



Tuesday, 29 November, 2016

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY OVERHAUL FOR MELBOURNE COURTS**

The Andrews Labor Government today announced \$1.1 million to upgrade the Melbourne Magistrates' Court and the Children's Court to improve community safety.

The refurbishment is part of the Labor Government's \$58.1 million investment in the state's courts outlined in the *Victorian Budget 2016/17* and will deliver on key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Government is providing \$855,000 to overhaul the Melbourne Magistrates' foyer and entry screening processes.

The new layout will ensure that people can pass through the entry faster which will reduce queuing outside in William Street.

An audit conducted by the court last year found that queues outside the building in William Street presented a potential risk to both court users and the general public.

An estimated 3000 people attend the court each day and users regularly experience delays in entering the building due to the existing entry foyer design and screening processes.

The current building has 30 courtrooms and two hearing rooms. The court sits seven days a week and hears up to 900 matters each day on a range of criminal, civil, family violence, Koori Court and Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal issues.

The Government is providing \$330,000 to upgrade the Children's Court to make it safer and more secure. The works will include creating flexible and secure office spaces for briefings with victims of family violence and support workers.

Waiting areas will also be enhanced to better separate opposing parties in court proceedings and screening processes will be improved.

Planning for both projects began in July and the works are expected to be completed in mid-2018.

### **Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula**

*"We're upgrading our courts to make them safer and more secure for the thousands of people who use them each day."*

*"It is crucial that those using our courts, especially victims of family violence, feel safe without delay and free from threat or intimidation."*

*"These projects will ensure that our justice system helps to supports those who need it most."*

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