

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2021-22 and 2022-23 performance of
the Department of Justice and Community Safety

Ryan Phillips
Associate Secretary,
Department of Justice and Community Safety

Tuesday 21 November 2023



Department of Justice and Community Safety

2021-22 and 2022-23

2021-22 and 2022-23 brought unprecedented challenges to the Victorian community.

In that time, we were faced with multiple, significant and sometimes overlapping emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the June 2021 Storm and Flood event and the October 2022 flood event.

In response, the Department continued to deliver the government's priorities and its statutory responsibilities, while also working to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on our services and those in our care. The dedication and commitment from our staff and tens of thousands of volunteers during this time was a remarkable service to the public of Victoria.

The Department remains committed to working to ensure a stronger, fairer and safer Victoria.



Financial and operational overview (as at 30 June 2023)



DJCS
total operating
budget



\$5.1 billion

DJCS
total workforce



9,729

Completed DJCS
infrastructure projects



25 projects

valued at over

\$1.7 billion

Victoria Police
total operating
budget



\$4.1 billion

Victoria Police
total workforce



21,849

including 16,133
sworn police
and 1,435 PSOs

Victoria Police



6 new stations

being planned, designed
or constructed

Aboriginal Justice

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23



Stolen Generations Reparations Package
655 applications have been received (as at 30 June 2023), with reparation payments approved for 376 applicants, including 100 advance payments.



Appearances by department executives and fulsome evidence provided to the Yoorrook Justice Commission acknowledging systemic racism and mistreatment of Aboriginal people in the justice system.



\$74.9 million in community grant funding was provided (as at 30 June 2023), predominantly to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver community-based initiatives aimed at preventing contact with the justice system or improving outcomes in the justice system.



The Aboriginal Justice Forum continues to bring together leaders of the Victorian Aboriginal community with senior government representatives in a formal partnership dedicated to self-determination improving Aboriginal justice outcomes.



Emergency Management

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23

- Progressed the emergency management reform program, including publishing the outcomes framework and strategic roadmap
- Establishment of Emergency Recovery Victoria to coordinate recovery (state and regional level) and relief (state level)
- Development of the Victorian Water Safety Strategy 2021-25 with the Water Safety Taskforce
- Improved communications with Victorian communities on emergencies through the Supplementary Alerting Service application
- Increase in support and capacity for the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA)
- Activation of the State Control Centre to respond to the significant flood events from October 2022 to January 2023



VICESSES Heidelberg completed in June 2022

Part of \$125m investment in VICESSES facility infrastructure

Corrections

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23

- Opening of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre Western Expansion, with new accommodation and service buildings designed based on trauma informed principles
- Completion of the Western Plains Correctional Centre and commenced preparations for opening
- Delivery of the Mental Health Transition Support Service, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people in contact with the criminal and youth justice systems
- Strengthened oversight of high-risk offenders on Community Correction Orders
- Completion of the Cultural Review into the adult custodial corrections system
- Implementation of the Prison Disability Support Initiative including pre and post release case management

As at 30 June 2023:

6,440 People in prison

10,676 Offenders on Community Corrections orders

4,875 People employed in prisons and community corrections

\$2.1 b Invested in Prison Infrastructure



Dame Phyllis Frost Centre new infrastructure, completed in April 2023

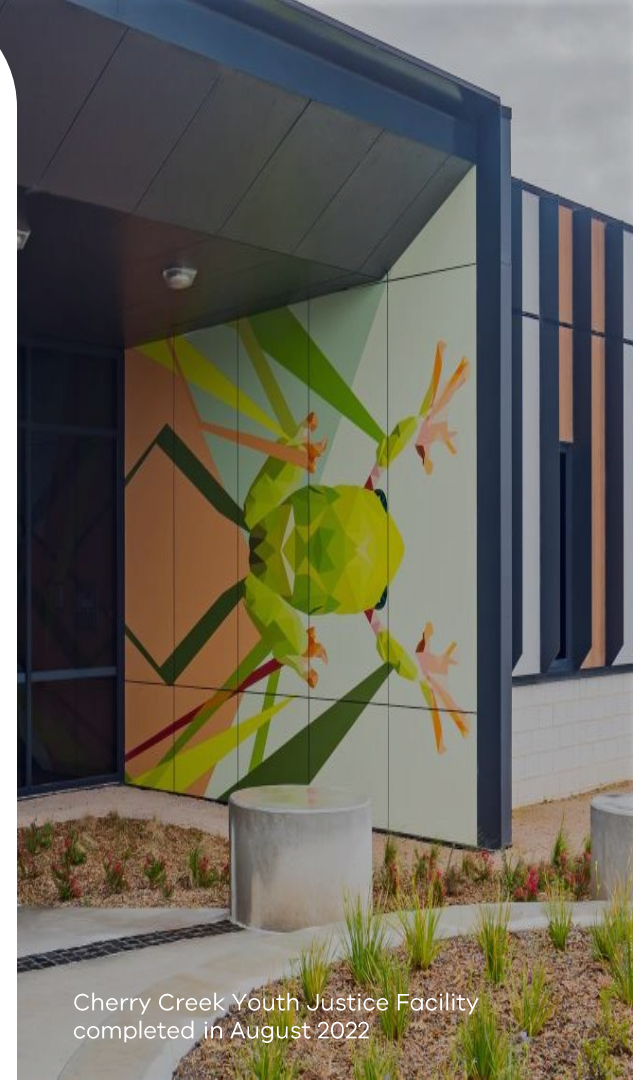


Western Plains Correctional Centre, completed in November 2022

Youth Justice

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23

- Launched Wirkara Kulpa, the Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy, and progressed implementation of key initiatives
- Established the South Sudanese Australian Youth Justice Expert Working Group to address the over-representation of young South Sudanese Australians
- Established the Youth Justice Bail After-hours Service and the Weekend Online Remand Children's Court.
- Completed the Statutory review of the Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017
- Progressed implementation of a salary uplift for custodial youth justice workers
- Completed construction of Cherry Creek youth justice facility and planning for its opening in August 2023



Cherry Creek Youth Justice Facility
completed in August 2022

Police; Crime Prevention; and Victim Support

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23

Victoria Police

- Implemented Neighbourhood Policing to better identify and address local issues
- Launched the VIPER taskforce focussed on outlaw motorcycle and street gangs and organised crime networks
- Supported the Victorian flood response in late 2022
- Established a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce to focus on preventing mental health injuries and supporting injured workers in their recovery and return to work.

DJCS

- Delivery of Crime Prevention projects to keep Victorians safe
- Established a new Countering Violent Extremism Multi-Agency Panel and legislated case management schemes for those at risk of radicalisation
- Delivered the Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme for former and current Victoria Police employees
- Deployed new artificial intelligence enabled Distracted Driver and Seatbelt road safety cameras and progressed installing 35 new fixed road safety cameras at high-risk intersections across Victoria.
- Victoria's first Victims Legal Service launched in March 2023 to assist victims of crime applying for financial assistance, and in restitution and compensation order matters.
- The *Garragarrak Victim and Witness Support Centre* opened in March 2023, providing a new co-located premises for the Child and Youth Witness Service and Intermediary Program.

15,459 in 2021-22

16,879 in 2022-23

Calls for support made to the **Victims of Crime Helpline**

15,678 in 2021-22

15,459 in 2022-23

Victims of violent crime supported by the **Victims Assistance Program**

1,265 in 2021-22

1,343 in 2022-23

Children and families supported by the **Child and Youth Witness Service**

98 crime prevention projects completed in metropolitan and regional areas (as at 30 June 2023)

1296 people supported through the **restorative engagement and redress scheme** (as at 30 June 2023)

Casino, Gaming, Liquor; and Racing

Key achievements in 2021-22 and 2022-23



Establishment of a dedicated Victorian liquor regulator and development of new Ministerial guidelines for late night liquor licences.



Delivery of recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence.



The Victorian Racing Industry Fund awarded 213 grants at a value of \$30.9m to improve participant and animal welfare, economic growth, community cohesion and integrity in the racing industry.



Development of a new funding framework, providing certainty for the Victorian racing industry.

Response to COVID-19

The department played a critical role supporting the community to respond to COVID-19 while maintaining critical justice services and emergency capability.

While officially COVID is no longer a global health emergency, the impacts continue throughout the justice system as we work to return to normal.

Key elements of the COVID-19 response



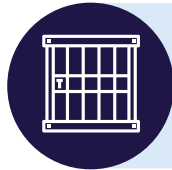
COVID-19 Quarantine Victoria (CQV)

CQV delivered the international arrivals quarantine program and the emergency accommodation program (incl. the frontline worker emergency accommodation program).



Activation of the State Control Centre (SCC)

The SCC was maintained at Tier 1 to support the COVID-19 response.



Corrections and Youth Justice response

Various programs and initiatives were implemented to protect and support individuals during COVID-19.



Victoria Police response

Significant resources and coordination were devoted to support the Victorian hotel quarantine program, enforce restrictions, support multi-agency response operations and appropriately equip staff.

Key legislation passed Parliament

- Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance Scheme) Act 2022
- Sex Work Decriminalisation Act 2021*
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022
- Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Act 2022
- Terrorism (Community Protection) Amendment Act 2021
- Victoria Police Amendment Bill 2022
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022
- Firearms and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2021
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Criminal Procedure Disclosure and Other Matters) Act 2022
- Human Source Management Act 2023

*Note WorkSafe Victoria is responsible for occupational health and safety and workplace compensation in the sex work industry, and responsibility for the decriminalisation of Sex Work moved to the Department of Government Services on 1 January 2023





Thank you.

