



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

19 May 2020



Courts, VCAT and legal assistance

- ▼ To remain open while performing safe essential services the courts and VCAT:
 - suspended all new civil and criminal jury trials
 - implemented measures to reduce the number of people entering buildings and increased hygiene measures
 - reduced in-court appearances through increasing the capacity for audio-visual conferencing and hearings, and matters dealt with “on the papers”
 - evaluated and prioritised cases to be heard.
- ▼ The *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* and subordinate Regulations will enable the courts and VCAT to continue to develop their use of technology.
- ▼ Government investments are supporting enhanced AVL capability and legal assistance services to hear more matters more quickly.



Corrections and Youth Justice

- ▼ There have been no cases of COVID-19 in Victoria's Corrections or Youth Justice facilities.
- ▼ Screening and temperature checks have been introduced for prisoners, staff and professional visitors entering correctional and youth justice facilities.
- ▼ A quarantine process for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases has been put in place as well as a 14 day quarantine period for all prisoners entering custody.
- ▼ Primary and mental health services are utilising telehealth services.
- ▼ Increased options for prisoners for virtual interaction with family and friends.



Supporting rental fairness and Victorian businesses to reopen and rebound

- ▼ New laws are in place to protect Victorian tenants, landlords and the rental market.
- ▼ We've been working with the liquor and gaming industry to implement a range of measures prior to venues reopen.
- ▼ We've introduced tax relief measures, including reimbursing businesses that have paid a renewable liquor licence for 2020.
- ▼ DJCS has pushed more than \$500 million into the economy by fast-tracking the payment of invoices for local businesses.
- ▼ More widely, DJCS and CSV will help to reboot and stimulate the economy through bringing forward important capital investments.



Workplace safety

- ▼ WorkSafe inspectors are visiting workplaces across the State to ensure employers understand their duties and what measures they should put in place.
- ▼ Since 31 January, WorkSafe has conducted 1324 inspections specific to COVID-19 risks and have issued 34 compliance notices.
- ▼ Over the same period, WorkSafe's Advisory Line has received 1455 calls.
- ▼ On workers' compensation, 20 claims related to contracting COVID-19 or the impact of the virus have been accepted to date.
- ▼ WorkSafe will continue to work with DHHS to coordinate response efforts to outbreaks affecting Victorian workplaces.





Thank you.

