim is being assessed.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General and Minister for Workplace Safety Jill Hennessy

*“We are strengthening our justice system across Victoria and making sure the Office of Public Prosecutions has the resources it needs to prosecute offenders and support victims.”*

*“The safety of Victorians is at the forefront of everything we do in the justice system, which is why we’re investing in programs and services across the state that will help reduce reoffending and improve community safety.”*

*“We’re making sure WorkSafe has the resources it needs to keep unsafe workplaces to account because all Victorian workers deserve to be able to go to work and come home again safely.”*