

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Racing



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NEW COURT COMPLEX SUPPORTS VULNERABLE CHILDREN

A state-of-the-art Children's Court specially designed for the needs of children and their families will open its doors for the first time today.

Attorney-General Martin Pakula said the Family Division Complex at Broadmeadows Law Courts is the first purpose-built facility outside the CBD.

The \$11.4 million complex includes two modern courtrooms designed for conducting child protection cases and a secure, child-focused waiting room for children in emergency care.

Dubbed the 'Cubbyhouse', the waiting room was created in consultation with specialist architects on behalf of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

The facility will also include activities and services aimed at reducing conflict and trauma for children in emergency care attending the court.

Families and Children Minister Jenny Mikakos said the design of the court fitted with the Government's aim to protect vulnerable children from trauma and harm and to provide positive experiences in care, in play and in education to help build resilience.

The complex will be the first Children's Court in the state to trial the Case Docketing Pilot system.

The 12-month pilot will see every case allocated to a particular judicial officer from beginning to end, allowing magistrates to become more familiar with the circumstances of individual children and their families.

Mr Pakula said the pilot aimed to generate greater consistency across the Family Division of the Children's Court and reduce the amount of time child protection practitioners and other participants needed to attend and prepare for court hearings.

Quotes attributable to Attorney General Martin Pakula

"The Children's Court is a vital institution in the care and protection of Victorian children."

"This new facility will continue to encourage new ways of thinking about court processes involving children."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

"Attending court can be a stressful and traumatic time for children and young people. This new court expresses our aspirations to protect children from harm whenever we can."

"Many children attending court hearings have experienced trauma in their lives. This is one way we are working to help them recover."

Quotes attributable to Member for Broadmeadows Frank McGuire

"The Government is addressing the needs of vulnerable children during a traumatic time in a caring way. Locally we're also reengaging these kids with lifelong learning through our nearby Global Learning Centre."

Media Contact: Christine Tyrrell 0423 092 752 | Christine.tyrrell@minstaff.vic.gov.au