



MAGISTRATES' COURT
OF VICTORIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



The Honourable Margaret Gardner AC,
Governor of Victoria

Government House
Melbourne Vic 3004

Dear Governor,

On behalf of the Council of Magistrates, I present the Magistrates' Court
Annual Report for the year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 pursuant to section
15(3) of the *Magistrates' Court Act 1989*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Hannan', is written over a light blue circular watermark that contains the text 'MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA'.

JUSTICE LISA HANNAN
Chief Magistrate

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE	4
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO	6
ABOUT THE MAGISTRATES' COURT	7
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	10
2022-2023 AT A GLANCE	12
OUR STRATEGIC PLAN	13
TOWARDS EXCELLENCE - ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS	14
ACROSS THE DIVISIONS	23
- CIVIL DIVISION	23
- CRIMINAL DIVISION	25
- SPECIALIST COURTS DIVISION	27
- FAMILY VIOLENCE	32
OPERATIONAL DATA AND FINANCIALS	34
COURT LOCATIONS	42

Acknowledgement of country

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria (MCV) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways.

MCV acknowledges and pays respect to Elders, knowledge holders and leaders – past present and emerging – and we extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE

LOOKING BACK OVER 2022–2023, I AM PROUD OF OUR COURT'S DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO SERVING THE PEOPLE OF VICTORIA.

In December 2022, we launched our Strategic Plan for 2022–26 '*Service. Community. Innovation – Delivering Court Excellence*', where we laid out a clear and actionable pathway to court excellence. We set our vision to become an innovative and accessible court delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice for the people of Victoria – and we are doing just that.

The plan sets out the court's vision as OneMCV and strategy to achieve excellence through four strategic pillars:

- **Pillar 1: MCV serves – a court of excellence**
- **Pillar 2: MCV empowers – a workplace where everyone thrives**
- **Pillar 3: MCV innovates – a future-ready court**
- **Pillar 4: MCV connects – a people-centred approach.**

I am pleased to report that we have already made substantial progress in line with our new strategic direction through transformative change to the way we deliver services at MCV. The time invested by our leaders in launching our strategic plan personally to staff statewide has promoted uptake, staff connection and laid a solid foundation for success in ensuring we continue to deliver justice as the people's court.

The *OneMCV* identity and the strategic pillars have been embraced across our 51 courts and are demonstrated daily through both organisational and individual achievements.

Since its inception, the MCV Service Centre has exemplified teamwork, connection and empowerment through problem-solving. It provides centralised support and responds to public enquiries – taking the pressure off court registry staff, building capacity at local courts and modernising our services.

The MCV Service Centre is delivering outstanding service to court users with an average 13-second call wait-time and 90 per cent of calls resolved on first enquiry.

The Family Violence Coordination Tool is a further demonstration of innovation and connection, not just as a technology platform, but also as a collaborative tool that brings MCV, Victoria Police, Victorian Legal Aid and other community service providers together.

We are also advancing our built environments. In February 2023, we celebrated the opening of the new cross-jurisdictional Bendigo Law Courts. Built to offer fit-for-purpose facilities with secure and safe spaces, this modern building was designed with court users in mind, providing a facility that applies best-practice principles for inclusion and accessibility and puts people and community first.

The Bendigo Law Courts brings together multiple Victorian court jurisdictions and specialist courts under one roof. It houses a Koori Court, offering culturally appropriate services for the Koori community, a Specialist Family Violence Court, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and an Assessment and Referral Court, which provides support for accused persons with mental illness or a cognitive impairment.

In 2022, work began on a new future-ready court facility in Melbourne's west. When it opens in 2025, the Wyndham Law Courts will be the largest court complex outside Melbourne's central business district and will provide multi-jurisdictional and specialist court services to the rapidly growing population in the Wyndham area.

It will be a state-of-the-art building complex, but more than that, we want it to offer the range and quality of services that build people's trust in the Court and the justice ecosystem we operate within.

In line with our commitment to being the people's court, we are prioritising court user experience, safety, and sustainability in the design. We are investing time and effort to ensure that, not only are the physical foundations solid, but that our operations are centred around the needs of court users and the wider community.

We continue to learn and build on the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and have seen how technological advances can support the delivery of and access to justice. We have now embedded hybrid hearings as part of our service model, with a mix of in-person and online hearings.

Our new case management system (CMS) continues to be a major part of our digital journey. Since celebrating the civil release (first stage) in October 2022, it has grown to more than 6000 external users, with more than 29,000 requests for case access and 72,000 documents filed by external users. CMS has provided a more efficient method for document filing and reduced the number of physical documents processed. It also reduced the need for court users to attend in person. The build of the new CMS continues across our other jurisdictions.

We are committed to innovation, improvement and sustainable court operations and we look to the future with confidence and a preparedness for change to deliver a modern court.

We could not have achieved the scale of change and innovation in the last year without the ongoing efforts of our people and the support of our stakeholders. I want to acknowledge the contribution of our judicial officers, in particular the Heads of Division, Regional Coordinating Magistrates and Supervising Magistrates for their leadership and commitment to delivering a fair, transparent, accessible and innovative court. The Court could not function, nor progress, without the dedicated work of our judicial officers and staff and I am deeply appreciative.

JUSTICE LISA HANNAN
CHIEF MAGISTRATE



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

OVER THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE SEEN SIGNIFICANT TRANSFORMATION AND EXCITING INNOVATIONS ACROSS OUR COURT AS WE CONTINUE TO ADAPT TO BEST SERVE THE PEOPLE OF VICTORIA.

In December we committed to an ambitious Strategic Plan 2022–26 *Service. Community. Innovation – Delivering Court Excellence*. The plan is informed by our self-assessment against the International Framework for Court Excellence and builds on our pledge to be an innovative and accessible court that delivers fair, transparent and efficient justice.

The remarkable progress we have seen in the plan's first six months of action has highlighted the breadth of our services. We have been driven by our four strategic pillars – MCV serves, connects, empowers and innovates – which continue to guide us on our journey to court excellence.

Our people and court users are at the heart of everything we do. As we continue to adapt to the evolving needs of our community, we have further invested in our teams and built on key services across our courts.

I am particularly proud of key initiatives launched in the past year to improve our service. This includes the successful rollouts of the civil CMS and our knowledge management system (KMS). We also opened the MCV Service Centre, which was recognised at the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) awards in May 2023.

We have continued to build on and embed innovations and change brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Online hearings have been normalised within our ongoing operations, with the Audio Visual Link (AVL) Scheduler transforming the way we manage the large volume of audio-visual links streamed across the state each day.

Through the implementation of a hybrid in-person and online model for court hearings, our court has become more accessible than ever. MCV has reduced pending cases by more than 63,000 matters since the peak in December 2020. This progress is a testament to the dedicated work of our people, and our commitment to continuous improvement.

MCV welcomed new Director Mason Atkinson in 2022 to lead a newly created Koori Strategy and Engagement function with a whole of MCV focus and dedicated strategic focus on Koori justice matters.

I would like to thank the Chief Magistrate, the Honourable Justice Hannan for her leadership of the Court and personal support to me, as well as Deputy Chief Magistrates Wakeling and Bourke, the broader judiciary, and my executive leadership group for their ongoing support.

I am grateful to all court staff for the implementation and delivery of our services to the community. I am proud of the dedication, passion and commitment they show across each of our courts every day.

SIMON HOLLINGSWORTH
CEO

ABOUT THE MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA

MCV PROVIDES AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE TO THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY AS THE FIRST LEVEL OF THE VICTORIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM. MORE THAN 93 PER CENT OF VICTORIA'S CRIMINAL AND CIVIL CASES BEGIN AND END IN THE MAGISTRATES' COURT.

We provide a range of services to ensure the delivery of fair, transparent and efficient justice to all Victorians, no matter how they access court, including:

- hearing and determining matters at courts across metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria and offering remote hearing options where it is appropriate and consistent with the interests of justice
- providing specialist courts and tailored support to facilitate access to justice
- offering alternative ways to resolve matters before a final hearing including pre-hearing conferences, mediations and early neutral evaluations.

MCV has three divisions: criminal, civil and specialist courts.

The Criminal Division hears and determines summary offences and some indictable matters, as well as conducting committal hearings in relation to serious indictable offences that are determined in the County Court or Supreme Court.

The Civil Division hears disputes arising from debts, claims for damages and other monetary or property disputes up to \$100,000. It also deals with claims for compensation for workplace injuries and hears claims by employees and employers under the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Many people come before the court with underlying mental health or substance abuse issues, social or cultural disadvantage, or a disability. Our specialist courts and programs are solution-focused, using the opportunity of an individual's participation in the justice system to prevent re-offending, improve wellbeing and increase community safety.

These specialist courts and programs include:

ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL COURT

The Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) is a specialist therapeutic and solution-focused court designed to ensure access to justice and improved outcomes for accused individuals who have a mental illness or cognitive impairment.

COURT INTEGRATED SERVICES PROGRAM

The Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) is a statewide, court-based program that supports eligible clients to address their health and social needs to help reduce the likelihood of reoffending. CISP works with clients during the bail (or pre-trial) stage of their criminal proceedings.

CISP REMAND OUTREACH PILOT

The CISP Remand Outreach Program (CROP) is a joint initiative with Corrections Victoria. CROP staff work in prisons to identify remand prisoners who would be eligible for bail if appropriate community supports were in place. They work with people on remand to identify and address barriers to receiving these supports.

DRUG COURT

The Drug Court provides offenders with a drug or alcohol dependency with the option to serve a sentence of imprisonment in the community under a drug and alcohol treatment order (DATO). The intensive, integrated treatment program is judicially supervised and provides a therapeutic response to address the underlying causes of addiction.

KOORI COURT

Koori Court is a culturally appropriate sentencing court for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who plead guilty. The Koori Court facilitates conversations between the participant (accused), their family and their lawyer sitting around a table, directly engaging with Koori Court Elders, the magistrate, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria and a Koori Court officer to address underlying issues. Elders and Respected Persons (ERPs) and Koori Court officers reduce cultural alienation, strengthen accountability and ensure the process is culturally safe.

NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

Established in 2007, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) is a multi-jurisdictional community justice centre in Collingwood that hears cases involving residents of the City of Yarra. It resolves disputes by addressing the underlying causes of harmful behaviour and tackling social disadvantage.

SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

Specialist Family Violence Courts (SFVCs) deliver an integrated family violence response with magistrates, registry and family violence practitioners who are all trained and specialising in family violence. Features of the SFVCs are designed to support the safety and wellbeing of people affected by family violence. These include separate entrances and safe waiting areas, remote witness technology and private interview rooms.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE TRIBUNAL

The Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) provides financial assistance to victims of violent crime to aid their recovery and to cover expenses that resulted from the crime.

THE MAGISTRATES' COURT IS THE FIRST LEVEL OF THE VICTORIAN COURT SYSTEM. WE HAVE A DEDICATED WORKFORCE OF MAGISTRATES, RESERVE MAGISTRATES, JUDICIAL REGISTRARS AND STAFF WORKING ACROSS THE COURT'S 51 LOCATIONS.

Figure 1: Map of MCV court locations



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria is led by the Chief Magistrate, Justice Lisa Hannan. Her Honour is supported by Deputy Chief Magistrates, Supervising Magistrates and Regional Coordinating Magistrates. The magistrates are supported by an administrative team, which is led by the CEO, to deliver an innovative and responsive court.

THE JUDICIARY

CHIEF MAGISTRATE

Justice Lisa Hannan

DEPUTY CHIEF MAGISTRATES

Susan Wakeling

Tim Bourke

HEADS OF DIVISION

<i>Crime</i>	Donna Bakos
<i>Specialist Courts</i>	Pauline Spencer
<i>Civil</i>	Phillip Goldberg

SUPERVISING MAGISTRATES

<i>ARC</i>	Ros Porter
<i>Drug Court</i>	Suzie Cameron
<i>Family Violence/PSIO</i>	Thérèse McCarthy
<i>Family Violence – Crime</i>	Tim Gattuso
<i>Industrial</i>	Kathryn Fawcett
<i>Koori Justice</i>	Rose Falla
<i>Sexual Offences</i>	Jo Metcalf
<i>VOCAT</i>	Fiona Hayes
<i>WorkCover</i>	Meghan Hoare

REGIONAL COORDINATING MAGISTRATES

<i>Barwon South West</i>	Ann McGarvie
<i>Broadmeadows</i>	Stella Stuthridge
<i>Dandenong</i>	Tony Burns
<i>Frankston</i>	Charles Tan
<i>Gippsland</i>	Tim Walsh
<i>Grampians</i>	Hugh Radford
<i>Heidelberg</i>	Meagan Keogh
<i>Hume</i>	Anne Goldsbrough
<i>Loddon Mallee</i>	Megan Aumair
<i>Moorabbin</i>	Luisa Bazzani
<i>Melbourne</i>	Tara Hartnett
<i>NJC</i>	Noreen Toohey
<i>Ringwood</i>	Jan Maclean
<i>Sunshine</i>	Kay Robertson

MAGISTRATES

Marita Altman
 Julian Ayres
 Guillaume Bailin
 Stephen Ballek
 Julia Barling
 Hayley Bate
 John Bentley
 Amina Bhai
 Jacqueline Billings (CHC)
 Angela Bolger
 Jade Bott
 Caroline Boulton
 Jennie Bowles (CHC)
 Felicity Broughton
 Gerard Bryant
 Abigail Burchill
 Carolyn Burnside
 Alexandra Burt
 Darrin Cain (CHC)
 Vincenzo Caltabiano
 Victoria Campbell
 Andrew Capell
 Megan Casey
 Michael Coghlan
 Ann Collins
 Gregory Connellan
 Erica Contini (CHC)
 Suzette Dootjes
 Peter Dotchin (CHC)
 Alana Duffy
 Peter Dunn
 Bernard Fitzgerald
 Lesley Fleming (CHC)
 Leon Fluxman
 Justin Foster
 Belinda Franjic
 Jane Gibson (CHC)
 Kieran Gilligan
 Julie Grainger
 Timothy Greenway
 Kirstie Grigor
 Martin Grinberg
 Jennifer Grubissa
 Simon Guthrie
 Andrew Halse
 Robyn Hamilton (CHC)
 John Hardy
 Annabel Hawkins (CHC)

Jacqueline Hawkins (CCOV)
 Natalie Heynes
 Timothy Hoare
 Michelle Hodgson
 Cecily Hollingworth
 Franz Holzer
 Gail Hubble (CHC)
 Trieu Huynh
 Audrey Jamieson (CCOV)
 Graham Keil
 Russell Kelly
 Costas Kiliias
 Michael King
 Randall Kune (CHC)
 Nunzio La Rosa
 Heather Lambrick
 Elizabeth Langdon (CHC)
 David Langton
 Rohan Lawrence
 Stephen Lee
 Dominic Lennon
 Gerard Lethbridge
 Denise Livingstone
 Cynthia Lynch
 Mary-Anne MacCallum
 Kay Macpherson (CHC)
 Urfa Masood
 Ross Maxted
 Andrew McKenna
 Michael McNamara
 Sharon McRae
 Fran Medina
 Peter Mellas
 Peter Mithen
 Helen Murphy
 Michelle Mykytowycz
 John O'Callaghan
 Julie O'Donnell
 Jason Ong
 Kim Parkinson (CHC)
 Shiva Pillai (CHC)
 Samantha Poulter
 Vicky Prapas
 Lucy Raponi (CHC)
 Michael Richards
 Gregory Robinson
 Kristen Rose (CHC)
 Mark Sabljak
 Ron Saines
 Andrew Sim
 Sharon Smith (CHC)
 Brett Sonnet
 Patrick Southey
 Paresa Spanos (CCOV)
 Helen Spewart

David Starvaggi
 Robert Stary
 Melissa Stead (CHC)
 Fiona Stewart
 Mark Stratmann
 Jacinta Studham
 Mia Stylianou
 Kimberley Swadesir
 Greg Thomas
 Malcolm Thomas
 Cynthia Toose
 Letizia Torres
 Jennifer Tregent
 Olivia Trumble
 Belinda Wallington
 Nahrain Warda
 Michael Wardell
 Ian Watkins
 Matthew White
 Michael Wighton
 Jarrod Williams
 Christina Windisch
 Simon Zebrowski
 Francis Zemljak (CHC)

RESERVE MAGISTRATES

Ross Betts
 Barry Braun
 Brian Clifford
 John Doherty
 Michelle Ehrlich
 David Faram
 Margaret Harding
 Jonathan Klestadt
 Bob Kumar
 Cathy Lamble
 John Lesser
 Lance Martin
 Ian McGrane
 Gregory McNamara
 Dan Muling
 Jelena Popovic
 Steven Raleigh
 Peter Reardon
 Duncan Reynolds
 Charlie Rozencwajg
 Marc Sargent
 Michael Smith
 Brian Wright

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Julian Bartlett
 Mick Bolte
 Shannon Dellamarta
 Samantha Dixon
 Kristie Eales
 Gavin Green
 Michael Gurvich
 Anthony Gwynne
 Leah Hickey
 Barry Johnstone
 Sivaratnam Kandasamy
 Stephanie Keogh-Barnes
 Alison Paton
 Lisa Rees
 Katherine Rynne
 Angela Soldani
 Allison Vaughan
 John Wieladek
 Sally Wilson

CHC indicates magistrates sitting at the Children's Court, CCOV indicates magistrates sitting at the Coroners Court.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Simon Hollingsworth

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

People and Innovation

Melissa Martino

Court Operations

Simone Shields

Family Violence

Melinda Stuart-Adams

Specialist Courts and Programs

Jane Craig

Strategy and Corporate Services

Jake Hawley

PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR

Ms Tanya Turner

2022-2023 AT A GLANCE



Strategic Plan
2022-26 launched



8
new SFVCs
commenced
operations



New Bendigo Law
Courts opened



New Koori Courts
commenced
in Bendigo,
Wangaratta and
Wodonga



303
active drug and
alcohol treatment
orders



More than 2,000 people
affected by family
violence supported
by the remote hearing
support service



24,327
civil claims
finalised



715,710
criminal listings



160,959
criminal cases
finalised



39,347
family violence
intervention order
matters finalised



11,765
personal safety
intervention order
matters finalised

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

IN DECEMBER 2022, WE LAUNCHED OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026 *SERVICE.COMMUNITY.INNOVATION – DELIVERING COURT EXCELLENCE.*

Our vision is to be an innovative and accessible court delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice. Our strategic plan sets out our direction for the next four years to ensure we achieve this vision and that we are providing the best possible justice service for the people of Victoria.

The plan is built on the foundation of OneMCV. We have 51 court locations throughout Victoria, with many different services, but we are one court. OneMCV means we have a single and determined commitment to our vision and to deliver excellence at every court, every day.

We have identified four strategic pillars to help us implement our strategic plan. We are committed to adapting the way we deliver services to ensure our vision becomes a reality.

These pillars will be the focus of our business planning and investment priorities for the next four years.

ACTIVATING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

From January to June 2023, MCV leaders hosted 21 Activating the Strategic Plan sessions across 18 court locations. The sessions brought together more than 700 judicial officers and staff as part of a court-wide conversation about how we bring our vision to life as OneMCV.

The sessions were an opportunity for our people to reflect on the vision, to acknowledge challenges, and, importantly, celebrate our achievements so far. Lessons and insights from the sessions will help shape our future program of work.

Pillar 1 A court of excellence

MCV Serves

We deliver high-quality, accessible and inclusive statewide court services that reinforce public trust and confidence in the justice system.

Pillar 2 A workplace where everyone thrives

MCV Empowers

We empower and equip our people to realise their potential and perform at their best. Our culture is safe and inclusive. We are outcome and people-focused.

Pillar 3 A future-ready court

MCV Innovates

We are committed to improvement and sustainable court operations. We look to the future with confidence and a readiness for change.

Pillar 4 A people-centred approach

MCV Connects

We are the people's court. We work across Victoria to connect with the community we serve and the broader justice system.

TOWARDS EXCELLENCE – ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

MCV Serves A court of excellence

BECOMING A COURT OF EXCELLENCE

In 2020, MCV began the journey towards court excellence with the adoption of the International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE). IFCE is the recognised international framework for courts seeking a strategic approach to sustained organisational change. The framework provides the values, concepts and tools that have informed our approach to improving the quality of justice and judicial administration.

Through consultation across our jurisdiction, we identified 14 high-level priority areas for improvement.

We have made considerable progress towards these priorities, delivering:

- Our Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Service. Community.Innovation – Delivering Court Excellence to shape our future and drive transformation.
- The KMS to foster information sharing, engagement and collaboration.
- A framework for data governance and a function for research and evaluation to embed the use of evidence and data to inform organisational decisions and work.

In 2023–24 we will release the MCV Service Commitment, setting the standards all court users can expect when they engage with us. Over the next 18 months, we will undertake further self-assessment to measure our progress towards becoming a court of excellence.

CREATING A MORE ACCESSIBLE COURT

In March 2022, we launched the MCV Service Centre, providing a centralised support service for court users. The centre diverts enquiries from court registries, including telephone calls and emails, and can help court users prepare for court.

The service centre has grown to support 31 courts across the state, responding to more than 139,000 enquiries in the criminal and civil jurisdictions during 2022–2023.

In the past year, the service centre has returned more than 15,000 hours of capacity to local courts, giving local court staff more time to ensure matters are ready for court and to provide high-quality, in-person service to court users, including targeted support for court users with complex needs.

Since its launch, the service centre has continued to innovate, introducing a public webchat service in November 2022. The webchat service is a convenient and user-friendly way to engage court users. MCV is only the second court jurisdiction in Australia to offer this service.

This year, the MCV Service Centre won the Citizen-centred Service Design Award at the IPAA Leadership in the Public Sector Awards 2022. This award recognised the service centre as “an exemplar of innovation, demonstrable impact and inspirational delivery for the public sector and the Victorian community.”

Creating a more accessible court – Sam’s story

Sam was feeling stressed and unsure of what would happen at her criminal court hearing. She rang her local court, and her call was answered in less than 20 seconds by a client service officer in the MCV Service Centre.

The client service officer gave Sam information about the court hearing process and sent her an SMS with contact details for legal support services.

Later that day, Sam realised she had forgotten to ask something about her hearing and used her phone to access the MCV webchat service to speak directly with another client service officer.

Sam was able to get advice and felt more comfortable and prepared for her hearing.

KOORI STRATEGY AND ENGAGEMENT

MCV’s Koori Strategy and Engagement (KS&E) team began in June 2022 with the appointment of MCV’s first Aboriginal designated executive position of Director Koori Strategy and Engagement.

Working closely with the Supervising Magistrate for Koori Justice, KS&E collaborates across MCV, the broader courts portfolio, and externally with Victoria’s Koori and First Nations communities to develop and implement Koori justice initiatives. KS&E is also working to increase MCV’s employment of

Koori and First Nations staff and improve the cultural safety and capability of the organisation.

KS&E is working with teams from across MCV on projects such as MCV’s response to recommendations from the Coronial Inquest into the passing of Ms Veronica Nelson. These recommendations will improve early identification and support for Koori and First Nations people who come before the court. This work reflects KS&E’s commitment to creating a court that is culturally safe and effective for Koori and First Nations court users and employees.



From L-R Simon Hollingsworth, CEO, Melissa Martino, Executive Director, People and Innovation and Emily Holland, Senior Manager, Innovation and Service Experience collecting the IPAA Citizen-centred Service Design Award on behalf of the MCV Service Centre.

MCV Empowers

A workplace where everyone thrives

TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION

A key focus of KS&E is to support MCV to embed principles and approaches to self-determination within day-to-day operations across the organisation.

KS&E has taken the lead in implementing initiatives in the CSV Self-determination Action Plan. To date, KS&E has created working groups to progress self-determination initiatives and successfully implemented a new governance model for its self-determination work – an example of practical self-determination in action.

The Self-determination Project Control Group oversees the implementation of MCV self-determination initiatives. This group has a majority of Koori and First Nations members, ensuring they have a strong voice in direction and decision-making. These Koori and First Nations members come from a variety of levels and classifications with executives, Elders and Respected Persons, program managers and frontline operational employees all represented.

THE VITAL ROLE OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The health and wellbeing of our staff and judicial officers is vital to the work we do at MCV.

In March 2023, MCV invited staff and the judiciary to have their say on future health and wellbeing initiatives through the Health and Wellbeing Plan Review Survey.

More than 300 people completed the survey, sharing their ideas and thoughts on our most important workplace health and

wellbeing issues, and how we can address them. The court will use the feedback to improve health and wellbeing information, training, services and events in the future.

MCV delivered six health and wellbeing projects in 2022–2023. These include another successful and engaging RUOK? DAY event focusing on mental health and wellness, the free health check and appraisal program for staff and preventative health and wellness through the MCV's third annual 10,000 Steps Time Out Tournament.

One of these initiatives was the Peer Support Program. Launched in October 2022, the program provides staff with proactive and short-term assistance from trained and trusted colleagues and links them to professional services if needed. The program has grown to include 52 specially trained peer support people (including 14 from MCV) from across the Courts Group.

OUR ONEMCV APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The MCV KMS is a central "information bank" of court procedures in the civil, criminal, intervention order and specialist court jurisdictions.

The launch of the KMS in March 2023 marked an important milestone on the OneMCV journey, enabling our staff to provide consistent, high-quality information and services to court users at every court, every day.

The KMS provides best practice service material to court staff, helping them to respond to public enquiries consistently,



MCV Service Centre staff responding to court user enquiries

across all court locations. It ensures staff across our 51 locations, and our service centre, have access to the same, up-to-date guidance on court procedures, legislation, government policy and court practice directions. The KMS means that every time a court user contacts us, they can be confident they will get timely, accurate and high-quality information and responses to their enquiries.

MEDIATION TRAINING

Mediation is a vital aspect of our justice system as it allows parties in a dispute to find mutually acceptable solutions in a collaborative and constructive way.

In 2023, 12 registrars completed the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria's Accredited Mediator Training Course, providing them with a nationally recognised certification in mediation. Participants come away with practical skills and knowledge that enables them to develop successful communication strategies, implement negotiation techniques, minimise conflict and prepare for and conduct mediations.

Building mediation skills and knowledge within the court's registry staff will significantly enhance service and capability in the civil jurisdiction.

MCV Innovates

A future-ready court

CREATING A MODERN CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

MCV's new CMS aims to create a more modern, efficient and user-friendly system that will enhance access to justice for Victorians.

CMS Civil began in October 2022, introducing automated processes for filing and accessing information through one easy-to-use portal. The benefits will flow to court users and the Victorian community as external parties can initiate, view, file documents and track their cases through the portal.

For the court, the introduction of electronic files has significantly reduced the manual hours previously required to manage paper files.

Civil jurisdiction practitioners are embracing the CMS and the automated system has had a positive impact on overall efficiency. The benefits include increased productivity, cost savings, customer and staff satisfaction, as well as environmental benefits from eliminating paper processes.

The CMS Child Protection jurisdiction of the Children's Court is expected to be delivered in late 2023, with the Criminal and Family Violence functionality to follow.

ROLLING OUT THE FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATION TOOL

The Family Violence Coordination Tool is an online portal where the court and approved family violence stakeholders including Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), community legal centres and Victoria Police, can share information and documents about family violence matters quickly and securely.

The coordination tool has changed the way the justice system supports and responds to family violence matters. It has taken a formerly paper-based, handwritten system of referrals, to a faster and more efficient system that helps link court users with services before their hearing date.

"Victoria Legal Aid worked in partnership with the MCV to contribute to the development of the Family Violence Coordination Tool. This collaborative approach has yielded great benefits to our lawyers and other client-facing staff that now work with a tool that is user-friendly, efficient and adapted to their needs."

– VLA representative

Most importantly, the coordination tool is improving outcomes for families affected by violence. It is helping to improve readiness for court hearings through better information sharing and reducing the need for people affected by family violence to retell their whole story when they come to court.

Court staff worked closely with stakeholders to develop the coordination tool, supporting a culture of collaboration and ensuring the system meets the needs of all court users. It is now in use at all headquarter courts and has facilitated more than 25,000 referrals since its launch.

The coordination tool was a finalist for the Communications and Engagement Excellence Award at the prestigious IPAA Leadership in the Public Sector Awards 2022, where it was recognised for delivering meaningful change across government.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ONLINE HEARINGS

We estimate that over 1,900 persons engage with the court by audio-visual means each day.

On 30 May 2022, we launched the AVL Scheduler to streamline and improve how we manage the large volume of AVLs each day.

The scheduler makes it easier to coordinate AVLs with other agencies, such as Corrections Victoria and legal practitioners.

Publishing open links to the MCV website strengthens our commitment to provide alternative appearance methods and online services to court users. It supports court users, including people affected by family violence, to take part in court matters in a safe, secure and accessible way. It also supports legislation that requires most accused persons on remand to attend their hearing by AVL.

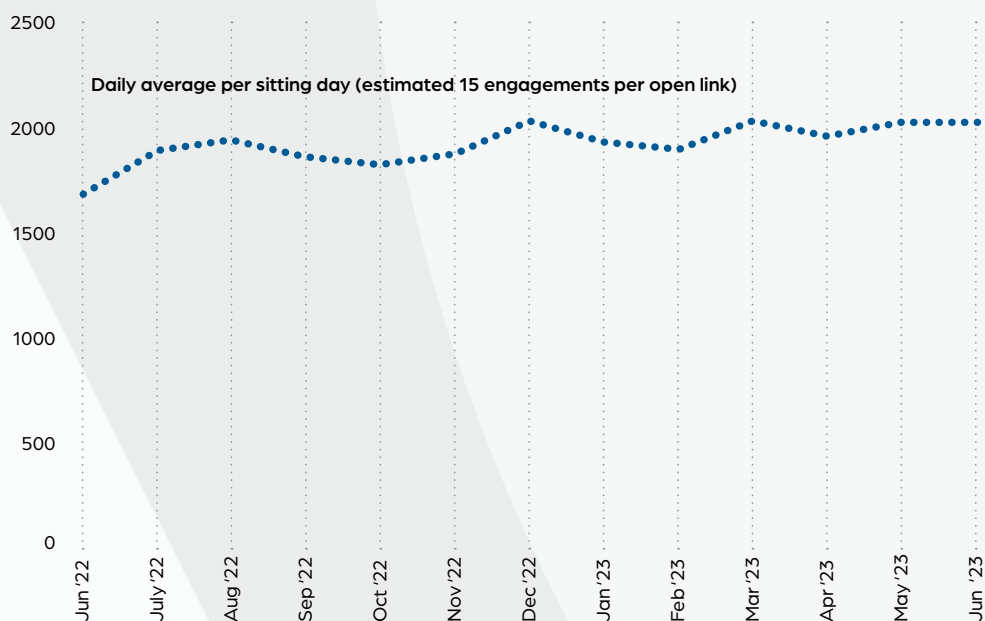


Figure 2: AVL Scheduler – estimate of engagements online (average per sitting day)

MCV Connects

A people-centred approach

LAUNCHING THE BENDIGO LAW COURTS

The new cross-jurisdictional Bendigo Law Courts was officially opened on 24 February 2023 by the Premier of Victoria, the Honourable Daniel Andrews MP.

The six-star certified state-of-the-art facility was designed with, and for, court users. The building applies best-practice principles for inclusion and accessibility, putting people and community first.

The Bendigo facility has nine courtrooms over five levels, with functional and accessible multipurpose spaces. It combines specialist courts, including the Koori Court, with key agencies under one roof for the first time in the region.

It provides greater access to justice in the community in a building designed and equipped for both operational excellence and long-term adaptability. It delivers fit-for-purpose facilities with secure and safe spaces and improved support to navigate a day in court.

Digital technology has been integrated through the courtrooms, staff work areas, judicial chambers and public spaces to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of court operations. The advanced technology will enable remote hearings, display of digital evidence, video conferencing and livestreaming.

In response to key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the SFVC features a design that enables separation between parties attending court, safe waiting areas, remote witness facilities and discreet meeting rooms.

Artworks by Djaara artists are exhibited throughout the building, enhanced by language elements in more than 40 locations. The design is anchored in Bendigo's unique heritage and culture of the Dja Dja Wurrung – Bendigo's Traditional Owners.



Waiting area at the Bendigo Law Courts.



Bendigo Law Courts.



Exterior view of the Bendigo Law Court.

CREATING A COURT OF THE FUTURE IN MELBOURNE'S WEST

In 2022, work began on a new state-of-the-art law court facility in Wyndham.

When it opens in 2025, the Wyndham Law Courts facility will be the largest court complex outside Melbourne's central business district.

Wyndham's future court will prioritise user experience, safety, sustainability and technological capability. It will bring together multiple Victorian court jurisdictions and will provide a range of therapeutic and culturally safe services.

The integration of the latest digital technology throughout the building will improve the daily experience for court users and key support services.

SUNSHINE LAW COURTS REDEVELOPMENT

Critical refurbishment and expansion works continue at the Sunshine Law Courts and are on track for completion in the second half of 2023. The refurbished Sunshine Law Courts will support the justice needs of the community in Melbourne's rapidly growing west, prioritising user experience, safety, sustainability and technological capability.

In addition, a new SFVC will be built at Sunshine responding to the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations. The SFVC project is expected to be completed in the first half of 2024.

IMPACT OF VICTORIAN FLOODS

During the Victorian floods in 2022, several court buildings were on flood watch. While many court staff were personally impacted, local court teams remained dedicated to serving their communities and responding to the unfolding natural disaster affecting thousands of Victorians.

The floods significantly damaged the Seymour courthouse, requiring substantial flooring, plastering, electrical and security remediation works.

Remediation will be completed in the 2023–24 financial year. The court will remain closed while work is in progress and will use the opportunity to make minor alterations to the court building layout to improve functionality and facilities for staff. Matters will continue to be heard at other courts in the region to ensure the community can continue to access justice locally.

CONNECTING COURT USERS WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT

The Navigation and Triage Pilot began at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court in October 2021 to support judicial decision making, provide earlier advice and information to reduce unnecessary adjournments and improve outcomes for the most vulnerable court users who require support.

The pilot was extended in 2023 at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court and expanded to Bendigo and Sunshine Magistrates' Courts.

Navigators assess the needs of court users and provide advice to magistrates regarding pathways and supports that best meet those needs. Navigators then support court users to access these services, including referral into court programs, accessing community services or linking with brokered programs such as emergency housing.

The Navigation and Triage team received around 400 referrals in 2022–23 and has helped hundreds of people get the right support for their needs.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

In 2022, MCV worked with the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) on a free series of continuing professional development (CPD) sessions for legal practitioners.

Ten sessions were delivered, focusing on therapeutic supports and specialist courts and programs to help lawyers expand their knowledge and increase confidence in using the programs. The sessions profiled MCV's highly skilled, specialist workforce and the work they do to support the most complex and vulnerable people in court.

Most sessions featured a specialist court supervising magistrate, as well as defence or prosecution lawyers, barristers or subject matter experts. The panels reflected the court's collaborative approach to justice.

More than 1,100 people attended these sessions, with many more accessing the recordings online through the LIV/MCV Courts and Programs Learning Hub.

ACROSS THE DIVISIONS

Civil Division

Head of Division – Magistrate Phillip Goldberg

SNAPSHOT

From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

762 matters initiated in the federal jurisdiction

627 matters finalised in the federal jurisdiction (September 2022 to June 2023)

53 matters initiated in the industrial division

The achievements of the past year would not have been possible without the dedication of the staff and judicial officers who support the work of the civil division. We acknowledge everyone who has contributed to our work.

The work of the judicial registrars has concentrated on serving the civil jurisdiction, including the federal jurisdiction. Their contribution to date has been invaluable to the timely resolution of matters.

FEDERAL JURISDICTION

Jurisprudence in respect of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's (VCAT) jurisdictional bounds has continued to unfold, with a flow-on impact on the court's operations and the types of cases heard in the federal jurisdiction.

In October 2022, the Supreme Court of Victoria Court of Appeal handed down the decision in confirming VCAT's inability to determine commonwealth matters, and questioning its ability to determine matters under the Australian Consumer Law.

The precise bounds of the court's federal jurisdiction have remained responsive to the needs of court users and to the administration of justice in accepting applications in a broader range of cases where VCAT's jurisdiction is in doubt.

MCV continues to have a strong engagement with VCAT to support information sharing, resolution of preliminary issues and expedition of matters struck out at first instance through VCAT.

INDUSTRIAL JURISDICTION REFORM

In early 2023, the industrial division welcomed Magistrate Fawcett as Supervising Magistrate.

The *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022 (Cth)* came into force on 6 December 2022. It introduced amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* (commencing 1 July 2023) which provide for small claims procedures to apply to claims valued at up to \$100,000 and allow the court to award the cost of filing fees for successful small claimants.

APPROPRIATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

On 11 May 2023, Magistrate Phillip Goldberg presented to the Victorian Bar as part of its continuing legal education to its membership. The presentation provided an opportunity for members of the Victorian Bar to engage with Magistrate Goldberg on Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes and the operation of the list of external mediators.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During the year, the civil division regularly engaged with stakeholders on a range of jurisdictional matters and used these engagement opportunities to support improved court operations and open dialogue with court users.

The **court user advocacy groups** meet regularly online and include representatives from Victoria Legal Aid, Tenants Victoria and community legal centres. The meetings present an opportunity for open dialogue with court stakeholders about jurisdiction operations and court user experience.

The **Civil Practice Committee** provides a forum for members of the profession including counsel and solicitors, Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the court to discuss opportunities for process optimisation. The group resolves questions of procedural uncertainty and is a forum to communicate incoming changes of impact to the profession.

The **WorkCover Users Group** represents the profession and stakeholders. The group discusses relevant procedural updates within the division and across court venues, providing a forum to discuss developments and address issues within the work area.

The **ADR Committee** includes members of the judiciary and court administration, the Victorian Bar, the LIV, and the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria. During 2022–2023, the ADR Committee continued its focus on reform and process refinement to the list of external mediators and associated application and fee policies and communicating these processes to the practitioner community.

Criminal Division

Head of Division – Magistrate Donna Bakos

The past year marks an important passage of law reform for the criminal jurisdiction. The work of the division relies on a team of staff and judicial officers, and we thank them for their dedication to serving the division and the Victorian community.

As in previous years, the division has maintained its working relationships with key stakeholders to ensure the court's views are communicated and reflected in the Victorian Government's legislative reform agenda.

Major items of law reform include the implementation of the *Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2022* and consultation about proposals introduced by the *Bail Amendment Bill 2023*. These two legislative items intersect with the daily business of the criminal jurisdiction and the division's representatives have communicated the court's views to the Victorian Government.

The division has continued to contribute to references undertaken by the Sentencing Advisory Council. On this year's agenda, the division assisted the council's study of aggregate sentences, adjourned undertakings and general collection of data on sentences imposed in MCV. The court's involvement in these references recognises its integral role in the criminal justice system.

Head of the Division, Magistrate Bakos maintains her chair of several criminal law committees to ensure the practical challenges facing practitioners are accounted for and the judiciary's expectations are made clear.

Magistrate Bakos continues to meet with representatives of the profession through the monthly Criminal Law Committee, which includes officers from prosecutorial and defence agencies. Her Honour also collaborates regularly with the Specialist Courts and Programs Division to deliver a holistic criminal jurisdiction through regular meetings with Forensicare, Youth Justice, Disability Services and Corrections Victoria.

SEXUAL OFFENCES PORTFOLIO

The *Justice Legislation (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022* introduced significant changes to practice and procedure in sexual offence proceedings, most notably, the requirement to conduct a ground rules hearing in all contested sexual offence matters where the complainant is a witness. Led by Supervising Magistrate Jo Metcalf, the division developed materials to meet the requirements of these legislative reforms, including the implementation of two new Practice Directions and the development of relevant statutory forms.

The division also conducted two Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions delivered to the judiciary and legal professionals in collaboration with the LIV to highlight these major changes. In partnership with the Judicial College of Victoria, Magistrate Metcalf and Magistrate Belinda Wallington recorded an instructive podcast covering ground rules hearings alongside County Court Deputy Chief Judge Meryl Sexton. These materials have ensured an informed transition period as the court and practitioners move to discharge their new obligation under the reforms.

Supervising Magistrate Metcalf continues to chair a bi-monthly Sexual Offences Management Committee to discuss legal and practical issues arising in sexual offence proceedings at MCV. The committee regularly updates the Sexual Offences Case Management Guide to ensure members of the judiciary have a contemporary reference when conducting sexual offence proceedings. All MCV headquarter courts are represented on the committee.

Regular meetings have also occurred with the Victorian Police Specialist Sex Offences Prosecution Unit to discuss listing issues, with a view to minimising delay and improving the level of information provided to the court in child abuse material cases. Supervising Magistrate Metcalf continues to represent MCV on the Intermediary Program and the Child Witness Service Steering Committees. This relationship has been increasingly important following the reforms introduced by the *Justice Legislation (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022*.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CRIME PORTFOLIO

The division is represented by Supervising Magistrate Timothy Gattuso at the monthly Family Violence Committee meetings, which are attended by prosecutorial and defence agencies relevant to this jurisdiction.

His Honour also represents the division at the bi-monthly Family Violence Practice and Policy Committee, where lead family violence magistrates discuss legal and practice issues relating to this increasingly complex area of law.

The division's representation at these meetings is important to ensure the effective intersection between family violence practice and the criminal jurisdiction. We continue to monitor relevant case law emerging in the family violence jurisprudence.

Specialist Courts Division

Head of Division – Magistrate Pauline Spencer

Specialist courts and mainstream court programs provide targeted, intensive and tailored interventions for court users with complex needs, or who have been charged with serious offences.

Mainstream court supports allow for therapeutic justice approaches to be delivered across court lists as 'business-as-usual'. Specialist courts allow for more intensive support with multi-disciplinary teams and court listing arrangements that cater to specific needs such as the facilitation of cultural conversations in Koori Court, or the participation of people with a disability in the Assessment and Referral Court (ARC).

COURT INTEGRATED SERVICES PROGRAM – MAINSTREAM COURT SUPPORT

The Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) service provision has continued to grow. In the past year, 5,135 people were referred to CISP for support, 2,764 new participants were accepted into the program and 1,327 people completed the program. This is an average increase of 15 per cent across the program's referral, acceptance, and completion measures from 2022-23.

Therapeutic Justice at the Magistrates' Court

Therapeutic justice acknowledges that legal problems have a wider context, such as addiction, unmanaged mental health or unsupported disability, unstable housing, family violence and other individual and social issues.

It aims to support a person on their journey to managing better in the community, therefore reducing the likelihood of reoffending and improving community safety.

MCV's therapeutic justice response acts as a bridge to connect court users to community-based support services and, where appropriate, mainstream court support programs or specialist courts.

This holistic, collaborative approach sees judicial officers, court-based support staff, community services, lawyers and prosecutors working together to identify and address the underlying drivers of legal issues and to empower and involve court users in their rehabilitation and recovery.



New Koori Court at Bendigo Law Courts

KOORI COURT

Expanding access to culturally safe justice

During 2022–2023, the Koori Court expanded to Wodonga, Wangaratta and Bendigo, giving more Koori and First Nations people access to culturally appropriate support and programs when they attend court for criminal matters. The Koori Court now operates at 16 court locations.

The Koori Court expansion has ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these communities have access to a culturally safe court and a system that is committed to self-determination.

Celebrating 20 years of Koori Court

The Shepparton and Broadmeadows Koori Courts celebrated 20 years of serving their communities in 2022 and 2023.

The Shepparton Koori Court is Victoria's first Koori Court, which commenced sitting in October 2002.

The anniversary ceremony was followed by the unveiling of the 20th anniversary plaque which showcases the work of Koori artists to celebrate 20 years of growth, healing and connection through the Shepparton Koori Court.

Broadmeadows Koori Court was the second Koori Court launched in Victoria and commenced sitting in April 2003.

The anniversary celebration was held during NAIDOC Week celebrations.

The event was followed by the unveiling of the 20th anniversary plaque, with artwork representing the story of the Broadmeadows Koori Court.

ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL COURT

ARC received funding in the 2022–23 state budget to expand to nine headquarter courts, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system.

Work on the ARC expansion began in July 2022. The new ARC sites will be phased over three years from July 2023 to June 2026. The first of these will begin at the Bendigo Magistrates' Court in July 2023.

Planning is on track for ARC to commence at the Ballarat and Heidelberg Magistrates' Courts early next year.

Assessment and Referral Court – Brad’s story

Brad was referred to ARC after being charged with aggravated burglary, theft and attempted fraud. He presented with acquired brain injury (ABI) symptoms as well as needing support for alcohol abuse, grief and loss and problem gambling.

Brad engaged with the ARC advanced case managers for 12 months. His ARC support plan included a referral for an ABI assessment, which resulted in him being diagnosed with an ABI.

Brad was referred for housing support and a gambling help service and commenced drug and alcohol counselling. He also contributed to the development of a mental health care plan with his general practitioner, who then managed his mental health issues.

By the end of his 12-month engagement with ARC, Brad had made significant improvements to his life, reconnected with his family and gained part-time work.

DRUG COURT

The Drug Court entered its 21st year of operation with regional pilot locations in Ballarat and Shepparton gaining momentum.

The Drug Court’s success and longevity were marked at an event at the Dandenong Drug Court’s Therapeutic Recovery Centre in August 2022.

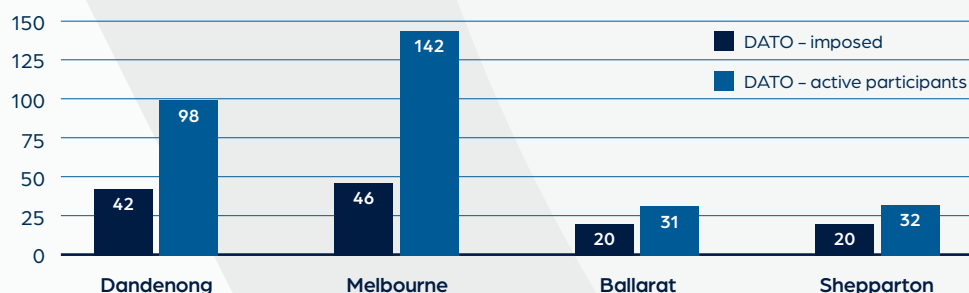
The event acknowledged the staff and judiciary who, over the past 20 years, have supported Drug Court participants to make significant and long-lasting changes.

After a period of significant growth in the 2021–22 financial year, the Drug Court has spent 2022–23 consolidating and building on the opportunities that period of growth provided.

Video provides insight into the Drug Court

In 2023, the Drug Court published an explainer video to help court users and the community learn more about the court and how it plays a pivotal part in transforming the lives of its participants.

The video includes a first-hand account from a Drug Court graduate and explains how a drug and alcohol treatment order addresses the underlying causes of offending.



NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

Over the past year, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) has continued to build its reputation as a justice innovation hub and problem-solving court.

The NJC established its community advisor panel to help improve services through engaging people with lived experience. The panel includes court users and community members who share their knowledge and diverse experiences to help NJC improve access to justice.

More than 100 people attended the court's flagship conflict resolution "peacemaking" services. As well as improving community safety, the peacemaking program reduces demand on the court. A total of 40 residents and service sector workers have been trained to facilitate their own sessions.

The NJC also grew its appropriate dispute resolution service to promote early resolution and better outcomes for parties involved in personal safety intervention order (PSIO) applications. To date, the service has conducted 100 sessions with 129 people.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE TRIBUNAL

Centralising statewide operations

Centralisation of the Tribunal's state-wide operations has been the largest project in the Tribunal's history. The Tribunal centralised state-wide operations in Melbourne between January and June 2023, with most of the 9,350 files centralised between April and June. Almost 34,000 historical applications across all court locations were archived.

In March 2023, the Tribunal relocated its principal registry from the William Cooper Justice Centre to 555 Lonsdale St Melbourne. The relocation facilitated a fit-for-purpose space to support and accommodate additional caseload and workforce in readiness for centralisation.

The Tribunal now has a registry space and workforce dedicated to the critical work of VOCAT that will support improvements to the quality of our application management, pending claim reduction and the service we provide to victims.



New VOCAT premises

Dhumbumana Healing Strategy

The Tribunal's Dhumbumana Healing Strategy (pronounced – thum-boo-mah-nah) launched in July 2022. The strategy focuses on continuous improvement within the VOCAT Koori list and enhancing VOCAT's capacity to engage with Koori communities.

The strategy's initiatives have enhanced the Tribunal's delivery of culturally appropriate service and will help form a targeted outreach program.

A cultural support plan was launched within the VOCAT Koori List. VOCAT will now capture significant cultural information for Tribunal members' consideration when making an award – acknowledging that an applicant's cultural journey affects their ability to heal from an act of violence.



Family Violence

NEW SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

Deputy Chief Magistrate Susan Wakeling led work on eight Specialist Family Violence Courts (SFVC) gazetted at Melbourne, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Geelong, Latrobe Valley, Ringwood, Sunshine and Bendigo. This is a significant milestone bringing the court's specialist family violence response to 13 locations, including all headquarter courts.

The SFVCs will now focus on ensuring all elements of the SFVC operating model remain consistent and working with the local registry and lead family violence magistrates to ensure each SFVC is responsive to local experience.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY EVENT FOR NEW SFVCS

The SFVC multi-disciplinary engagement (MDE) sessions brought together local organisations working within the family violence sector with judiciary and court staff to discuss how effective integrated practice helps respond to and address family violence.

MCV has held MDE sessions for all new SFVC locations. In 2022-23, MCV hosted MDE sessions at Ringwood and Bendigo ahead of the commencement of SFVCs at those courts.

The sessions aimed to create a shared understanding of the SFVC's role in the community and to establish best practice for how the sector can work together.

The interactive sessions brought together magistrates, court staff, Victoria Police, lawyers, and representatives from family violence organisations, demonstrating integrated and collaborative practice in action.

"I found the session incredibly useful to contextualise the policy work our team contributes to. It was a great insight into the dedication of the court and services in implementing the initiative in the Ringwood area."

– MDE Participant

SPECIALIST COURTS REMOTE HEARING SUPPORT SERVICE

Legislative changes in February 2022 and the introduction of Practice Direction 6 of 2022 allow for Affected Family Members (AFM) to elect to take part in the court hearing in-person or online.

The MCV remote hearing support service assists AFMs who choose to take part in their hearing online from a remote witness location, their home, or another safe location.

The remote hearing support service team includes family violence practitioners who assist AFMs taking part in their matter online before, during and after their hearing.



Magistrate Therese McCarthy (pictured) providing feedback to participants at the safer families moot court at Melbourne Magistrates' Court.

They can explain the hearing options available, help the person prepare for their matter and provide support on the day of the hearing as well as after the hearing.

The service is available at 11 court locations and supports more than 2,000 people affected by family violence each year.

"The remote hearing practitioner was understanding, patient and able to explain things to me that I would not have been able to understand otherwise. Having her there helped me to stay in control and make decisions."

– AFM remote hearing service participant

SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN FAMILY VIOLENCE MATTERS

In early 2023, MCV hosted three Safer Families Moot Court training sessions for family violence duty lawyers from across Victoria. The training sessions were

organised by Women's Legal Service Victoria in conjunction with MCV.

At each session, about 25 participants spent the day practising client interviews, negotiating with other lawyers and appearing before a magistrate in a real courtroom. The sessions demonstrated how lawyers can represent their clients more effectively and facilitate the safety of AFMs and their children.

The moot court provides training on how to advocate effectively in intervention order matters, using the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)* and evidence-based risk factors. Participants also learned to identify culturally responsive and trauma-informed strategies to support diverse communities.

Magistrate Therese McCarthy, Supervising Magistrate, Family Violence Intervention Orders and Personal Safety Intervention Orders, and Magistrate Frances Medina, Melbourne Magistrates' Court Lead Family Violence Magistrate shared their expertise during the training sessions, hearing submissions and providing guidance and feedback to participants.

OPERATIONAL DATA AND FINANCIALS

MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023.

CIVIL

Summary							
	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Total complaints issued		40,100	34,131	17,877	21,921	33,377	52%
Total claims finalised		38,972	36,821	34,084	21,197	24,327	15%
Total number of cases where a defence notice filed		7,237	8,387	6,803	6,765	7,712	14%
Total civil listings		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	31,726	

Complaints							
	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Complaints issued or filed							
Up to \$10,000 claimed		25,485	20,238	8,808	10,753	17,327	61%
More than \$10,000 claimed		14,615	13,893	9,069	11,168	16,050	44%
Total complaints issued		40,100	34,131	17,877	21,921	33,377	52%

As of October 2022, Civil Division data is generated from the court's new CMS. Data prior to October 2022 was extracted from the previous case management system. Further refinements in reporting methodologies may result in updates to data previously published. Data in relation to listings has become available because of the new CMS.

Complaints can be filed in the MCV for a monetary value up to \$100,000.

Claims finalised							
	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Defended claims finalised at a hearing							
Arbitration	1	1,289	1,191	2,125	1,314	1,090	-17%
Hearing		1,567	1,620	2,452	2,674	2,595	-3%
Pre-hearing conference or mediation		729	889	1,262	807	806	0%
Any other hearing type		1,586	1,677	2,387	2,386	2,275	-5%
Total of defended claims finalised at a hearing		5,171	5,377	8,226	7,181	6,766	-6%
Default orders made							
Complaints dismissed (under Regulation 21.11 of Magistrates' Court Civil Procedure Rules 2010)	2	17,506	15,371	7,098	6,269	7,938	27%
	3	16,295	16,073	18,760	7,747	9,623	24%
Total claims finalised	4	38,972	36,821	34,084	21,197	24,327	15%

Note 1: Cases where defences have been lodged and have been finalised, sorted by the hearing type where the matter was finalised.

Note 2: Plaintiff applies to the court for an order in default of a defence being filed by the defendant.

Note 3: Regulation 21.11 of the Magistrates' Court Civil Procedure Rules 2020 states that a complaint will be dismissed against any defendant three months after the expiration of the validity of service period of the complaint if no action taken.

Note 4: Total claims finalised is the total of both the defended claims finalised at a hearing, default orders made or complaints dismissed.

Civil cases finalised per court region

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Barwon South West		1,455	1,227	870	595	832	40%
Broadmeadows		2,205	2,334	1,945	1,471	1,669	13%
Dandenong		2,688	2,402	2,090	1,383	1,817	31%
Frankston		3,498	3,358	3,012	1,928	1,047	n/a
Gippsland		1,060	773	548	280	584	109%
Grampians		911	629	438	282	535	90%
Heidelberg		1,935	1,757	1,742	1,404	1,395	-1%
Hume		1,221	842	654	391	664	70%
Loddon-Mallee		1,218	1,060	748	419	683	63%
Melbourne		15,503	15,836	16,340	9,944	8,789	-12%
Moorabbin		-	-	-	-	1,584	n/a
Ringwood		3,230	3,269	2,860	1,486	2,706	82%
Sunshine		4,048	3,334	2,837	1,614	2,022	25%
Total		38,972	36,821	34,084	21,197	24,327	15%

The above totals breakdown the civil cases finalised at either defended hearing stage, default order or the complaint was dismissed, broken down by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 13 regions, with Moorabbin separating from Frankston and becoming its own region in 2022. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts.

Defence notices

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Defence notices filed							
Against complaints of up to \$10,000 claimed		2,572	3,179	2,310	1,926	1,965	2%
Against complaints of more than \$10,000 claimed		3,328	4,073	3,644	4,171	5,099	22%
Workcover defences filed		1,337	1,135	849	668	648	-3%
Total number of cases where a defence notice was filed		7,237	8,387	6,803	6,765	7,712	14%

A defendant to a claim can file a defence within specified timeframes depending on the complaint type. Defences can be filed outside specified timeframes if a default order has not been made.

Timeliness

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Defended claims finalised within six months		79.3%	77.0%	49.6%	66.1%	70.0%	6%
Defended claims pending as at 30 June		1,881	2,209	2,008	1,806	3,171	76%
Of the pending cases, the number of cases that have been pending for over 12 months		183	188	380	296	183	-38%

MCV aims to finalise 80 per cent of civil cases within six months or less and is required to report to the State Government on this target as part of Budget Paper No. 3 requirements.

CRIMINAL

Summary							
	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Cases initiated		150,465	144,455	133,487	134,948	145,054	7%
Cases finalised		142,909	115,575	105,784	132,758	160,959	21%
Bail application orders made		40,637	37,372	31,624	34,045	42,643	25%
Applications finalised		62,273	50,905	40,388	43,461	43,303	0%
Contravention of sentencing order cases		10,219	8,211	6,882	4,980	5,767	16%
Total criminal listings		660,262	606,061	607,167	703,571	715,710	2%

Caseload							
	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Cases initiated	1	150,465	144,455	133,487	134,948	145,054	7%
Cases finalised	1	142,909	115,575	105,784	132,758	160,959	21%
Cases finalised per court region	2						
Barwon South West		8,372	7,555	6,720	9,094	12,015	32%
Broadmeadows		10,528	8,697	8,495	10,092	11,287	12%
Dandenong		11,546	9,679	7,719	8,877	13,280	50%
Frankston		13,401	11,746	10,000	15,324	12,012	n/a
Gippsland		8,924	6,624	7,749	8,273	9,293	12%
Grampians		4,945	4,545	4,673	5,567	6,850	23%
Heidelberg		11,399	8,257	6,594	9,638	12,334	28%
Hume		7,134	5,711	5,299	7,535	7,982	6%
Loddon Mallee		7,948	7,314	8,447	8,360	8,712	4%
Melbourne		29,683	23,836	21,927	26,500	31,281	18%
Moorabbin		-	-	-	-	5,729	n/a
NJC		1,060	858	748	1,000	1,215	22%
Ringwood		13,553	10,261	9,636	10,058	11,826	18%
Sunshine		14,416	10,492	7,777	12,440	17,143	38%
Total		142,909	115,575	105,784	132,758	160,959	21%

Note 1: Cases initiated and finalised refer to criminal cases commenced or finalised at MCV for the financial year specified. The totals do not include some enforcement hearings or applications, relisted warrants to arrest, or contravention of sentencing order cases.

Note 2: The above totals break down the criminal cases finalised by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 13 regions, with Moorabbin separating from Frankston and becoming its own region in 2022. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts.

Initiations

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Charge and summons		103,076	94,136	88,622	88,549	94,779	7%
Charge and information		42,777	45,425	41,438	42,651	45,988	8%
Charge and warrant		4,378	4,630	3,142	3,216	3,516	9%
Notice to appear		182	264	284	532	771	45%
Infringement revocation		52	0	1	0	0	n/a
		150,465	144,455	133,487	134,948	145,054	7%

Cases in the Magistrates' Court can be commenced by different processes. Cases coming before the court where the accused is either in custody or on bail will be subject to a charge and information or charge and warrant.

Bail orders

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Bail application orders made							
Bail granted		17,613	16,942	14,333	16,889	20,987	24%
Bail refused		11,487	10,100	8,076	7,429	9,107	23%
No application for bail		60,685	54,539	49,157	51,387	59,152	15%
	1	89,785	81,581	71,566	75,705	89,246	18%
Applications where bail was revoked		3,468	2,970	3,644	3,427	3,992	16%
Applications where bail was varied		8,069	7,360	5,571	6,300	8,557	36%
Listings where bail was extended		87,348	89,291	98,825	123,479	120,232	-3%
Other orders							
Application for bail – struck out/withdrawn		2,677	2,682	1,589	1,554	1,811	17%
Application for bail variation – struck out/withdrawn		392	403	209	197	393	99%
Application for revocation of bail – struck out/withdrawn		2,631	4,179	6,138	5,728	6,316	10%
Total bail applications struck out/withdrawn	2	5,700	7,264	7,936	7,479	8,520	14%

Note 1: For those applications, the accused in the case came before the court in custody.

Note 2: Struck out/withdrawn means the listed application did not proceed before the court.

The above table records the number of individual applications heard and determined by the court. These figures do not reflect the number of individual cases or persons who have bail granted or refused. All the events listed below are counted in these figures:

- An accused person with multiple cases, and applications for bail on all those cases
- Bail revocation applications lodged on multiple cases for the one accused
- Multiple applications heard on the one case (either applications for bail, to vary or revoke bail).

Timeliness

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Criminal cases finalised within six months		70%	70.1%	76.2%	40.7%	55.1%	35%
Number of cases pending as at 30 June		52,840	83,260	101,787	83,194	64,553	-22%
Of the pending cases, the number of cases that have been pending for over 12 months		4,251	9,299	28,802	25,226	11,732	-53%

MCV aims to finalise 85 per cent of criminal cases within six months. MCV is required to report to the State Government on this target as part of Budget Paper No. 3 requirements.

INTERVENTION ORDERS

Intervention orders summary – Family Violence

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Total initiations		38,977	41,207	42,402	41,857	41,465	-1%
Total finalisations		35,172	33,058	35,598	43,040	39,347	-9%
Total post hearing applications lodged		4,105	3,985	3,569	3,971	4,205	6%
Total interim orders made		29,357	33,570	38,119	39,003	40,897	5%
Total overall listings		104,866	111,558	132,713	145,865	144,757	-1%

Caseload – Family Violence

Barwon South West		2,762	2,460	3,090	3,326	3,036	-9%
Broadmeadows		2,834	2,875	2,589	3,219	3,178	-1%
Dandenong		3,377	3,099	2,948	3,942	3,682	-7%
Frankston		3,548	3,424	3,620	5,175	2,739	n/a
Gippsland		3,157	2,791	3,168	3,237	3,063	-5%
Grampians		1,752	1,658	1,886	1,961	1,914	-2%
Heidelberg		2,682	2,435	2,745	2,800	2,842	1%
Hume		2,383	2,169	2,529	2,450	2,360	-4%
Loddon-Mallee		2,934	2,842	3,126	3,209	3,070	-4%
Melbourne		2,900	2,716	2,724	3,725	3,489	-6%
Moorabbin		-	-	-	-	1,341	n/a
NJC		320	348	350	376	279	-26%
Ringwood		2,616	2,504	2,704	4,173	3,310	-21%
Sunshine		3,907	3,737	4,119	5,447	5,044	-7%
Total		35,172	33,058	35,598	43,040	39,347	-9%

The above totals break down the cases finalised by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 13 regions, with Moorabbin separating from Frankston and becoming its own region in 2022. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts. Cases may be counted more than once if a post hearing application has been lodged and finalised.

Intervention orders summary – Personal safety

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Total initiations		11,437	11,484	12,579	12,145	12,591	4%
Total finalisations		10,767	9,138	11,027	12,620	11,765	-7%
Total post hearing applications lodged		307	276	231	268	338	26%
Total interim orders made		8,617	9,004	10,530	10,053	11,112	11%
Total overall listings		29,718	28,868	36,531	38,685	37,613	-3%

Intervention orders summary – Personal Safety (cont)

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Caseload – Personal Safety							
Barwon South West		948	693	1,115	1,033	889	-14%
Broadmeadows		737	634	761	965	919	-5%
Dandenong		861	770	759	945	762	-19%
Frankston		1,057	848	953	1,231	824	-33%
Gippsland		1,055	808	1,032	965	932	-3%
Grampians		598	460	697	667	680	2%
Heidelberg		748	657	799	853	902	6%
Hume		833	674	947	870	825	-5%
Loddon-Mallee		1,068	989	1,335	1,131	1,153	2%
Melbourne		989	875	848	1,359	1,312	-3%
Moorabbin		-	-	-	-	421	-
NJC		204	242	217	291	233	-20%
Ringwood		714	658	726	1,174	812	-31%
Sunshine		955	830	838	1,136	1,101	-3%
Total		10,767	9,138	11,027	12,620	11,765	-7%

The above totals break down the cases finalised by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 13 regions, with Moorabbin separating from Frankston and becoming its own region in 2022. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts. Cases may be counted more than once if a post hearing application has been lodged and finalised.

Pending

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Number of family violence intervention orders pending		-	-	-	-	8,559	-
Number of personal safety intervention orders pending		-	-	-	-	2,650	-
Total		-	-	-	-	11,209	-

MCV identified a Courtlink counting rule which resulted in a minor overstatement of the pending case count for family violence and personal safety intervention order cases. Following amendment, the pending case count has been revised down and the court is working to provide revisions for prior dates.

Listings

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Number of family violence listings		104,866	111,558	132,713	145,865	144,757	-1%
Number of personal safety intervention order listings		29,718	28,868	36,531	38,685	37,613	-3%
Total		134,584	140,426	169,244	184,550	182,370	-1%

The above total represents the overall number of listings in the specified financial years. A case may come before the court on multiple occasions.

Family Law

	Notes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% diff 22/23
Total family law finalisations		1,107	1,054	913	700	870	24%

FINANCIALS

MCV controlled income and expenses for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Income from transactions			
Output appropriations		186,141	171,267
Special appropriations		74,474	62,410
Grants		2,202	3,959
Total income from transactions		262,817	237,636
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses and Judicial Officer remuneration		191,289	167,741
Depreciation and amortisation		0	0
Interest expense		661	698
Grants and other transfers		5,861	4,129
Supplies and services		63,389	58,022
Total expenses from transactions		261,201	230,590
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		1,616	7,046
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of building		0	0
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets		0	0
Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments		0	0
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows		(262)	2,152
Total other economic flows included in net result		(262)	2,152
Net result from continuing operations		1,354	9,199
Other economic flows – other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation reserve		0	0
Total other economic flows – other comprehensive income		0	0
Comprehensive result		1,354	9,199

MCV controlled assets and liabilities for the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Assets			
Financial assets		21,227	20,633
Non-financial assets	1	1,097	3,015
Total assets		22,324	23,647
Liabilities			
Liabilities		123,479	122,749
Total liabilities		123,479	122,749
Net assets		(101,155)	(99,102)

Note 1: 2021-22 statements were adjusted to reflect the centralisation of jurisdictions' property, plant and equipment and associated expenditure and revenue.

COURT LOCATIONS

ARARAT

Cnr Barkly & Ingor Streets
Ararat 3377

BACCHUS MARSH

Main Street
Bacchus Marsh 3340

BAIRNSDALE

Nicholson Street
Bairnsdale 3875

BALLARAT

100 Grenville Street South
Ballarat 3350

BENALLA

21 Bridge Street
Benalla 3672

BENDIGO

188 Hargreaves Street
Bendigo 3550

BROADMEADOWS

Cnr Pearcedale Parade
& Dimboola Road
Broadmeadows 3047

CASTLEMAINE

Lyttleton Street
Castlemaine 3450

COBRAM

Cnr Punt Road &
High Street
Cobram 3644

COLAC

Queen Street
Colac 3250

CORRYONG

11 Jardine Street
Corryong 3707

DANDENONG

Cnr Foster &
Pultney Streets
Dandenong 3175

DROMANA

Codrington Street
Dromana 3936

ECHUCA

Heygarth Street
Echuca 3564

EDENHOPE

Shire Offices
49 Elizabeth Street
Edenhope 3318

FRANKSTON

Fletcher Road
Frankston 3199

GEELONG

Railway Terrace
Geelong 3220

HAMILTON

Martin Street
Hamilton 3300

HEIDELBERG

Jika Street
Heidelberg 3084

HOPETOUN

Shire Offices
75 Lascelles Street
Hopetoun 3396

HORSHAM

22 Roberts Avenue
Horsham 3400

KERANG

Victoria Street
Kerang 3579

KORUMBURRA

Bridge Street
Korumburra 3950

KYNETON

Hutton Street
Kyneton 3444

LATROBE VALLEY

134 Commercial Road
Morwell 3840

MANSFIELD

Cnr High & Highett Streets
Mansfield 3722

MARYBOROUGH

Clarendon Street
Maryborough 3465

MELBOURNE

233 William Street
Melbourne 3001

MILDURA

56 Deakin Avenue
Mildura 3500

MOORABBIN

1140 Nepean Highway
Moorabbin 3189

MYRTLEFORD

Myrtle Street
Myrtleford 3737

NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

241 Wellington Street
Collingwood 3066

NHILL

110 Macpherson Street
Nhill 3418

OMEO

Shire Offices
Main Street
Omeo 3898

ORBOST

Wolsley Street
Orbost 3888

OUYEN

Shire Offices
Oke Street
Ouyen 3490

PORTLAND

67 Cliff Street
Portland 3305

RINGWOOD

39 Ringwood Street
Ringwood 3134

ROBINVALE

George Street
Robinvale 3549

SALE

Foster Street
Sale 3850

SEYMOUR

56 Tallarook Street
Seymour 3660

SHEPPARTON

14 High Street
Shepparton 3630

ST ARNAUD

Napier Street
St Arnaud 3478

STAWELL

Patrick Street
Stawell 3380

SUNSHINE

10 Foundry Road
Sunshine 3020

SWAN HILL

121 Curlewis Street
Swan Hill 3585

WANGARATTA

24 Faithfull Street
Wangaratta 3677

WARRNAMBOOL

218 Koroit Street
Warrnambool 3280

WERRIBEE

Cnr Duncans Road
& Salisbury Street
Werribee 3030

WODONGA

5 Elgin Boulevard
Wodonga 3690

WONTHAGGI

Watt Street
Wonthaggi 3995

Magistrates' Court of Victoria
233 William Street
GPO Box 882
Melbourne 3001

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