

SERVICE. COMMUNITY. INNOVATION.

DELIVERING COURT EXCELLENCE

MCV Strategic Plan 2022-2026

December 2022

Acknowledgement

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 Chief Magistrate Justice Lisa Hannan
and CEO Simon Hollingsworth



Chief Magistrate
Justice Lisa
Hannan



CEO Simon
Hollingsworth

We are proud to present the MCV strategic plan for 2022-2026 *Service. Community. Innovation. Delivering Court Excellence.*

We look to the future confident that we can build on our commitment to be an innovative and accessible court delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice.

MCV is the people's court. We exist to serve the community, including those who are court users and those who will never be court users, but rely on the court to play its role in keeping our community safe.

Our strategic plan sets out our vision and direction for the next four years. Our thinking has been informed by our people, our stakeholders and our experience. Our *Pathway to Excellence* document identifies 14 priority areas to progress under the International Framework of Court Excellence (IFCE) and this work underpins our planning.

MCV is committed to adapting the way we deliver services to ensure we are providing the best possible justice services for the people of Victoria. We have 51 court locations, but we are one court with a single and determined commitment to excellence at every court, every day.

We have made progress over the past few years, improving the way we deliver across our programs and services. We have introduced online hearings, expanded our Koori and Drug Courts and we are on our way to delivering a statewide specialist family violence response. We are improving the court experience for court users and enriching the experience of our people via our new service centre. We are growing and adapting at a rapid pace, which is both challenging and rewarding.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated our plans for technological evolution. It was thrust upon us, but our people worked with our stakeholders and together we kept all 51 courts open.

We increased our capability while continuing to deliver services in new ways. As we emerge and face a changed world, we must ask questions of ourselves: What can the community expect of a modern court? How can we enhance access to justice while focusing firmly on quality and our pursuit of excellence?

The way MCV delivers justice will continue to adapt to meet the demands of a changing world, but the core of our justice response will remain the same. We are an independent, transparent, fair and accessible court and our focus is the community we serve.

This is our journey, and the next four years will shape our future court. We approach our task with open minds and gratitude for the support of our judicial officers, staff and the wider justice community.

ABOUT THE COURT

We uphold trust in justice

MCV provides an essential service to the community as the first level of the Victorian Justice system. **More than 93 per cent of criminal and civil cases** begin and end in our court. MCV has three divisions: Criminal, Civil and Specialist Courts, which includes Specialist Family Violence Court, Koori Court, Assessment and Referral Court, Bail and Remand Court, Court Integrated Services Program, Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal, Neighbourhood Justice Centre and Drug Court.

We are independent of the executive and legislative arms of government. Independence is a core feature of our justice system and is embedded in all that we do. It is critical that our judicial officers maintain judicial independence when exercising their decision-making powers to ensure the proper administration of justice.

We provide court services in a range of ways

We provide services in a range of different ways to ensure delivery of fair, transparent and efficient justice to all Victorians, no matter how or why they access the court.



We hear and determine matters at courts across metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria and offer remote hearing options where that is appropriate and consistent with the interests of justice.



We offer alternative ways to resolve matters prior to final hearing including pre-hearing conferences, mediations and early neutral evaluations.



We provide specialist courts and tailored support, such as the Assessment and Referral Court, Drug Court, Koori Court and Neighbourhood Justice Centre as well as translator services, to facilitate access to justice.



We innovate to improve our service delivery, including establishing a service centre to assist court users, and a new case management system to digitise our processes.



A court with people at the centre

Our services are delivered across 13 regions, with 51 courts providing access to justice including in the most remote parts of the state.

13

Regions

51

Satellite courts

A COURT THAT IS MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

We manage a high-volume, complex caseload

In 2021-2022, MCV:

Finalised more than:

130,000

criminal cases

10,800

civil cases

54,800

intervention orders

Managed more than:

703,000

criminal listings

50,410

civil listings

211,000

intervention order listings



15

Koori Courts



4

Drug Courts



4

Assessment and Referral Courts



18

CISP locations

We are flexible and responsive

Our service centres responded to:



23,500

emails and phone calls



Pending caseload down to

97,927

from COVID peak of 145,000 in December 2020

VISION AND VALUES

To ensure our vision becomes a reality and our people live our values, MCV must deliver our strategic plan.

The four strategic pillars, encompassing the **14 Court Excellence priority areas**, will be the focus of our business planning for the next four years.

Our vision

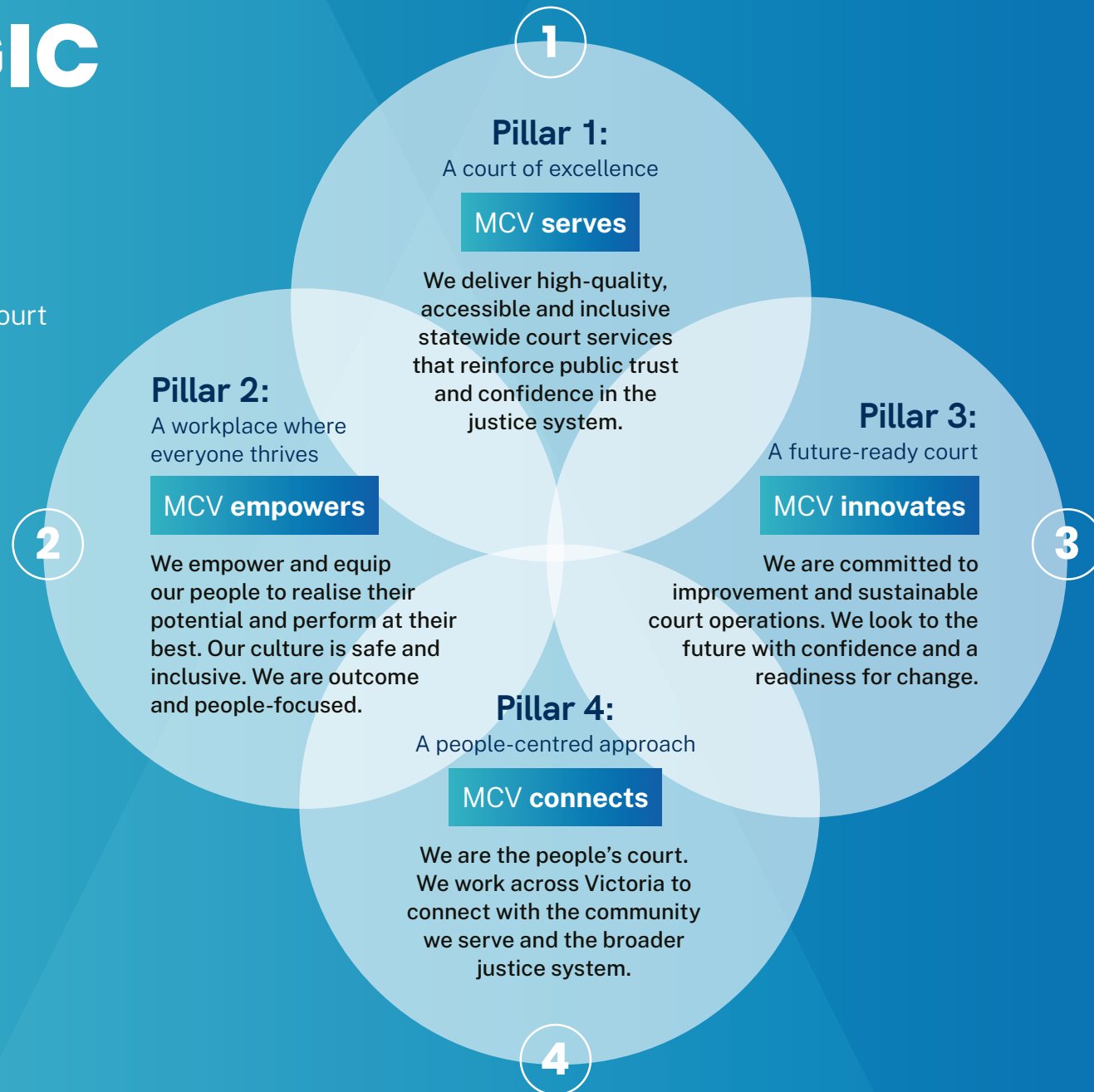
AN INNOVATIVE AND ACCESSIBLE COURT DELIVERING FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT JUSTICE

Our values

- ➔ **Excellence**
Striving for excellence in performance of our work
- ➔ **Respect**
People are listened to and treated with courtesy and respect
- ➔ **Integrity**
Honest, ethical and reasonable behaviour
- ➔ **Fairness**
Ensure due process and equal protection of the law
- ➔ **Transparency**
Promote trust and confidence in the work of the court by upholding principles of open justice, engaging with community and being accountable for our use of public resources
- ➔ **Accessibility**
Ensuring the court's practices and processes are clear, consistent, user-friendly and non-discriminatory making the court physically available to all
- ➔ **Innovation**
Being a leader in innovative court practices and leveraging technology to increase our accessibility and support our reform agenda
- ➔ **Inclusiveness**
A court for all Victorians that is respectful of culture and diversity

STRATEGIC PILLARS 2022-26

An innovative and accessible court delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice



PILLAR 1: A COURT OF EXCELLENCE

MCV serves

Our role

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

Why this is important

We are here to serve the Victorian community. Becoming a court of excellence is centred on providing justice responses tailored to the adapting population and changing needs of Victorians – no matter where or how they access our court.

Our strategic goals

- 1.1 Review and ensure our court services and processes support high-quality justice outcomes
- 1.2 Strengthen and improve the accessibility, responsiveness and consistency of the court user experience
- 1.3 Improve access to justice including through the delivery of multi-channel offerings and investments in technology
- 1.4 Shape a cohesive culture across MCV with a unified approach to the delivery of quality service outcomes
- 1.5 Improve Koori/First Nations justice responses by supporting self-determination and creating positive change

What success looks like

Our caseload is sustainable, and people value the high-quality and responsive service they receive. We are leading against international and national benchmarks for contemporary court practice. We set the standard in listening, engaging and measuring our impact to demonstrate we are learning from past experiences and embedding court excellence.



PILLAR 2: A WORKPLACE WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES



MCV empowers

Our role

We empower and equip our people to realise their potential and perform at their best. Our culture is one where everyone feels safe, included and engaged. We are outcome and people focused.

Why this is important

We want to ensure we are providing the best environment for our judiciary and people to support them in their work and through the changes they face in our pursuit of excellence.

Our strategic goals

- 2.1 Identify our capability needs and uplift these to shape the court workforce of the future
- 2.2 Help our people by identifying their strengths and developing their talents
- 2.3 Create culturally safe workplaces for our Koori/First Nations employees
- 2.4 Establish meaningful pathways and opportunities to attract, retain and engage our people
- 2.5 Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our people
- 2.6 Empower our people in everything we do and celebrate the outcomes they achieve

- 2.7 Enable and embed diversity across our workforce and workplace and ensure people feel included

What success looks like

We are attracting talent, our people are engaged and stay with us because of the rich and fulfilling career paths and supportive, purpose-driven environment we offer. Our people feel safe, included and supported to be their best. People's strengths are developed through leadership training, mentoring and learning opportunities in contemporary practice and systems. Our people feel empowered to share their views about the future of the court.

PILLAR 3: A FUTURE-READY COURT

MCV innovates

Our role

We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation in how we deliver services. We look to the future with confidence and a readiness for change.

Why this is important

Our population is growing and changing, and we need to find ways to provide fair and equitable justice in increasingly sustainable ways. We are embedding the changes we have made over the past few years to make attending and working in the court an easier and better experience.

Our strategic goals

- 3.1 Continue to explore opportunities to streamline, integrate and automate our processes and systems
- 3.2 Continue to build our evidence base and strengthen our data analytics capabilities to monitor and evaluate court performance, inform priorities and demonstrate our impact
- 3.3 Create opportunities for our people to contribute and progress new and creative ideas for our future
- 3.4 Increase our digital competencies to modernise court management practices and delivery
- 3.5 Leverage technology and our expertise to create a better experience across the court
- 3.6 Adapt and apply contemporary ways of working, technology and infrastructure in a court's context

What success looks like

New ideas across the court are welcomed and adopted – no matter where they come from. Access to court services is available through multiple channels, including digital, that are embedded in our ways of working, providing increased access to justice. We have modernised our ways of working and providing services through investment and use of technology. The court is agile and able to adapt quickly to emerging community and societal needs, in a way that upholds fair and equitable justice.



PILLAR 4: A PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH

MCV connects



Our role

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

Why this is important

People often find the court experience challenging and difficult to understand. Many different people interact with court, and through better information, listening to and considering their perspectives, we improve our services.

Our strategic goals

- 4.1 Ensure our services are informed by the experiences and insights of court users
- 4.2 Utilise evidence and data to inform service planning that is tailored to community needs
- 4.3 Work with CSV to modernise the physical environment of the court and create spaces that reflect the needs of court users and our people
- 4.4 Innovate to provide specialist programs and services at more court locations across the state
- 4.5 Work alongside our external stakeholders and community organisations to improve the court user experience

What success looks like

We have expanded and improved engagement across our stakeholder groups and the wider community. We are recognised as being proactive and willing to work with stakeholders and the community to improve justice outcomes. More people across Victoria understand what the court does and see value in it. We can identify improvement in the experience of court users.

OneMCV: WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER A FUTURE-READY JUSTICE RESPONSE

An important step in supporting implementation of this strategic plan is our commitment to a OneMCV culture.

OneMCV means all of us working together to deliver on our strategic plan. It also means that no matter where our community access our services, they receive a consistently excellent response.

The OneMCV culture means:



One vision

- we have a shared vision for the future of MCV



One leadership

- our leadership is clear and consistent
- judiciary and staff lead in partnership to achieve our strategic goals



One organisational culture

- our people live our values



One team

- we collaborate across the organisation
- information and knowledge are shared freely with our colleagues



One approach

- we take a court-user centred approach to service design
- stakeholder input informs our strategy and policy design
- our people actively seek opportunities to leverage existing work
- we consider how new Initiatives might benefit the whole organisation
- our court processes are consistent across the state

A COURT THAT IS DELIVERING PUBLIC BENEFITS

Our Vision: An innovative and accessible court delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice for Victorians.

Delivering against this strategic plan by 2026 will contribute to public value and court outcomes.

MCV helps **shape**:

FAIR AND JUST COMMUNITIES



People are treated fairly and equitably under the law



Communities are safer



Individuals are informed, have access to, and know how to navigate the justice system

MCV helps **reinforce**:

CONFIDENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



Justice is a respected pillar of society and democracy



Justice is transparent and accountable



All Victorians have access to high quality and timely justice

MCV helps **lead**:

INNOVATION IN THE COURTS



Evidence, data and feedback informs our services



People access our services in contemporary and safe ways



We are fiscally responsible

Accessibility

At MCV, we want everyone to be able to understand what we do and our strategic direction. We strive to be a court that is accessible to all Victorians – regardless of ability. To access this document in a different version to allow you to engage with it more effectively, please refer to our website for instructions www.mcv.gov.au/accessibility-statement.