

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Pakula MP**  
Attorney-General  
Minister for Racing



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## CLEARER INFORMATION AND BETTER PROCESSES FOR JURIES

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting juries with clearer information and better processes when examining expert evidence in criminal trials.

Introduced into the Victorian Parliament today, the *Crimes Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016* will amend the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009* and the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997*.

The new laws will allow courts to hear evidence from prosecution and defence expert witnesses together or consecutively, giving juries the chance to evaluate all the relevant evidence at the same time.

Currently, the defence can only call witnesses after the prosecution has closed its case, resulting in evidence from expert witnesses being heard at different times – sometimes days or weeks apart.

That can make it difficult for juries to assess and compare differing expert opinions and to identify issues or subtle differences.

Under the new laws, juries will have the chance to hear a range of expert evidence at the same time – a simpler sequence making it easier for jurors to understand and consider information and testimony put to them.

The laws have been drafted following extensive consultation with Supreme, County and Magistrates' Courts, the Forensic Evidence Working Group, Victoria Legal Aid, the Criminal Bar Association, the Office of Public Prosecutions and Victoria Police.

### Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

*“Expert evidence can be technical, time-consuming and complicated – we’re making it easier for juries to consider the evidence put to them by letting it be heard consecutively or at the same time.”*

*“We’ve already introduced legislation to simplify the directions a trial judge provides to a jury and these latest reforms will further improve the court process for everyone involved.”*