

# Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2023-24 Financial  
and Performance Outcomes

**Kate Houghton PSM**

Secretary

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Thursday 21 November 2024



# Department of Justice and Community Safety

## 2023-24 operations and achievements

Our vision is to deliver a trusted justice and community safety system that works together to build a just, safe, and resilient Victoria.

The DJCS team works tirelessly, aligned to the Victorian public sector values, to deliver our services to the Victorian community.

In 2023-24, Victoria experienced floods, storms and fire emergencies – we thank our workforce, emergency service partners, and volunteers in keeping Victorians safe and assisting them in their recovery.

We delivered many Government priorities in 2023-24, alongside our critical statutory functions, including:

- First Law Officer functions
- Continued the safe operations of adult and youth justice systems and sheriff duties.
- Law reforms – development and implementation
- Infrastructure reconfiguration



# Financial and operational overview (as at 30 June 2024)



**\$5.90  
billion**

DJCS total 2023-24 output cost, including grant funding to emergency service organisations



**10,543**

DJCS total workforce, including entities (full-time equivalent)



**8  
initiatives  
valued at over  
\$340  
million**

Completed DJCS infrastructure projects, including Victoria Police initiatives



**\$4.35  
billion**

Victoria Police total 2023-24 output cost



**21,715**

Victoria Police total workforce, including 16,059 sworn police and 1,417 PSOs



# Aboriginal Justice

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **Stolen Generations Reparations Package:** As at 30 June 2024, 849 applications in total had been received and reparations payments of \$54.7 million had been made to 555 applicants
- **Aboriginal Community Grants Program:** The department administered \$38.7 million in grant funding directed to improve justice outcomes for the Victorian Aboriginal community, with 98% of these grants provided to Aboriginal organisations
- **Engagement with the Victorian Truth and Treaty Process:** The department continued fulsome engagement with the Yoorrook Justice Commission and Victorian Treaty processes
- **Aboriginal Justice Forum:** The Aboriginal Justice Forum met three times to oversee implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and address systemic justice issues



# Emergency Services

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **Bushfire, storm and flood events:** Activation of the State Control Centre and Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) to support those affected by December 2023 and January 2024 floods, and February 2024 storms and bushfires
- **Triple zero service:** Reform of Victoria's triple zero call taking and dispatch service, including establishment of Triple Zero Victoria as the new responsible entity
- **Resilience and risk reduction:** Administration of \$4.5 million in grants for 31 risk and resilience projects, \$5.1 million for 18 State and Regional Priority Projects and \$26 million for 31 Disaster Ready Fund projects
- **Communications:** Continued delivery of the Emergency Management Operational Communications Program and the VicEmergency app, which delivered approximately 55 million warnings to users in 24 hours during the February 2024 storm event



More than **8,000** households received support through Recovery Support Programs, and over **14,000** calls for information and referrals were made to the 1800 Emergency Recovery Hotline.



# Corrections

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **New primary healthcare model in public prisons:** Implementation of the *Health Quality Framework for Victorian Prisons 2023*, transitioning the provision of custodial primary health services to new providers in all public prisons and embedding Aboriginal cultural safety standards in service delivery
- **New Aboriginal Healing Unit:** Opening the new unit at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre to provide a culturally safe and appropriate space for Aboriginal women in custody to reside and undertake tailored, community-led and trauma-informed programs
- **Lonarch Unit:** Opening of a refurbished 26-bed unit at Langi Kal Kal Prison to support elderly people in custody
- **Men's prison system reform:** Announcement of major reforms to deliver the modern infrastructure and services needed over the next decade, including opening the new Western Plains Correctional Centre

As at 30 June 2024:

5,915

People in custody

9,650

Offenders managed by Community Correctional Services

5,600+

People employed by DJCS in the corrections portfolio





# Youth Justice

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **Introduction of the Youth Justice Bill 2024:** The Bill became Victoria's first standalone Act for the youth justice system
- **Youth Justice Custodial System:** Cherry Creek started accommodating young people. Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct ceased operations, with all young people successfully transferred to other facilities and staff comprehensively supported during the transition
- **Youth Diversion:** In line with the *Youth Diversion Statement*, 1,215 Children's Court Youth Diversions were overseen in 2023-24 with 98% of diversion plans successfully completed, exceeding performance targets
- **Health and wellbeing services:** All Youth Justice custodial precincts transitioned to having their primary healthcare provided through public or community health service providers, and the Custodial Forensic Youth Mental Health Service was expanded to provide additional capacity and expertise



# Crime Prevention and Victim Support

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **Youth Crime Prevention Program (YCPP):** In 2023-24, YCPP provided individualised case management to 161 young people and pro-social activities to 644 young people who have had contact with, or have demonstrated risk of being involved with, the criminal justice system
- **Garragarrak Victim and Witness Support Centre:** The new Child and Youth Witness Service and Intermediary Program premises, Garragarrak, launched in August 2023
- **Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS):** Preparation continued for the launch of the Financial Assistance Scheme

**17,770** Calls for support made to the **Victims of Crime Helpline**

**9,729** Victims of violent crime supported by the **Victims Assistance Program**

**1,297** Children and families supported by the **Child and Youth Witness Service**

**42** Crime prevention projects completed in metropolitan and regional areas (as at 30 June 2024)

**432** People supported through the **restorative engagement and redress scheme** (as at 30 June 2024)







# Police and Road Safety

## Key achievements in 2023-24

### Victoria Police

- **Operation Bastion:** Planning for the largest Victoria Police operation since the World Economic Forum in 2000
- **Operation Park:** Focused on maintaining social cohesion through community engagement and visible reassurance patrols
- **Transition to a public health response to public intoxication:** Implementation of new policy, training and communications to support a health-led response with reduced police involvement

### DJCS

- **Victoria Police Death and Disability Benefits Contingency Fund:** The fund was operationalised in October 2023 and has since approved 53 claims
- **Digitally-Recorded Evidence in Chief:** Amendments made to the Criminal Procedure Act that enable victim-survivors to have the permanent option to give their evidence via recorded statement
- **Victoria's Road Safety Strategy Action Plan 2021-23:** Delivery of new Distracted Driving and Seatbelt Road Safety Camera trailer-based technology, deployed to over 200 metropolitan and rural locations
- **Fixed road safety cameras:** 29 of 35 new fixed road safety camera intersection sites have commenced enforcement



# Casino, Gaming and Liquor; Racing

## Key achievements in 2023-24

- **Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence:** All 33 recommendations have now been fully implemented or are legislated and awaiting commencement. The casino introduced mandatory pre-commitment and mandatory carded play for all gaming machines
- **Liquor Control Reform Regulations 2023:** These include a new risk-based liquor licence fee model, minimum standards for required security cameras, and new information requirements for licence applications
- **Establishing and implementing guidelines on late-night liquor licences** in inner-city municipalities, replacing the late-night liquor freeze, which balances alcohol harms with the late-night economy
- **Preventing gambling harm:** Extensive engagement to support the government's landmark reforms in relation to electronic gaming machines
- **Backing Jobs in Victorian Racing:** Implementation of the Greyhound Whole of Life Digital Tracking Program

# Key legislation passed in 2023-24

- *Bail Amendment Act 2023*
- *Corrections Amendment (Parole Reform) Act 2023*
- *Crimes Amendment (Non-fatal Strangulation) Act 2023*
- *Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2023*
- *Triple Zero Victoria Act 2023*
- *Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Salute Prohibition) Act 2023*
- *Special Investigator Repeal Act 2023*
- *Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Repeal and Advisory Councils Act 2024*
- *Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Act 2024*
- *Firearms and Control of Weapons (Machetes) Amendment Act 2024*
- *Private Security and County Court Amendment Act 2024*



# Key legislation developed in 2023-24

- Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024
- Youth Justice Bill 2024
- Criminal Organisations Control Amendment Bill 2024
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Integrity, Defamation and Other Matters) Bill 2024
- Confiscation Amendment (Unexplained Wealth) Bill 2024
- Anti-vilification reforms, including 3 rounds of detailed public consultation in late 2023 (619 survey responses and 122 submissions received)

## Spotlight on the *Youth Justice Act 2024*

- Close to 1000 pages of end-to-end legislative systemic reform
- Bill introduced 18 June 2024
- Three key tranches of reforms to:
  - introduce standalone youth justice legislation and implement recommendations of the 2017 *Youth Justice Review and Strategy* by Penny Armytage and Professor Jim Ogloff
  - raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years, with associated reforms to police powers and the operation of *doli incapax*
  - establish a trial of electronic monitoring on bail with intensive bail supervision and support
- Extensive stakeholder engagement over a lengthy period, including with key system agencies, the Aboriginal Justice Caucus and an Independent Expert Group





**Thank you.**

