

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

OUR VISION IS TO BE AN
INNOVATIVE AND ACCESSIBLE
COURT DELIVERING FAIR,
TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT
JUSTICE FOR VICTORIANS.

1 December 2020

The Honourable Linda Dessau AM,
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 2019 to 30 June 2020 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 the 'Yours sincerely' text.

JUDGE LISA HANNAN
Chief Magistrate

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**I COMMENCED AS CHIEF
MAGISTRATE IN NOVEMBER LAST
YEAR WITH A CLEAR VISION FOR
THE COURT AND A PLAN FOR WHAT I
WANTED TO ACHIEVE.**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE

JUDGE LISA HANNAN

I expected 2020 to be a year of opportunities, challenges, progress and learnings, and it has been – in expected and unexpected ways. Within weeks of commencing, our courts were disrupted by bushfires and, four months into my role, COVID-19 created the biggest disruption to operations in MCV's history.

I have always believed that adversity creates opportunity and that has proved true. Reform was born of necessity but embraced as the opportunity it is to fast-track reform, in particular with regards to technology and our operating model.

The judiciary and staff of MCV understood that we are the people's court and provide essential services. On that basis, we determined all 51 courts would remain open and continue to deliver justice for Victorians.

At pace, we transformed our operating model and moved from an in-person, paper-based court to one that could hear matters online and operate in a digital environment. Our Online Magistrates' Court was imagined and in pilot phase within six weeks. It was a monumental achievement, and one that has set the foundation for a technological revolution that will fundamentally change how our courts operate.

As I commented at my bench welcome, our court is not a group of ageing buildings – it is all of us. Our court lives and it is capable of growth and change.

I am grateful for the dedication, resilience and adaptability of our judicial officers and staff, and the willingness across the justice sector to work with us as we transformed our court.

As I look to a future beyond coronavirus, I see a court that is driven by excellence. One that strives to be innovative and accessible, delivering fair, transparent and efficient justice. I want to promote confidence and trust in the work we do, by upholding the principles of open justice, engaging with community and being accountable for our use of public resources.

I am incredibly proud to lead MCV. The work we do, and our service to the community, is tangible and real. It impacts thousands of lives every day.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

OUR VISION IS TO BE AN INNOVATIVE AND
ACCESSIBLE COURT DELIVERING FAIR, TRANSPARENT
AND EFFICIENT JUSTICE FOR VICTORIANS.



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.

ABOUT THE MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA

THE MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA (MCV) IS A KEY PART OF VICTORIA'S JUSTICE SYSTEM, HEARING MORE THAN 90 PER CENT OF THE CRIMINAL AND CIVIL CASES THAT COME BEFORE VICTORIAN COURTS.

The criminal jurisdiction 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 or Supreme courts. In 2019-20, more than 145,000 criminal cases were initiated and a total of 606,220 hearings related to criminal matters were held.

The civil jurisdiction hears disputes arising from debts, claims for damages and other monetary or property disputes up to the value of \$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*.

MCV has a dedicated and committed workforce that includes 119 magistrates working across the court's 51 locations, as well as 30 reserve magistrates, 12 judicial registrars and 935 staff. Eight magistrates sit at the Coroners Court and 17 at the Children's Court.

In addition to its court operations, MCV also provides a number of specialist courts and programs that aim to improve outcomes for court users and the community. Many of those who come before the court are assessed to have underlying mental health or substance abuse issues, social or cultural disadvantage, or a disability.

Our specialist courts and programs are solution-focused. They use the opportunity of an individual's participation in the justice system to prevent offending, improve wellbeing and increase community safety.

MCV's services 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 and/or cognitive impairment. It works collaboratively with the Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) to provide a wide range of support. ARC operates on a problem-solving court model, where the magistrate hears the matters and reviews the accused person's progress in a less formal setting. A guilty plea is required before an individual support plan is developed. Participants can be involved from three to 12 months.

BAIL AND REMAND COURT

The Bail and Remand Court (BaRC) began sitting at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on 30 April 2018, replacing the night and weekend court model that was introduced after the Bourke Street tragedy in January 2017. The court hears bail and remand matters from across the metropolitan area, from 10am – 9pm seven days a week.

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/or social needs with an aim to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. CISP works with clients during the bail (or pre-trial) stage of their criminal proceedings. It is a voluntary program and clients are provided with individualised case management to support timely access to community-based treatment and support services, including drug and alcohol treatment, accommodation, disability or mental health services.

CISP REMAND OUTREACH PROGRAM

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

DRUG COURT

MCV's Drug Court sits at venues at Dandenong and Melbourne. The Drug Court provides offenders with a drug and/or alcohol dependency the option to undertake a drug treatment order (DTO) in lieu of serving a sentence. The intensive, integrated drug treatment program is judicially supervised and provides a therapeutic response to address the underlying causes of drug addiction. Structured to promote honesty, accountability and a change in participants' behaviour, DTO non-compliance attracts swift and significant consequences, including jail.

KOORI COURT

MCV's Koori Court is a culturally appropriate sentencing court for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants who plead guilty. The Koori Court facilitates conversations with the defendant and their family and lawyer sitting around an oval table, directly engaging with Koori Court Elders, the magistrate, Victoria Police, Corrections 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. Sentencing decisions informed by cultural conversations are more appropriate to cultural needs and divert Koori defendants from prison wherever appropriate.

NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

The Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) is a multijurisdictional 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. NJC magistrates hear criminal and civil matters (including VOCAT applications), family violence and personal safety intervention order matters. Children's Court (criminal division) and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) matters are also heard at the centre.

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.



**IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER BUSY YEAR
FOR THE COURT, DESPITE THE
OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES WE
FACED IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH
QUARTER.**

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CEO

ELISSA SCOTT

We welcomed our new Chief Magistrate, Judge Lisa Hannan, and she has brought an energy and passion to the role that has revitalised our court.

Despite the disruptions mentioned by the Chief Magistrate previously, we continued to work hard across all our divisions and we made significant progress in key areas.

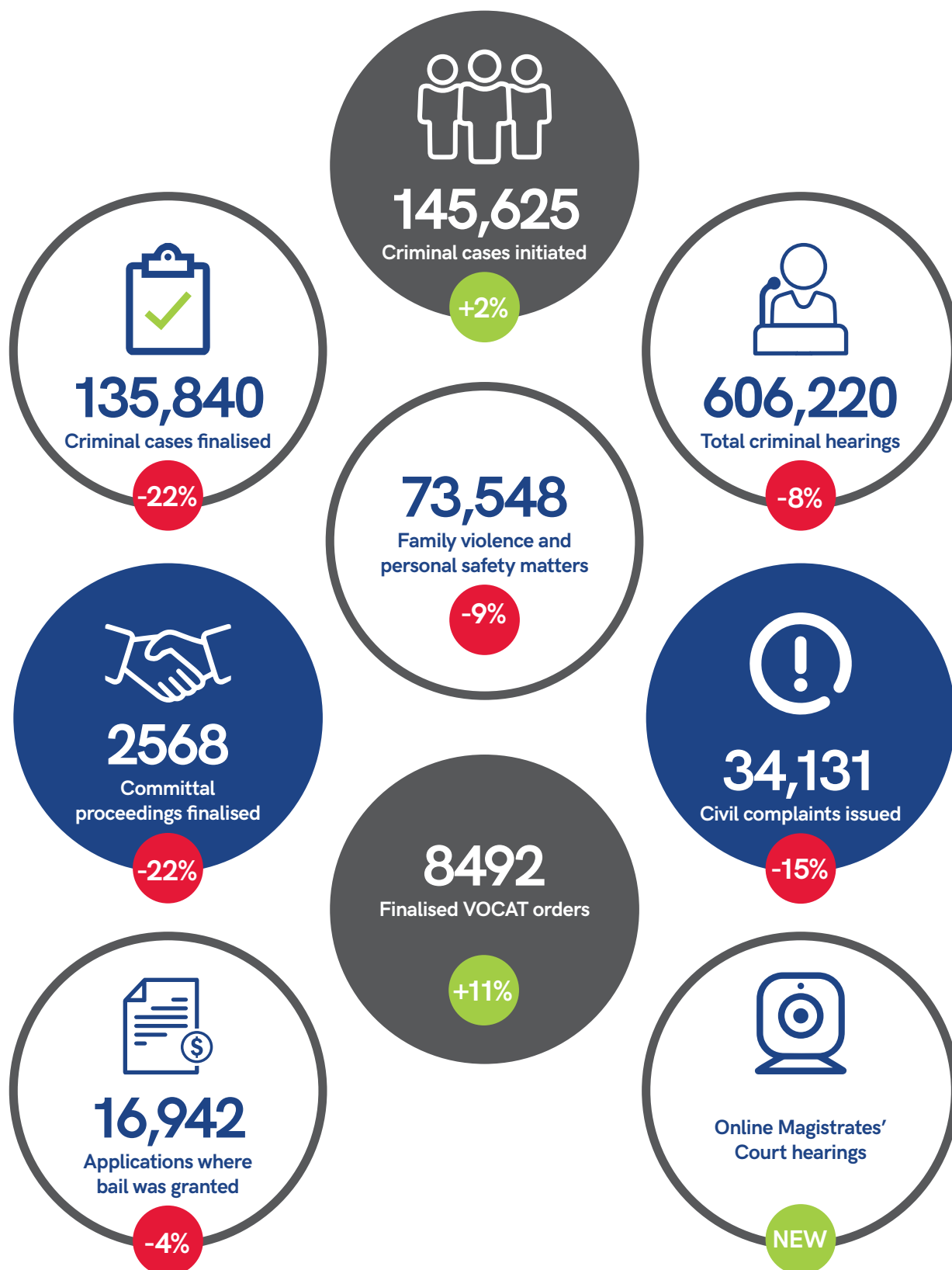
Our investment in technology reaped benefits, with the statewide expansion of our audio-visual link system enabling record numbers of people to appear for matters from prison. We moved ahead with the development of our court management system, which is set to offer greater efficiencies and modernise our operating environment.

People are central to everything we do, and we have increased our commitment to therapeutic jurisprudence with the official opening of the Dandenong Koori Court and ARC marking its 10-year anniversary.

We have worked with the County Court to pilot an expansion of CISP, which is an innovative example of collaboration and integration across jurisdictions.

We also embarked on a workforce planning project that was designed to review our operating model as we look to a future that will feature greater use of technology. We consulted with our staff to determine how we can best support them to address future demands and to ensure MCV is an employer of choice. The review included recruitment and retention of staff, staff wellbeing, and learning and development opportunities. We look forward to implementing the learnings in the next financial year.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our former CEO, Andrew Tenni, who left the court in February after six years as CEO and 23 years within courts. Andrew provided leadership during a period of significant change for MCV and he has left the court well-placed to embrace the opportunities presented by our workforce planning project and investment in technology.



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria is led by the Chief Magistrate, Judge Lisa Hannan. Her Honour is supported by three deputy chief magistrates, supervising magistrates and regional coordinating magistrates. Through a suite of committees, the judiciary makes recommendations about the administration of the law and the running of the court to improve processes. 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

Judge Peter Lauritsen (to 17 November)

Judge Lisa Hannan (from 18 November)

DEPUTY CHIEF MAGISTRATES

Ms Felicity Broughton

Mr Lance Martin

Ms Susan Wakeling

SUPERVISING MAGISTRATES

<i>ARC</i>	Mr John Hardy
<i>Civil</i>	Mr Hugh Radford
<i>Criminal</i>	Ms Donna Bakos
<i>Drug Court</i>	Mr Anthony Parsons
<i>Family Violence and Family Law</i>	Ms Felicity Broughton Ms Kate Hawkins
<i>Koori Court and CISP</i>	Ms Pauline Spencer
<i>Sexual Offences List</i>	Ms Johanna Metcalf
<i>VOCAT</i>	Ms Fiona Hayes

REGIONAL COORDINATING MAGISTRATES

<i>Barwon South West</i>	Ms Ann McGarvie
<i>Broadmeadows</i>	Mr Martin Grinberg
<i>Dandenong</i>	Mr Jack Vandersteen
<i>Frankston</i>	Mr Gerard Lethbridge
<i>Gippsland</i>	Ms Ann Collins
<i>Grampians</i>	Ms Noreen Toohey
<i>Heidelberg</i>	Ms Meagan Keogh
<i>Hume</i>	Mr Peter Mithen
<i>Loddon Mallee</i>	Ms Megan Aumair
<i>Moorabbin</i>	Ms Anne Goldsbrough
<i>Melbourne</i>	Ms Susan Wakeling
<i>Neighbourhood Justice Centre</i>	Mr David Fanning
<i>Ringwood</i>	Ms Jan Maclean
<i>Sunshine</i>	Ms Kay Robertson

MAGISTRATES**AS AT 30 JUNE 2020**

Mr Ian Alger
 Ms Marita Altman
 Ms Susan Armour
 Mr Julian Ayres
 Ms Hayley Bate
 Ms Donna Bakos
 Mr Stephen Ballek
 Ms Luisa Bazzani
 Mr John Bentley
 Ms Amina Bhai
 Ms Jacqueline Billings (CHC)
 Ms Angela Bolger
 Ms Jade Bott
 Mr Timothy Bourke
 Ms Jennie Bowles (CHC)
 Mr Darren Bracken (CCOV)
 Mr Gerard Bryant
 Ms Abigail Burchill
 Mr Anthony Burns
 Ms Carolyn Burnside
 Mr Darrin Cain (CHC)
 Mr Andrew Capell
 Ms Victoria Campbell
 Mr Michael Coghlan
 Mr Gregory Connellan
 Ms Suzette Dootjes
 Mr Peter Dotchin (CHC)
 Ms Alana Duffy
 Mr Peter Dunn
 Ms Michelle Ehrlich (CHC)
 Ms Rosemary Falla
 Mr David Faram
 Mr Bernard Fitzgerald
 Ms Lesley Fleming (CHC)
 Mr Justin Foster
 Mr Simon Garnett
 Mr Timothy Gattuso
 Ms Sarah Gebert (CCOV)
 Ms Jane Gibson (CHC)
 Mr Kieran Gilligan
 Mr Phillip Goldberg
 Ms Julie Grainger
 Ms Jennifer Grubissa
 Mr Simon Guthrie
 Mr Andrew Halse
 Mr John Hardy
 Ms Tara Hartnett
 Ms Annabel Hawkins (CHC)
 Ms Jacqui Hawkins (CCOV)

Mr Rodney Higgins
 Ms Meghan Hoare
 Mr Timothy Hoare
 Ms Michelle Hodgson
 Mr Franz Holzer
 Ms Gail Hubble (CHC)
 Mr Trieu Huynh
 Ms Audrey Jamieson (CCOV)
 Mr Graham Keil
 Mr Russell Kelly
 Mr Costas Kilias
 Dr Michael King
 Mr Randall Kune (CHC)
 Ms Elizabeth Langdon (CHC)
 Mr Nunzio LaRosa
 Mr Stephen Lee
 Mr Dominic Lennon
 Ms Denise Livingstone
 Ms Mary-Anne MacCallum
 Ms Therese McCarthy
 Mr Simon McGregor (CCOV)
 Mr Michael McNamara
 Ms Kay Macpherson (CHC)
 Ms Urfa Masood
 Mr Ross Maxted
 Mr Andrew McKenna
 Mr Gregory McNamara
 Ms Sharon McRae
 Ms Fran Medina
 Mr Peter Mellas
 Ms Helen Murphy
 Ms Michelle Mykytowycz
 Mr John O'Callaghan
 Ms Julie O'Donnell
 Mr John Olle (CCOV)
 Ms Kim Parkinson (CHC)
 Ms Leveasque Peterson (CCOV)
 Mr Shiva Pillai (CHC)
 Mr Richard Pithouse
 Ms Roslyn Porter
 Ms Vicky Prapas
 Mr Peter Reardon
 Mr Michael Richards
 Mr Gregory Robinson
 Ms Kristen Rose (CHC)
 Mr Ron Saines
 Mr Marc Sargent
 Mr Paul Smith
 Ms Sharon Smith (CHC)
 Mr Patrick Southey
 Ms Paresa Spanos (CCOV)

Mr David Starvaggi
 Ms Fiona Stewart
 Mr Mark Stratmann
 Ms Jacinta Studham
 Ms Stella Stuthridge
 Ms Mia Stylianou
 Mr Charles Tan
 Ms Cynthia Toose
 Ms Letizia Torres
 Ms Jennifer Tregent
 Ms Olivia Trumble
 Ms Belinda Wallington
 Mr Timothy Walsh
 Ms Nahrain Warda
 Mr Michael Wardell
 Mr Ian Watkins
 Mr Michael Wighton
 Mr Brian Wright
 Mr Simon Zebrowski
 Mr Francis Zemljak (CHC)

RESERVE MAGISTRATES

Mr Thomas Barrett
 Mr Ross Betts
 Mr Doug Bolster
 Mr Barry Braun
 Mr Len Brear
 Mr Phillip Byrne
 Mr Brian Clifford
 Mr Bruce Cottrill
 Mr Rodney Crisp
 Mr John Doherty
 Ms Margaret Harding
 Mr Lou Hill
 Mr Jonathan Klestadt
 Mr Bob Kumar
 Ms Cathy Lamble
 Mr Gregory Levine
 Mr Peter Mealy
 Mr Ian McGrane
 Mr Dan Muling
 Mr John Murphy
 Mr John O'Brien
 Ms Jelena Popovic
 Mr Steven Raleigh
 Mr Duncan Reynolds
 Mr Charlie Rozencwajg
 Mr Barry Schultz
 Mr Michael Smith
 Mr Alan Spillane
 Mr Iain West

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Ms Ruth Andrew
 Mr Julian Bartlett
 Mr Mick Bolte
 Ms Shannon Dellamarta
 Ms Samantha Dixon
 Mr Anthony Gwynne
 Ms Leah Hickey
 Mr Barry Johnstone
 Mr Richard O'Keefe
 Ms Alison Paton
 Ms Katherine Rynne
 Ms Angela Soldani

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

PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR

Ms Simone Shields

EXECUTIVE TEAM**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Mr Andrew Tenni
 Ms Elissa Scott (acting CEO from 24 February)

DIRECTORS*Court Operations*

Ms Melissa Martino

Family Violence Reform

Ms Mariela Diaz
 Mr Robert Cotter
 (from 3 February)

Finance and Strategy

Mr Tony Christianen

People, Culture and Transformation

Ms Johanna Begbie

Specialist Courts and Programs

Ms Elissa Scott
 Ms Carolyn McSporran
 (acting director from July to September and from 24 February)

COURT COMMITTEES

THE COURT'S PRIMARY COMMITTEES ARE:

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chaired by Magistrate Gail Hubble

The Education Committee assists the Chief Magistrate to provide professional development for the court's magistrates. It oversees education conferences for magistrates and has a close collaborative relationship with the Judicial College of Victoria and the Law Library of Victoria. The committee conducted two education conferences during the year: a two-day conference in July 2019 and a single-day conference in October 2019. These conferences were comprised of both internal and external presenters, and covered recent legal developments as well as matters of general educational interest. Unfortunately, both the March 2020 education conference and the intensive residential program for new magistrates scheduled for May 2020 were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

CIVIL PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Hugh Radford

The committee reviews civil court processes ensuring that appropriate practices are in place to manage the efficient resolution of its caseload. The committee oversaw the implementation of changes to the Magistrates' Court General Civil Procedure Rules 2010, as well as rule changes concerning the award of costs in matters involving the appointment of litigation guardians, harmonised a number of rules with provisions at the County and Supreme courts, finalised rules concerning offers of compromise in arbitration matters, and discussed increasing the civil jurisdiction of judicial registrars to hear motor vehicle accident matters up to \$20,000.

CRIMINAL LAW COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Donna Bakos

The committee is comprised of magistrates from courts around the state. It oversaw the functions of the court's criminal jurisdiction and addressed substantive, procedural and administrative matters. In the past year, this committee responded to the Law Reform Commission's inquiry into committals, prepared and consulted on the Magistrates' Court Criminal Procedure Rules and discussed the Sentencing Act Reform project. The committee also addressed matters relating to the progress of criminal cases in the court.

CRIMINAL COURT USERS COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Donna Bakos

The Criminal Court Users Committee comprises representatives of all agencies that use the court. Membership includes representatives from Victoria Legal Aid, Office of Public Prosecutions, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Commonwealth), Victoria Police, Law Institute, Criminal Bar Association, Victorian Workcover Authority, Corrections Victoria, Child Witness Service, Victoria Police Forensic Science Department, Melbourne Custody Centre, Prisoner Records, CISP, magistrates and court registrars. The committee provided vital consultation and communication on proposed court initiatives and informed court users of changes and developments within the court as they relate to criminal practice and procedure. Issues discussed during the year included alternative methods of presenting evidence, appeal bail, community correction order assessments, and appearances via audio-visual link (AVL).

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND FAMILY LAW PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Stella Stuthridge, (6 January 2020 – 30 June), Deputy Chief Magistrate and Supervising Magistrate Felicity Broughton (1 July 2019 – 24 July 2020) and Supervising Magistrate Kate Hawkins (1 July 2019 – 20 December 2019)

The committee monitors and improves the operations of the court in relation to family violence, personal safety and family law. Issues considered included professional development programs and working with the Judicial College of Victoria to facilitate family violence training for magistrates, applying strategies for managing growing demand within the intervention order jurisdiction, identifying process and system issues to improve the court experience for those experiencing family violence, and facilitating a best practice justice response for children and adults experiencing family violence by holding perpetrators accountable.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chaired by Deputy Chief Magistrate Lance Martin

The committee advises the Chief Magistrate and CEO on human resource and occupational health and safety matters. Issues considered included a number of strategic improvement initiatives including policy

development, recruitment, people management and reporting.

SEXUAL OFFENCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Belinda Wallington and Supervising Magistrate Jo Metcalf (from 1 January 2020)

Comprising metropolitan and regional magistrates from MCV and the Children's Court, the committee reviews and comments on proposed legislative changes and works to promote efficient and consistent case management of sexual assault cases. Its focus has continued on managing the Intermediary Pilot Scheme at gazetted court venues and implementation of ground rules hearings across the state.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE TRIBUNAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Chaired by Supervising Magistrate Fiona Hayes and Johanna Metcalf

The committee drives initiatives to improve outcomes for victims of crime and VOCAT's operations. To support consistency across venues, it reviews the Chief Magistrate's practice directions and guidelines and, where necessary, makes recommendations. Issues considered during the year included the expansion of judicial registrar delegation of powers to allow them to manage applications where an act of violence has not been reported to police, the inclusion of VOCAT into the Specialist Family Violence Court model, the establishment of a Koori list engagement officer, the introduction of WebEx listings and the establishment of the National Redress Scheme as a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Childhood Sexual Abuse.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

THE COURT ADMINISTERS A RANGE OF LEGISLATION, WITH A NUMBER OF ACTS, RULES AND REGULATIONS INTRODUCED OR AMENDED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD.

- *Children Legislation Amendment Act 2019*
- *Children's Services Amendment Act 2019*
- *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020*
- *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) (Electronic Signing and Witnessing) Regulations 2020*
- *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) (Criminal Proceedings and Other Matters) Regulations 2020*
- *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) (Integrity Entities) Regulations 2020*
- *Dangerous Goods Amendment (Penalty Reform) Act 2019*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019*
- *Guardianship and Administration Act 2019*
- *Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Act 2019*
- *Justice Legislation Amendment (Serious Offenders and Other Matters) Act 2019*
- *Magistrates' Court (Arbitration) Regulations 2020*
- *Magistrates' Court Criminal Procedure Rules 2019*
- *Magistrates' Court (Judicial Registrars) Amendment Rules 2020*
- *Open Courts and Other Acts Amendment Act 2019*
- *Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Act 2019*
- *Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019*
- *Sale of Land Amendment Act 2019*
- *Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Act 2020*
- *Transport Legislation Amendment (Better Roads Victoria and Other Amendments) Act 2019*
- *Victims of Crime Assistance Rules 2020*
- *West Gate Tunnel (Truck Bans and Traffic Management) Act 2019*

BUSHFIRE AND CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

IT WAS A CHALLENGING YEAR FOR THE COURT WITH REGIONAL OPERATIONS IMPACTED BY BUSHFIRES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY, AND STATEWIDE OPERATIONS IMPACTED BY CORONAVIRUS FROM MARCH.

Statewide, the number of finalised matters dropped to 217,775 from 254,208 the previous year. This was largely due to a drop in criminal finalisations over the final three months of the financial year due to the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

BUSHFIRES

Bushfires impacted north-east Victoria and Gippsland in December and January, with MCV enacting its bushfire response plan on 29 December.

Fire danger and smoke affected court operations at Bairnsdale, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Mansfield and Myrtleford, with court buildings forced to close for short periods during the disaster.

Court staff worked tirelessly to relocate matters away from impacted areas so that hearings could continue.

Video technology was used to enable judicial officers and regional staff to meet daily during the crisis with the court's business continuity team, including the Chief Magistrate, CEO and senior managers.

For the first time, the court utilised SMS technology to send messages to those with listed matters, while phone calls were also made to court users to discuss how their case would proceed and the options available to them.

Social media and the MCV website were also used to inform the public of the operational changes.

Ensuring the health and safety of court staff and judiciary was the primary concern, with bushfire first-aid kits and P2 face masks distributed to affected regions during the crisis due to smoke and poor air quality.

CORONAVIRUS

The COVID-19 pandemic required MCV to respond, innovate and adapt to new ways of working.

MCV moved quickly to ensure the health of its judicial officers, staff, stakeholders and court users when the pandemic was declared in March. The court enacted its pandemic response plan, and the Chief Magistrate issued a number of practice directions that were designed to reduce the number of people in our buildings by limiting, suspending or modifying non-urgent hearings.

Where possible, staff were directed to work from home and frontline staff and judicial officers were separated into two teams, with one team working from home for a week while the other attended work premises.

All 51 court locations remained open and continued to hear urgent matters including bail, remand and family violence applications and breaches. More than 60,000 non-urgent matters and contested committals were adjourned to dates in the 2020-21 financial year.

The criminal jurisdiction:

- prioritised the hearing of cases related to custody and bail
- liaised with other jurisdictions and with Corrections Victoria to ensure, where possible, prisoners appeared via audio-visual link
- extended the first return date of matters proceeding by summons to more than 20 weeks and all matters where an accused was on bail to more than 12 weeks
- adjourned all other non-urgent hearings to a date later in the year.

The family violence jurisdiction:

- prioritised the hearing of all applications for interim family violence intervention orders and personal safety intervention orders as well as urgent hearings across the jurisdiction
- adjourned second or subsequent hearings where non-urgent, noting 90 per cent of adjourned matters had an interim order in place

- transferred all family violence practitioner engagement to telephone
- extended the capacity of the family violence contact centre
- fast-tracked rollout of online applications for family violence intervention orders.

The civil jurisdiction:

- prioritised the hearing of urgent civil applications, where practicable via use of telephone and other online platforms
- adjourned non-urgent hearings
- transferred all civil prehearings to telephone and encouraged resolution of matters on the papers.

The specialist courts and programs:

- Koori Court was immediately suspended to protect the Koori Elders and Respected Persons with the option for any participant to transfer their matter to mainstream court
- Drug Court reduced non-essential attendances at Drug Court House, maximised contact opportunities using telephone and Zoom, and made alternate arrangements for all group programs
- ARC reduced face-to-face interactions and, where appropriate, moved reviews and hearings to telephone or an online platform.
- CISP and CROP continued to provide services but the mode, frequency and depth of service changed in response to the pandemic. New assessments were conducted largely by AVL or telephone, rather than face-to-face.
- VOCAT transferred all directions hearings to telephone, prioritised urgent hearings to be heard on the papers and used working-from-home teams to process a full range of chamber work.

ONLINE MAGISTRATES' COURT

While the court utilised technology, including audio-visual links and telephone, to further reduce the need for people to physically appear in court, it was soon apparent that a longer-term solution would be needed to help meet hearing demand.

In April, a project was launched to enable the court to utilise video technology to hear matters online. On 11 May, just six weeks after planning began, the Online Magistrates' Court pilot launched with the Chief

Magistrate hearing a bail application. Parties appeared from remote locations using the WebEx platform.

All staff and magistrates were trained in the use of the technology by the end of the financial year and the range of matters heard expanded to include summary jurisdiction applications, guilty pleas and VOCAT hearings.

As at 30 June, the Online Magistrates' Court had heard 154 matters from across metropolitan Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, MCV was a traditional court, meaning it was paper-based, event-driven and reliant on the physical presence of people within court buildings for completion of tasks or progression of cases.

The rapid establishment of Online Magistrates' Court allowed MCV to maintain a range of court operations, ensuring that more of the essential work of the court was able to continue.

**"JUSTICE HAS NOT
CHANGED – IT'S JUST THE
MODE OF DELIVERY THAT'S
DIFFERENT."**

- Chief Magistrate Judge Lisa Hannan



JUSTICE THROUGH A NEW LENS

THE ONLINE MAGISTRATES' COURT IS PAVING THE WAY FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE DELIVERY OF JUSTICE. MAGISTRATE TIMOTHY BOURKE IS LEADING THE PROJECT.

How will the Online Magistrates' Court assist magistrates in the administration of justice?

COVID-19 has given us the opportunity to review and enhance the way things are done. One of the key things occurring outside of COVID-19 is an enormous change program.

Our court is evolving, and we are rethinking the way we do things. So, even for somebody like myself, who has been around this place for 34 or 35 years, I'm loving the challenge of saying, "why do we have to do it this way?"

The great fear was that every court in the state would be shut down. Thankfully that didn't happen and we now have a system where, for example, a magistrate and a registrar can be at home, and a young person in the cells at the Echuca Police Station who wishes to come before the court for a bail application can do so.

It's a great opportunity to re-engineer so we are more efficient and access to justice is expanded.

What types of matters can be heard before OMC?

Specialist jurisdictions like the Drug Court or ARC deal with probably the most vulnerable people before the court. These lists are where we deal with homeless people, drug-addicted people, people with acquired brain injuries and cognitive deficits. These are the people that we don't want to lose in the system.

So, where we can provide remote, online access to the court to these people, even if it may be a little bit different, it ensures they still have access to justice. This is important because it is the most vulnerable we are the most concerned about.

Then we can look at matters such as low-level traffic offences that don't require as much where sentencing is concerned. An online court will be a huge advantage for those people in terms of gaining access to the court through the online portals.

There are victims of crime who are obviously traumatised by the court process. If they would prefer to be at home then they may be more comfortable in engaging with the court. There has already been a lot of work done in this area and we are beginning to identify cases that can come before the online court.

We may see better engagement with the court by victims and I think this is a great opportunity because hearing that acknowledgement from a magistrate that you were a victim of crime is very significant.

"OUR COURT IS EVOLVING AND WE ARE RETHINKING THE WAY WE DO THINGS."

The other area where we have done an enormous amount of work is the family violence unit.

The online court model fits in beautifully with the recommendations of the Royal Commission, particularly when you look at the need to have victims of family violence away from the court buildings.

How will OMC benefit the Victorian community?

We have been very conscious of our court users. The online court can potentially provide greater court access to many within the Victorian community.



COURT OPERATIONS

AUDIO-VISUAL LINK EXPANSION PROJECT

The court's audio-visual capacity further increased during the year with funding provided for the technology to be expanded to 17 additional courtrooms at Melbourne, Dandenong, Ringwood, Broadmeadows and Sunshine.

One-hundred and forty courtrooms are now equipped with the technology, enabling 30,457 people to appear for their matters from prison. This was an increase of 10 per cent on the previous year.

The project also included the replacement of the Lotus Notes diary scheduling system and implementing statewide bar table phone capabilities.

The bar table project sought to replicate the approach where an accused was appearing physically in a courtroom and a practitioner asked for permission to approach the accused to seek instructions. Phones had been installed in courts statewide by the end of the financial year.

BAIL AND REMAND COURT

The Bail and Remand Court sits at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court from 10am – 9pm seven days, including public holidays. The court had 11,163 people appear before it during the year, with 5165 people having their matter heard during the night session. Fifty-nine per cent of people were remanded in custody while 17 per cent were granted bail. Of note, 19 per cent of people had matters finalised, negating the need for additional court time at other venues. Twenty-two per cent of matters were related to family violence, up from 20 per cent the previous year.

BENDIGO COURT DEVELOPMENT

The State Government provided \$152.4 million in the 2019-20 State Budget to build a new regional headquarter court in Bendigo for the Loddon Mallee region.

The multijurisdictional building will be home to the Magistrates' Court, Children's Court, Victorian Civil

and Administrative Tribunal, the Supreme Court and the County and Federal courts on a circuit basis.

Located on the corner of Mundy and Hargreaves streets, this landmark civic building will set a new standard for the delivery of justice to the Bendigo community and surrounds.

It will be the first court in Victoria to deliver all specialist court services, including Koori Court, a Specialist Family Violence Court, the ARC list and Drug Court.

BUILDING A NEW COURT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The 2017-18 State Budget provided Court Services Victoria with \$89.2 million for a modern case management system for the Magistrates' Court and Children's Court. This was part of the whole-of-government response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The project has made significant progress this year with Journal Technologies appointed as CSV's technology partner in July.

The initial focus was on designing and configuring the first two major stages of the project — civil and child protection. A number of early solution elements, such as court orders, were built and had successful proof-of-concept demonstrations for court staff.

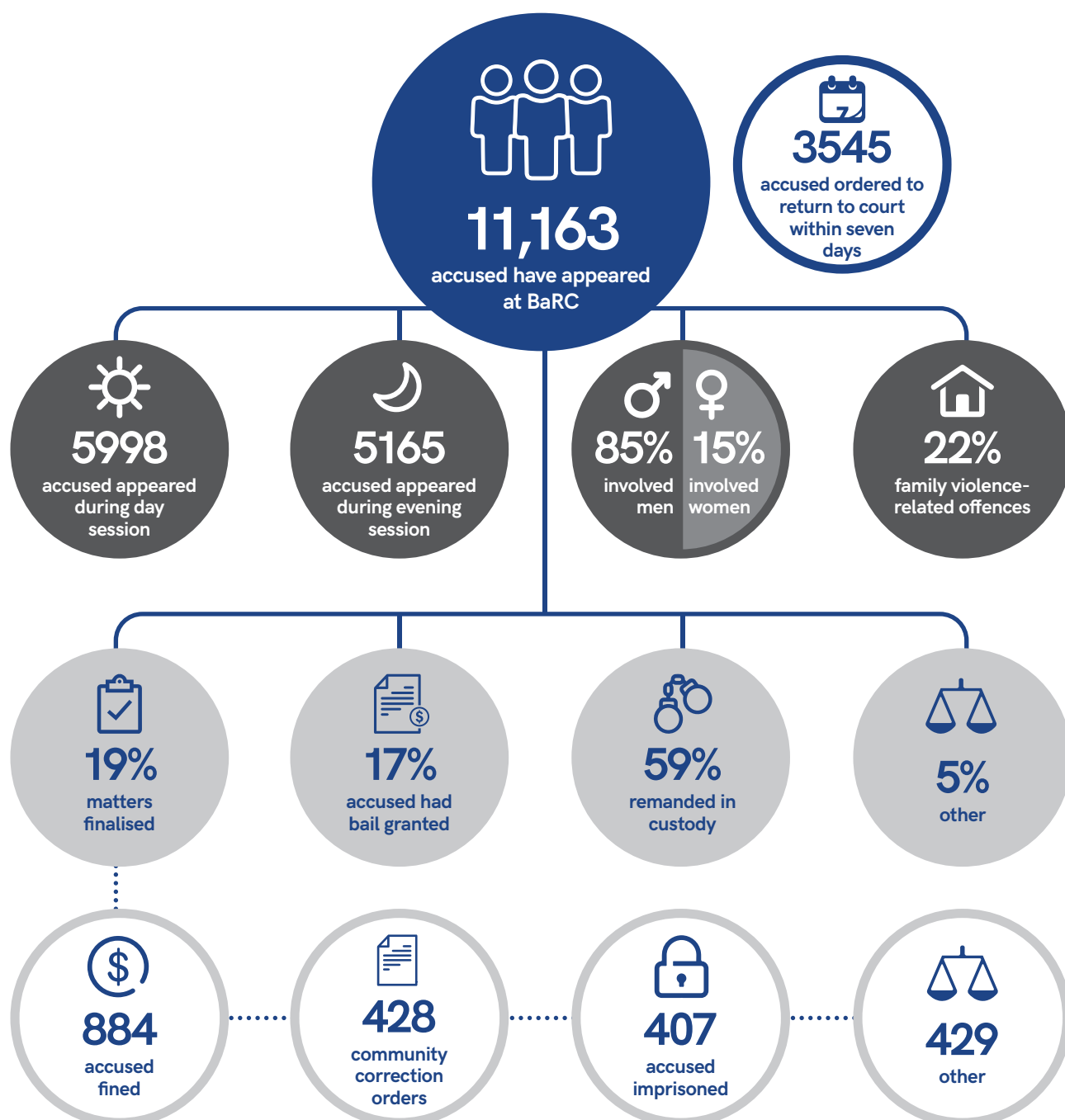
More than 25 million court records have been validated and successfully migrated from the old court management system, Courtlink, to the new platform, while current interactions with external stakeholders have been mapped to inform future process design.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, MCV asked the project team to bring forward the delivery of key elements including electronic document exchange, online payments and automated notifications to support the Online Magistrates' Court. These will be available in the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

The project is on target to be completed by 2022.

BAIL AND REMAND COURT

SNAPSHOT JULY 2019 TO JUNE 2020



FAX PORTAL FOR AFTER-HOURS WARRANTS

The court moved to modernise its after-hours warrant service with a move from faxed documents to processing PDFs electronically. The after-hours fax portal allows magistrates and registrars to process warrant applications from anywhere in the state as long as they have access to a computer, tablet or mobile phone and an internet connection. After-hours warrant applications that are faxed to the court are now converted to PDF. A registrar then transfers the application into a secure OneDrive folder enabling a magistrate to review and sign it on an iPad. The groundwork undertaken for this project has the potential to streamline many of the court's fax processes in the future.

FINES REFORM

After some delays, Fines Victoria successfully implemented system functionality that allowed the issue of Court Fine Collection Statements for fines imposed after December 2019. The majority of the backlog of Court Fine Collection Statements were finalised by the end of the financial year.

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COURTS EXCELLENCE

MCV started work to implement the International Framework for Courts Excellence (IFCE). The aim of the framework is to provide courts with a set of tools that enable them to measure their performance and improve the quality of justice and court administration. Developed by an international consortium, the framework aims to build public trust and confidence in the work of the court. It will be implemented in the 2020-21 financial year.

WEST MELBOURNE COURTS AND CUSTODY COMPLEX

The State Government has allocated \$7.5 million to start planning for a new courts and custody complex in West Melbourne. The proposal is looking at a new type of pre-prison custody centre that bridges the gap between police cells and prison. It is proposed that the complex would have a Magistrates' Court with up to six courtrooms and day holding cells for male and female prisoners, as well as a short-stay custody centre to accommodate male and female prisoners remanded for fewer than 14 days. The Chief Magistrate is part of the steering committee that comprises representatives from Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police and the Department of Justice.

CIVIL DIVISION

The court's civil jurisdiction comprises three main jurisdictions:

- the general civil jurisdiction deals with proceedings where the disputed amount does not exceed \$100,000 or, in the case of equitable relief, the value of the relief does not exceed \$100,000
- the jurisdiction conferred by the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*, the *Accident Compensation Act 1985* and the *Workers Compensation Act 1958*
- proceedings within the industrial division.

The civil jurisdiction finalised 41,576 claims for the year, which was a 4 per cent decrease on the previous year.

There was a 21 per cent decline in claims up to \$10,000 (20,238) and a 5 per cent drop in the number of complaints issued where more than \$10,000 was being claimed (13,893).

The total number of applications finalised dropped by 26 per cent to 11,515.

The WorkCover division deals with claims under the *Accident Compensation Act 1985* and the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*.

The court has jurisdiction to hear and determine matters arising out of decisions of the Victorian WorkCover Authority, an authorised insurer, an employer, a self-insured or conciliation officer.

Pursuant to section 266(1) of the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act*, the court has a like jurisdiction to inquire into, hear and determine any question or matter under that Act, as well as the *Accident Compensation Act* and the *Workers Compensation Act* that the County Court has jurisdiction to consider. The only exception is that the court cannot grant a serious injury certificate for common law damages.

The industrial division of the court exercises an extensive jurisdiction under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and in matters concerning the interpretation and application of awards and other industrial instruments that govern the entitlements of employees, outworkers and contractors including the determination and imposition of penalties in appropriate cases.

The court has the power to impose monetary penalties for civil breaches of relevant statutes and awards.

The court also has the power to impose criminal convictions and penalties, as well as order the recovery of monies due in successful prosecutions for breaches of employer obligations under the *Fair Work Act*. It also exercises exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine prosecutions under the *Long Service Leave Act 1992*.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The overarching purpose of the *Civil Procedure Act 2010* and the Rules of Court is to facilitate the just, efficient, timely and cost-effective resolution of civil disputes. The court provides three appropriate dispute resolution processes: pre-hearing conference, mediation and early neutral evaluation.

SPECIALIST COURTS AND PROGRAMS

ARC MARKS MILESTONE

ARC marked its 10-year anniversary at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court in April. Since its inception in 2010, the program has expanded and now sits at Frankston, Moorabbin and Latrobe Valley Magistrates' courts.

ARC continued to sit during the coronavirus restrictions, with some modifications to how appearances and engagement with participants occurred.

Eighty-one new clients were accepted into the list during the year with 37 people completing the program. Of these, 73 per cent were male and 33 per cent were female.

The number of referrals and acceptances into the program declined this financial year due to coronavirus restrictions, however the acceptance rate from referrals increased across all sites, with notable increases at Frankston and Latrobe Valley

Location	Referral		Acceptance		Acceptance rate	
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2018-2019	2019-2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Frankston	89	31	31	17	35%	55%
Latrobe Valley	29	64	5	22	17%	34%
Moorabbin	80	20	34	10	43%	50%
Melbourne	143	61	52	35	43%	57%

Latrobe Valley includes ARC at the Korumburra and Wonthaggi Magistrates' Courts.

ATRIUM HOUSING AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

MCV was a key partner in this 20-month pilot that was funded by Corrections Victoria, with services provided by the Australian Community Support Organisation, Caraniche and Melbourne City Mission.

Court support staff at Melbourne and NJC worked closely with the service providers to deliver holistic support designed to provide access to supported short-term housing, case support and intensive alcohol and other drug treatment for individuals with complex

needs who come before the court without stable accommodation.

While the pilot was extended for three months, funding lapsed as government considered its post-pandemic position.

Forty-four clients were assisted during the pilot and all transitioned into medium and long-term community-based housing.

CISP AND CROP

CISP and CROP continued to provide services throughout the coronavirus restrictions operating across all existing sites, but the mode, frequency and depth of service provision changed in response.

Extensive work was undertaken to establish policies and procedures around virtual case management to ensure risk factors for clients were appropriately managed. New assessments were conducted largely by AVL or telephone, rather than face-to-face.

There were 4034 client referrals during the year, which was a 5 per cent decrease compared to 2018-19. The number of people accepted into the program (2271) decreased 3 per cent compared to the previous year.

The completion rate was on par with the 2018-19 financial year with 984 successful completions compared with 990 the previous year.

WHAT CLIENTS SAID ABOUT INTERACTIONS WITH CISP AND CROP DURING THE PANDEMIC

Benefits

- Decreased anxiety
- Increased engagement
- Better time management
- More flexibility with appointments

Challenges

- Some preferred in-person contact
- Some felt more volatile and/or unsettled
- Difficult to feel engaged

EXPANSION OF CISP INTO COUNTY COURT

MCV and the County Court received funding in July for an 18-month pilot to expand CISP into the County Court.

The pilot was due to commence in April but coronavirus restrictions delayed its start until the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

Despite the delay, significant work has been completed on operational readiness and refinement of practice for case managers. This includes how clients will transition from MCV to CCV should they be accepted into the program.

To help inform the pilot and to provide continuous program improvement, the Specialist Courts and Programs team surveyed lawyers and barristers who were asked to provide feedback on the program. The survey received 31 responses and the feedback was very positive:

- 79 per cent were satisfied with the overall program
- 79 per cent were satisfied with timeliness of CISP response
- 74 per cent were satisfied with CISP workers' expertise
- 100 per cent of respondents believe that CISP is a very important program.

These results will help finalise the service design for the new County Court CISP program and also help improve CISP service delivery.

DRUG COURT

DAVID* TURNED HIS LIFE AROUND ON A DRUG TREATMENT ORDER, REBUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO HIM AND REGAINING CUSTODY OF HIS SON.

David commenced his DTO in August 2017. At that time he was a 28-year-old father of one. He had a longstanding drug problem and associated history of offending, which had seen him placed on a previous Community Corrections Order that he breached after being picked up on new charges that related to driving, weapons and drug offences.

He commenced the DTO unemployed and with an unstable relationship with his mother as she had taken responsibility for looking after his son while he was substance affected and offending. He also had ongoing issues with his ex-partner and had lost the care of his son.

He struggled with his emotions and letting people in and identified this as an issue that had contributed to his longstanding drug use.

The wraparound supports provided by the Drug Court team meant that while on the DTO David engaged in one-on-one drug and alcohol counselling provided by the Southern Eastern Consortium of Alcohol and Drug Agencies and undertook weekly urine drug screening that was monitored by the court.

He obtained and maintained full-time employment in scaffolding, secured stable accommodation, repaired his relationship with his mother and former partner, and regained care of his son.

For the duration of his two-year DTO, he was also an integral member of the Dandenong Drug Court Participant Representative Committee.

While on the DTO, David ceased all interaction with drug-using peers and developed new friendships creating positive peer networks.

David graduated in August 2019 but continues to maintain sporadic telephone contact with the Drug Court team. He remains drug free, employed full-time and is now the father of two young children, who are both in his care.

*Not his real name.



DRUG COURT VICTORIA (MELBOURNE AND DANDENONG)

The Drug Court program continued to operate during coronavirus restrictions, but staff modified how they interacted with and responded to participants. This was to protect the ongoing health and wellbeing of staff and participants, and to ensure the robust provision of monitoring, supervision and treatment.

The modified service delivery model elicited positive responses from participants. Despite the restrictions, participants successfully graduated from the program, and this is a credit to the agility of the program.

In March, the State Government announced \$35 million to expand the Drug Court program to regional Victoria, including Ballarat and Shepparton in 2020-21.

2018-2019	Dandenong	Melbourne	Total
DTOs*	129	178	307
Graduations	10	14	24
Completions	5	3	8
Cancellations	38	58	96
Exited	54	77	131

2019-2020	Dandenong	Melbourne	Total
DTOs*	110	186	296
Graduations	15	16	31
Completions	4	6	10
Cancellations	46	55	101
Exited	65	80	145

KOORI COURT

Koori Court sittings across Victoria were temporarily suspended in March with Koori Court officers working remotely.

Prior to the suspension, the Koori Court held 29 sittings with 553 matters listed. Despite the suspension, 87 per cent of participants chose to continue in the jurisdiction rather than have their matters finalised in the mainstream court.

Urgent Koori Court matters were prioritised for hearing in the Online Magistrates' Court.

The Dandenong Koori Court was officially opened in January (see photos left), bringing to 12 the number of Koori Courts operating across Victoria.

NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

NJC continued to provide services to residents of the City of Yarra during the coronavirus pandemic. More than 750 clients received therapeutic services, including addiction recovery, mental health support, family violence services, Koori Justice services and financial counselling.

The centre also played a lead role in mobilising community and agency responses to the pandemic. NJC established and chaired the Yarra COVID-19 Community Response Network, which was designed to coordinate service delivery to vulnerable residents, and share information and expertise.

It also partnered with Carringbush Adult Education Centre and Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House to establish a social enterprise kiosk. The kiosk provides vulnerable clients with nutritious meals, and gives members of the local community opportunities to develop job-ready skills in hospitality.

NJC established a Peacemaking Service to resolve conflict and provide restorative options for victim and offenders across the City of Yarra. More than 50 stakeholders were consulted to inform the design of the service. Referrals came from members of the community, MCV, Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police and community organisations.

In an Australian first, NJC launched a trial of a Young Adult List. Available to people aged 18-25, it was designed to connect them with therapeutic and practical support on the day of their hearing that could help address the reasons for their offending. The trial was suspended due to coronavirus but will resume in the 2020-21 financial year.

Extensive building works were also completed during the year to provide new family violence applicant facilities and refurbished office space for staff.

VOCAT

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. New VOCAT applications decreased slightly this year to 8041, but the number of finalised orders increased by 11 per cent to 8492.

In September 2018, the Victorian Government made an election commitment to replace the existing judicial model with an administrative scheme to align with best practice and build greater confidence in the system.

The new Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) is due to commence in March 2023 and VOCAT has been working closely with the FAS reform team to support the development of a new service delivery model and to plan for the transition.

FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORM

DELIVERING ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION

The 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence made 227 recommendations to transform the way Victoria responds to family violence. MCV is responsible for implementing 26 of those recommendations. Four years after the commission released its findings, MCV has acquitted 19 recommendations with seven still in progress. The court has worked closely with victim survivors to transform the justice response to deliver a safer, more supported court experience for families living with violence.

NEW SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

Three Specialist Family Violence Courts (SFVC) commenced sitting during the year: Shepparton on 30 September, Ballarat on 18 November and Moorabbin on 16 March.

These courts provide victim survivors and their families access to purpose-built court facilities, including a separate entrance and exit, and a safe waiting area. They provide a specialised operating model and support services, including additional specialist registry staff and applicant and respondent practitioners. These specialist courts mark a major step towards a safer court experience for families living with violence.

Under the SFVC model, all family violence magistrates have the power to direct perpetrators to take part in court-mandated counselling. This program assists in holding perpetrators to account, increases monitoring and provides an individualised approach to help address the barriers to behaviour-change. This program is also operating at Heidelberg and Frankston.

ONLINE FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ORDER APPLICATION FORM

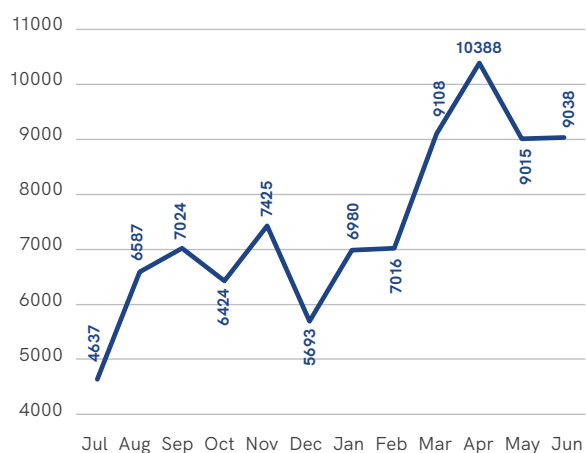
A new online family violence intervention order application form was launched statewide this year. Designed to make applying for an intervention order more accessible, it gives family violence victim survivors more choice in how they lodge an application. It can be lodged from any electronic device and has been designed as a simpler, quicker and easier version of the paper-based form. New

features make it easier for court staff to identify high risk applications and support more informed conversations with victim survivors.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CONTACT CENTRE

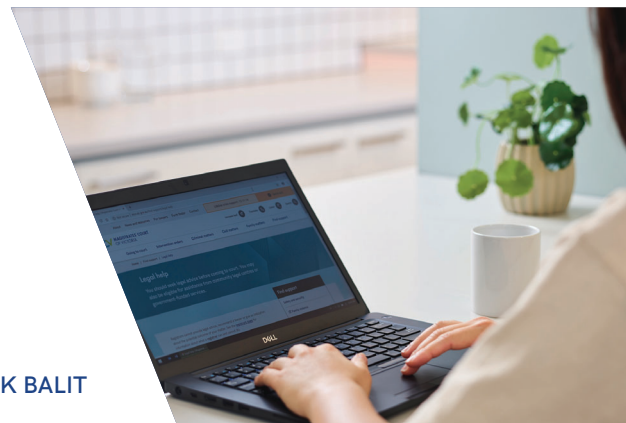
The contact centre is a centralised unit that manages phone calls and emails relating to family violence and personal safety intervention order inquiries from eight headquarter courts: Melbourne, Shepparton, Heidelberg, Sunshine, Dandenong, Ringwood, Geelong, and Frankston (emails only). Demand has continued to grow, with the centre taking more than 90,000 inquiries from the public and stakeholders during the year. This is a 300 per cent increase since the service was created in 2018-19. Plans are underway to expand the centre to cover all SFVCs in the next financial year.

Public inquiries to contact centre (2019-20)



REMOTE HEARING PILOT

A 12-month remote hearing pilot program to enable female victim survivors to participate remotely in their court hearing was run in partnership with Family Safety Victoria, Victoria Police, community legal services and Victoria Legal Aid. More than 160 people or 84 per cent chose to participate in their court hearing from a remote location.



UMALEK BALIT

Umalek Balit is a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence support program. Meaning *give strength* in Woiwurrung, the language of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, Umalek Balit offers culturally safe and appropriate, non-legal expertise regarding family violence matters. The program began at the Melbourne Magistrates Court in 2018, and has since expanded to Mildura and Shepparton.

The dedicated Koori practitioner services have enhanced safety and improved perpetrator interventions. This includes the introduction of flexible client support packages for affected family members and respondents. These provide tailored financial and safety supports, and keep clients engaged with their practitioners for longer. There is also a greater level of integration with men's support services to meaningfully engage with perpetrators.

KOORI COURT INTERVENTION ORDER BREACHES PILOT

A pilot program at Mildura that enabled the Koori Court to hear breaches of intervention orders has been extended until June 2021. Fifty-one family violence matters were heard by the Koori Court, including 31 FVIO breaches, before sittings were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

ONGOING TRAINING

MCV has partnered with the Judicial College of Victoria to deliver multidisciplinary training to support magistrates to manage family violence matters. A suite of 25 training materials and support materials have been developed to enhance family violence capability and understanding across MCV. Training materials have been developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, CALD and victim survivor community members.

AROUND THE STATE

The court is divided into 12 administrative regions, each managed by a regional coordinating magistrate and a senior registrar. Each region consists of a headquarter court and many also include satellite courts. The judiciary and court staff work closely with a range of stakeholders to provide improved access to justice to all Victorians.

BARWON SOUTH WEST

The Barwon South West region includes courts at Geelong (headquarter court), Colac, Hamilton, Portland and Warrnambool.

The Portland Magistrates' Court, the oldest courthouse still operating in Victoria, underwent significant renovations during the year. The \$575,000 project included the installation of access ramps and automated doors, external toilets, repairs to external elements such as retaining walls, replacement of roof spouting and downpipes, the repair of timber windows, and internal and external painting.

The court closed for six months with matters heard at Warrnambool. Limited registry services were provided from Oz Child in Portland. Video links were utilised to enable some accused to appear from their lawyer's offices in Portland.

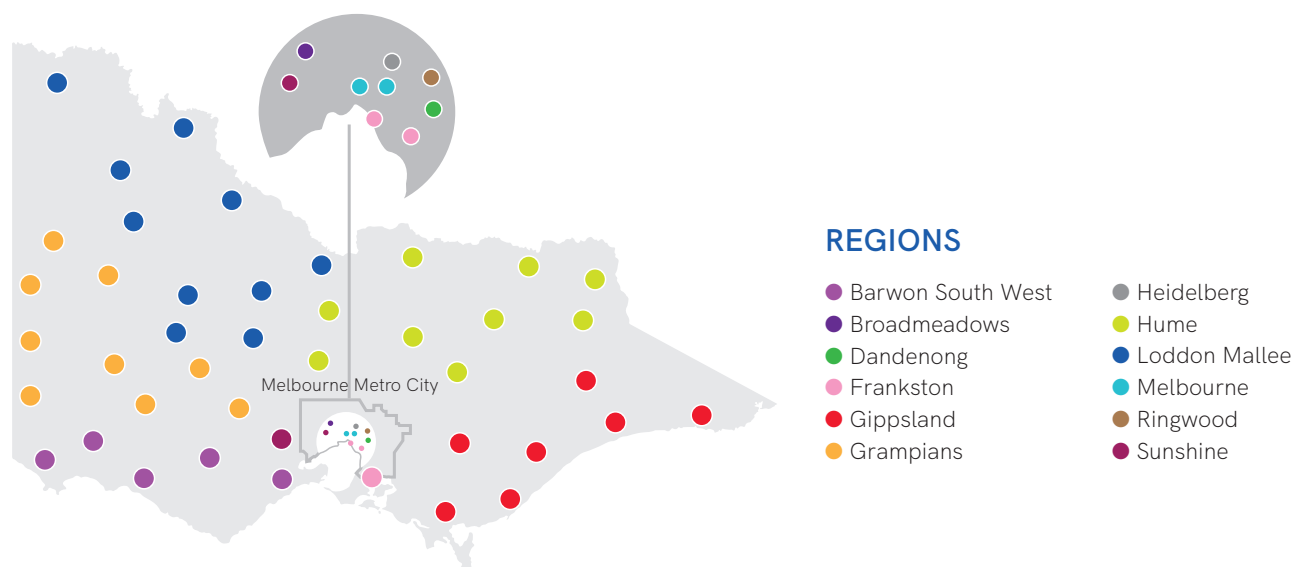
Geelong Magistrates' Court commenced a new remote hearing pilot in which applicants for family violence intervention orders were able to appear at their court hearing via video link from a separate, safe location. The pilot started in July but was suspended in March due to coronavirus.

BROADMEADOWS

Buildings works were undertaken during the year that included new public toilets and a fit-for-purpose office for VLA. Plans were also approved for the redevelopment of the CISP and Forensicare Office.

A new Koori Court Bar table was installed, which features artwork from artist Gary Saunders. It depicts Bunjil (the eagle) with wings outspread protecting the community. It also features circles to represent MCV's court locations, which are connected by songlines to represent the people who make up the justice system. Symbols around the table represent the Aboriginal people that come through the court as a reminder of the need to reduce the number of those incarcerated.





The court actively participated in Week Without Violence, which celebrated its 20-year anniversary in October.

The local event focussed on the theme of “a million stars to end family violence”. Stars were made by community groups at workshops facilitated at the court and the final products were hung on a central tree of life, which was on display at the Broadmeadows Shopping Centre. Broadmeadows supported this event in July by providing a meeting space for women to get together for a community lunch and to work on their stars.

DANDENONG

The Dandenong Magistrates’ Court serves the cities of Greater Dandenong, Casey and the Shire of Cardinia.

The adult Koori Court at Dandenong was officially opened in January, with Chief Magistrate Judge Hannan joining guests to mark the occasion. A smoking ceremony was held before guests headed into the court building to hear speakers that included Elders and Respected Persons from across the region.

Building upgrades were carried out during the year that included new bathroom facilities for staff, judicial officers and the public.

Dandenong farewelled Regional Coordinating Magistrate Jack Vandersteen after seven years in the role and welcomed Magistrate Julie O’Donnell.

FRANKSTON

The Frankston region includes Frankston (headquarter court), Moorabbin and Dromana.

The Moorabbin Magistrates’ Court building at the Highett Justice Centre was expanded to include a new SFVC. The new court started sitting in March, offering court users a safe waiting area and meeting rooms.

Extensive building works have also been carried out at Frankston during the year in preparation for the site also becoming an SFVC in the 2020-21 financial year. A new courtroom and safe waiting area have been completed, specialist staff employed and processes modified to accommodate the revised operating model. Office space was also expanded to accommodate growing staff numbers.

Building works were also completed at the Dromana Magistrates’ Court.

GIPPSLAND

The Gippsland region comprises seven courts with the headquarter court situated at Morwell and other venues at Sale, Bairnsdale, Orbost, Omeo, Korumburra and Wonthaggi.

Bushfires had a significant impact on court operations in the region during summer with courts forced to close and staff and judicial officers relocated. Courts worked together to ensure that hearings went ahead and justice continued to be delivered across the region during this challenging time.

Building works were completed at Bairnsdale and Korumburra during the year, improving the court experience for stakeholders. Court one at Korumburra was upgraded with new seating, carpet, paint and windows.

New Koori Court tables were installed at Latrobe Valley and Bairnsdale.

GRAMPIANS

The Grampians region includes Ballarat (headquarter court), Bacchus Marsh, Ararat, Stawell, Horsham, Nhill, St Arnaud, Edenhope and Hopetoun courts.

The state's second SFVC began sitting at the Ballarat Magistrates' Court in November 2019 with new facilities to improve the safety of those attending court. The \$4.97 million project included the establishment of safe waiting areas, accessibility for people with disabilities, private interview rooms for use by registrars and service providers, and remote witness facilities. SFVC staff added to their skills by completing multidisciplinary training through the Judicial College, while staff at the Ballarat Magistrates' Court undertook the Umalek Balit cultural safety professional development program, which is aimed at helping address the specific barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when attending court for family violence matters.

The Stawell Magistrates' Court received a technology upgrade with the installation of AVL facilities to allow matters to be heard via video link, while the Horsham Magistrates' Court received upgraded kitchen facilities. Planning was started for substantial safety and security upgrades at Horsham in the 2020-21 financial year.

In March, the State Government announced \$35 million to expand the Drug Court program to regional Victoria, including Ballarat and Shepparton, in the 2020-21 financial year.

HEIDELBERG

Significant building works were undertaken at Heidelberg during the year to expand the court to include a purpose-built SFVC. The works included a new building at the rear of the original court that will provide a separate entrance and safe waiting area. It also provides additional registry accommodation, chambers for judicial officers, interview rooms for

legal and support services, separate entrances into the courtrooms and remote witness facilities.

The new building is expected to be completed in the first quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

The court has been working closely with Victoria Police, legal and support services to develop a model that will support SFVC operations, including list structures and practices.

Heidelberg welcomed a full-time Koori Court officer during the year who will oversee the implementation of a Koori Children's Court and a Koori Magistrates' Court in the 2020-21 financial year.

HUME

The Hume region encompasses Benalla, Seymour, Shepparton (headquarter court), Wangaratta, Wodonga, Cobram, Corryong, Mansfield and Myrtleford. Six magistrates work across the region.

Significant building works were undertaken at the historic Mansfield Magistrates' Court, which greatly improved disability access and amenity for court users and staff. The \$200,000 project included restoration of heritage features, a new roof, installation of public toilets and a new external ramp. Court hearings moved to Benalla while the work was completed.

Victoria's first SFVC was officially opened at Shepparton on 9 October by Attorney-General Jill Hennessy. The purpose-built facility includes separate entrances and a safe waiting area for applicants. The Hume Region heard almost 5000 family violence and personal safety matters during the year.

Magistrate Peter Mithen replaced Magistrate Stella Stuthridge as regional coordinating magistrate during the year.

LODDON MALLEE

The Loddon Mallee region consists of 10 venues including Bendigo (headquarter court), Kyneton, Castlemaine, Maryborough, Echuca, Swan Hill, Kerang, Mildura, Robinvale and Ouyen. Four magistrates are based at Bendigo and sit at seven locations. Magistrates visit Mildura, Robinvale and Ouyen on a roster. A judicial registrar sits weekly at Bendigo.

The Mildura Law Court underwent building upgrades

to create a separate entry and safe waiting area for those affected by family violence. An increased number of family violence matters across the region led to a number of courts dedicating more time to hearing those cases. Mildura and Bendigo Magistrates' courts increased the number of days dedicated to hearing family violence matters while the Kerang Magistrates' Court doubled its number of sitting days to deal with an increase in family violence proceedings.

Building works were also completed at the Swan Hill Magistrates' Court in April, providing an improved waiting area for those attending court. A new bar table and seating will be installed in the 2020-21 financial year.

MELBOURNE

Former Chief Magistrate Judge Peter Lauritsen and Deputy Chief Magistrate Jelena Popovic unveiled a plaque at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court in November to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Melbourne Magistrates' Court was built. The plaque carries the inscription: "The Magistrates' Court of Victoria acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which all venues of the court stand. The Magistrates' Court of Victoria values the culture, relationships to country, connections and journeys of the first peoples of this land and pays respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging."

The building underwent a number of upgrades during the year with new carpet and seating installed in public areas. The public address system was also updated to improve the court's ability to communicate with visitors, and all docks received security upgrades.

All courts have had AVL equipment installed, with additional infrastructure provided in a ground floor meeting room to enable support services to take instructions and communicate with an accused in custody.

The court has also implemented a coordinators' triage centre, which makes it easier for court users phoning or emailing to access coordination staff.

RINGWOOD

Ringwood Magistrates' Court continued to support the Gateways bail program, which has been designed to provide temporary accommodation for those being released from custody. Run in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Salvation Army, it also provides referrals to support services.

The court also ran a series of Walk In Her Shoes tours, which are aimed at giving people a sense of the experience of applying for an intervention order while learning about the court process and the support services available.

SUNSHINE

The Sunshine region includes the headquarter court at Sunshine and a venue at Werribee. Eight magistrates sit across the region along with one judicial registrar.

All the region's courtrooms have now been fitted with AVL facilities, which has increased the number of matters being heard via video link and further reduced the need for people to physically attend court.

The region successfully focussed on reducing waiting periods for custody and civil matters to be heard, largely clearing the backlog of these cases despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the pandemic restricted public gatherings, the region's Children's Court was involved in running regular barbecues and breakfasts to bring together local families and workers from a range of support services involved with the court. The engagement sessions were organised by Brimbank Council Youth Services and aimed at familiarising the community with the programs and specialist services on offer to support young people. School groups also regularly visited the region's courts before restrictions were introduced. Registrars and the judiciary provided students with an overview of the court process and fielded questions.

FINANCIALS AND STATISTICS

Magistrates' Court of Victoria financial statement for year ending 30 June 2020

Comprehensive operating statement for the financial year ended 30 June 2020

	Notes	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Income from transactions			
Output appropriations	1	176,115	153,726
Special appropriations	1	61,075	55,904
Grants		4,374	8,164
Other income		0	0
Total income from transactions		241,564	217,793
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses and judicial officer remuneration	2	137,271	123,102
Depreciation and amortisation		26,925	22,539
Interest expense		808	117
Grants and other transfers		5,576	5,368
Capital asset charge	1	15,808	14,353
Supplies and services		49,938	41,240
Total expenses from transactions		236,325	206,718
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		5,239	11,076
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets		108	193
Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments		0	0
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows	3	(666)	(2,622)
Total other economic flows included in net result		(558)	(2,429)
Net result from continuing operations		4,681	8,646
Other economic flows - other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation reserve	4	11,021	21,213
Total other economic flows - other comprehensive income		11,021	21,213
Comprehensive result		15,702	29,859

Note 1: CSV has identified one prior period error. In accordance with AASB 108 (Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors), CSV is required to correct material prior period errors retrospectively in the first set of financial statements authorised for issue after their discovery. The prior period error occurred before the earliest prior period presented, hence the opening balances of assets, liabilities and equity for 2019 have been restated.

Note 2: Employee expenses include staff training and development costs, with the growth in employee expenses reflective of workforce increases to support new and expanded initiatives.

Note 3: Revaluation of the long service leave liability includes wages inflation decrease from 4.33 per cent (2019) to 4.25 per cent (2020) and lower discount rate from 1.32 per cent (2019) to 0.872 per cent (2020) contributing to an increase to the present value of long service leave liabilities.

Note 4: Non-financial assets, capital asset charge and changes in physical revaluation reserve.

CRIMINAL

Summary								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Cases initiated		247,025	160,942	166,499	160,473	143,151	145,625	2%
Cases finalised		275,552	199,960	198,185	196,871	173,778	135,840	-22%
Bail-related applications		33,344	39,056	46,520	44,202	40,637	37,372	-8%
Applications finalised		46,005	53,936	62,260	68,906	62,273	50,905	-18%
Contravention of sentencing orders		8806	9466	11,142	10,583	10,219	8211	-20%
Total criminal listings		766,091	683,709	726,249	713,062	660,262	606,220	-8%
Caseload								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Cases initiated	1	247,025	160,942	166,499	160,473	143,151	145,625	2%
Cases finalised	1	275,552	199,960	198,185	196,871	173,778	135,840	-22%
Cases finalised per court region	2							
Barwon South West		9317	9699	10,733	10,323	10,346	9074	-12%
Broadmeadows		15,829	19,243	16,624	14,173	13,006	10,304	-21%
Dandenong		19,624	17,150	16,648	15,354	14,210	11,786	-17%
Frankston		19,300	22,114	21,437	19,802	17,463	14,630	-16%
Gippsland		8642	8718	10,188	12,799	10,987	8033	-27%
Grampians		6693	6615	7225	6719	6250	5527	-12%
Heidelberg	3	13,026	9854	15,432	15,774	13,863	9895	-29%
Hume		8059	8573	9239	9076	8914	6946	-22%
Loddon-Mallee		9627	9827	10,924	9855	10,152	9028	-11%
Melbourne		128,725	48,599	41,845	45,377	31,985	23,944	-25%
Ringwood		15,898	15,988	17,192	17,027	16,115	11,889	-26%
Sunshine		18,780	21,911	19,330	19,232	19,212	13,756	-28%
NJC		2032	1669	1368	1360	1275	1028	-19%
Total		275,552	199,960	198,185	196,871	173,778	135,840	-22%

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

Note 2: The above totals breakdown the criminal cases finalised by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 12 regions. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions also have one or more satellite courts.

Note 3: No court hearings were held at Heidelberg Magistrates Court in the 2015-16 financial year. Most lists were transferred to Melbourne Magistrates' Court, with others transferred to Broadmeadows and Ringwood courts. Cases listed at Melbourne Magistrates' Court will be included in the Heidelberg region statistics.

Initiations								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Charge and summons		105,850	101,807	107,822	100,303	103,891	94,973	-9%
Charge and information		36,258	39,767	42,502	41,417	35,182	45,662	30%
Charge and warrant		3949	4230	4477	4209	3841	4720	23%
Notice to appear		197	216	368	304	185	270	46%
Infringement revocation	1	100,771	14,922	11,330	14,240	52	0	-100%
		247,025	160,942	166,499	160,473	143,151	145,625	2%

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.

Note 1: The introduction of the *Fines Reform Act 2014* saw legislation relating to infringement revocations repealed. As such, infringement revocation matters are no longer referred to the Magistrates' Court and will be removed from future reports.

Bail orders								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Bail-related applications								
Bail granted		14,493	17,370	20,873	19,405	17,613	16,942	-4%
Bail refused		7565	9803	11,744	11,609	11,487	10,100	-12%
No application for bail		36,568	48,076	57,653	55,910	60,685	54,539	-10%
1		58,626	75,249	90,270	86,924	89,785	81,581	3%
Applications where bail was revoked								
Applications where bail was varied		2637	3037	4042	4055	3468	2970	-14%
Listings where bail was extended		8694	8846	9861	9133	8069	7360	-9%
		93,541	98,217	108,782	100,609	87,348	89,291	2%
Other orders								
Application for bail - struck out/withdrawn		1846	2448	2769	2794	2677	2682	0%
Application for bail variation - struck out/withdrawn		445	539	532	528	392	403	3%
Application for revocation of bail - struck out/withdrawn		515	630	969	1283	2631	4179	59%
Total bail apps struck out/withdrawn	2	2806	3617	4270	4605	5700	7264	27%

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 of the events listed below are counted in these figures:

- an accused person with multiple cases, and applications for bail on all of 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).

Applications								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Application types	1,2	20,169	26,629	39,497	42,672	42,815	38,993	-9%
Licence eligibility applications	4	9860	8037	7586	8107	8000	4122	-48%
Interlock removal applications	4	5238	4981	5067	4780	4676	1563	-67%
Rehearing applications		1747	2543	1898	1597	496	415	-16%
Application to vary or cancel sentencing order		1733	1836	1964	1933	1356	716	-47%
Application under section 84U Road Safety Act		510	831	1017	1305	1211	1055	-13%
Application to question/ investigate a person in custody		118	59	39	31	52	38	-27%
Application for forfeiture of property		490	465	439	393	321	257	-20%
Application for forensic procedure		2431	5878	7043	6932	7239	2662	-63%
Applications for special mention		890	849	1113	1367	1324	1238	-6%
Committal-related applications		1763	1739	2052	1846	2234	2422	8%
Infringement-related applications		7258	9910	6248	9817	4930	5096	3%
Application for AVL order for accused	3			3077	7540	8641	9473	10%
Application for physical appearance of accused	3			3383	6184	6401	5170	-19%
All remaining applications		13,967	16,808	21,334	17,074	15,392	16,678	8%
Applications finalised		46,005	53,936	62,260	68,906	62,273	50,905	-18%

Note 1: There are many different types of applications that can be determined in the criminal jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. Some applications are heard in conjunction with a case also before the court, whereas others can be listed independent of a pending case. This total is capturing applications where a formal application is filed with the Magistrates' Court. Common application types are highlighted above.

Note 2: In previous annual reports this section included applications for bail, applications for bail variation and applications for revocation of bail for both written applications and oral applications made in open court. These have been removed from this section and can now be found in the bail orders section.

Note 3: These applications were introduced on 1 December 2016 pursuant to s42L & s42M of the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958 and relate to an accused in custody either physically appearing before the court or appearing via audio visual link.

Note 4: Since December 2019, the majority of licence eligibility order applications and interlock removal applications have been determined by VicRoads and not the Magistrates' Court. This has caused significant reduction in these applications.

Contravention of sentencing orders								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Number of cases listed for a contravention of sentencing orders	1	6826	8264	10,662	10441	10185	8203	-19%
Number of cases listed for restoration of suspended sentence	1,2	1980	1202	480	142	34	8	-76%
Total		8806	9466	11,142	10,583	10,219	8211	-20%

Note 1: Finalised cases with particular sentencing orders can be relisted at the Magistrates' Court under contravention proceedings if a charge is issued. This does not include contravention of intervention order or bail charges. These hearings are attached to the original case and are not counted as part of cases initiated. The above are the number of contravention cases that had their first listing in the specified financial year.

Note 2: Suspended sentences were abolished for offences committed on or after 1 September 2014; consequently cases listed for restoration of suspended sentences have decreased and will continue to do so.

Committals and appeals

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Committal proceedings finalised		2839	2842	3182	3426	3426	2568	-22%
Appeals lodged against conviction and/or sentence	1	2875	2988	2870	2853	2853	1906	-33%

Note 1: Appeals lodged against conviction and/or sentence to the County Court.

Infringements

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Appeals against infringement registrar's refusal to revoke enforcement	1	43,120	70,508	40,388	52,132	380	0	-100%
Infringement revocations granted and defaulted to Magistrates' Court	1	2310	5221	4197	5656	49	0	-100%
Infringement matters referred to special circumstances list	1	55,184	49,537	56,336	57,095	210	0	-100%
		100,596	125,266	100,921	114,883	693	0	-100%
Infringement/enforcement warrant case initiations	2	7819	6746	6244	2287	36	0	-100%
Individual infringement/enforcement warrant initiations	2	353,734	306,343	327,057	163,383	436	0	-100%

Note 1: These are the numbers of individual infringements that were initiated in the financial year under the Infringements Act referral system, not the Fines Reform Act where cases are commenced by way of charge and summons.

Note 2: Infringement/enforcement warrant case initiations counts the number of people who have been referred to the court by the Sheriff's office on unpaid warrants for fines. Individual infringement/enforcement warrant initiations refers to the number of individual warrants that have been listed for enforcement. These cases are not captured as part of the Budget Paper No. 3 reporting requirements.

Warrant to arrest issued and relisted

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Warrants to arrest issued by the Magistrates' Court		53,805	62,316	66,531	61,181	48,561	33,996	-30%
Relisted warrants to arrest by the Magistrates' Court		40,407	58,371	64,603	60,694	49,768	41,362	-18%

If an accused fails to appear on the listed date, a magistrate may issue a warrant to arrest. If a warrant is executed, the person subject to the warrant will be bailed or remanded for further hearing to the Magistrates' Court. Relisted warrants are counted if the relist date is in the financial year specified.

Timeliness

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Criminal cases finalised within six months		89.9%	84.3%	81.3%	80.6%	80.9%	82.1%	1%
Number of cases pending as at 30 June		45,762	44,254	51,554	49,516	52,840	83,260	58%
Of the pending cases, the number of cases pending for more than 12 months		3192	3853	4918	5187	4251	9299	112%

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.

Listings								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Listing types	1							
Mention listings	2,3	354,551	350,068	360,869	340,826	320,092	299,974	-6%
Plea of guilty hearings		59,552	62,461	74,132	77,353	77,443	64,702	-16%
Contest mention listings		15,707	16,900	18,673	18,704	17,713	16,355	-8%
Contested hearing listings		8175	8657	8678	8419	7230	7218	0%
Committal mention listings		5262	4813	5421	5220	4828	5248	9%
Committal hearing listings		2464	2399	2607	3560	3372	3039	-10%
Application listings	3	136,239	107,862	114,411	96,414	92,121	81,400	-12%
Contravene criminal sentencing order listings		24,768	29,086	40,870	43,538	45,221	40,722	-10%
Judicial monitoring listings		3233	4412	5633	6821	8094	7685	-5%
Courts Integrated Services Program listings		3973	3898	5180	5487	4676	3917	-16%
Drug Court listings	4	3504	3476	3666	7052	7358	7255	-1%
Diversion listings		14,391	14,428	14,311	15,257	15,335	15,182	-1%
Infringement warrant listings		14,112	12,271	11,798	6,868	344	62	-82%
All remaining listings	5	120,160	62,978	60,000	77,543	56,435	53,302	-2%
Total listings in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria	3,6,7	766,091	683,709	726,249	713,062	660,262	606,061	-8%

Note 1: The above table highlights the common hearing types of the Magistrates' Court. Important: A case can be determined by a plea of guilty at different stages of a court proceeding, not limited to the plea of guilty hearing type.

Note 2: 2015-16 mention listings have been revised up from 305,068 to 350,068.

Note 3: The reduction in listings from 2014-15 to 2015-16 was the direct result of changes to the way infringement cases were processed in the case management system.

Note 4: Drug Court at Melbourne became operational in March 2017 resulting in a large increase in listings.

Note 5: 2015-16 application listings have been revised up from 75,042 to 107,862.

Note 6: All remaining listings includes hearing types not specified above.

Note 7: Total listings include all cases and applications that have been before the court for a hearing in the specified financial year.

CIVIL

Summary

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Total complaints issued		41,884	37,209	39,978	38,697	40,100	34,131	-15%
Total claims finalised		50,824	46,231	44,932	43,968	43,245	41,576	-4%
Total number of cases where a defence notice filed		7570	7240	7845	7256	7237	8387	16%
Applications finalised		14,152	14,662	14,355	13,698	15,640	11,515	-26%

Complaints

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Complaints issued or filed								
Up to \$10,000 claimed		30,567	26,757	28,383	25,785	25,485	20,238	-21%
More than \$10,000 claimed		11,317	10,452	11,595	12,912	14,615	13,893	-5%
Total complaints issued		41,884	37,209	39,978	38,697	40,100	34,131	-3%

Complaints can be filed in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria for a monetary value up to \$100,000.

Claims finalised

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Defended claims finalised at a hearing	1							
Arbitration		1808	2200	2563	2225	2177	1654	-24%
Open hearing		1937	2060	2300	2185	2440	2097	-14%
Pre-hearing conference or mediation		1300	1080	1041	1003	911	1032	13%
Any other hearing type		2519	1828	1922	1779	1715	3276	91%
Total defended claims finalised at hearing		7564	7168	7826	7192	7243	8059	11%
Default orders made	2	24,675	20,961	20,263	19,722	19,596	17,387	-11%
Complaints dismissed (under Regulation 21.11 of Magistrates' Court Civil Procedure Rules 2010)	3	21,104	18,102	16,843	17,054	16,406	16,130	-2%
Total claims finalised	4	53,343	46,231	44,932	43,968	43,245	41,576	-2%

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 2010 states that a complaint will be dismissed against any defendant three months after the expiration of the validity of service period of the complaint.

Note 4: Total claims finalised is the total of both the defended claims finalised at a hearing and default orders made.

Claims finalised (continued)								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Civil cases finalised per court region								
Barwon South West		708	703	895	964	797	567	-29%
Broadmeadows		719	620	1008	1199	1616	1340	-17%
Dandenong		1770	1425	1699	1626	1598	1409	-12%
Frankston		1420	1597	2003	2376	2264	1998	-12%
Gippsland		661	478	674	741	635	476	-25%
Grampians		758	637	574	622	569	405	-29%
Heidelberg		462	395	708	1227	1104	1062	-4%
Hume		1043	916	987	775	780	548	-30%
Loddon-Mallee		1524	1418	1090	898	598	525	-12%
Melbourne		17,272	15,311	13,088	9888	10,853	10,030	-8%
Ringwood		1298	1176	1495	1839	2004	1820	-9%
Sunshine		2085	1625	1946	2269	2300	1969	-14%
Total		29,720	26,301	26,167	24,424	25,118	22,149	-12%

The above totals breakdown the civil cases finalised at either arbitration, hearing, pre-hearing conference or default order by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 12 regions. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts.

Defence notices								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Defence notices filed								
Against complaints of up to \$10,000 claimed		2621	2791	3124	2642	2572	3179	24%
Against complaints of more than \$10,000 claimed		3070	2678	3237	3182	3328	4073	22%
Workcover defences filed		1879	1771	1484	1432	1337	1135	-15%
Total number of cases where a defence notice filed		7570	7240	7845	7256	7237	8387	16%

A defendant to a claim can file a defence within specified timeframes depending on the complaint type. Defences can be filed outside specified timeframes as long as a default order has not been made. When a defence is filed with the Magistrates' Court, the case will be listed for either an arbitration, pre-hearing conference, or referred to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria for mediation.

Timeliness								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Defended claims finalised within six months		79.1%	79.9%	82.6%	74.0%	79.3%	77.0%	-3%
Defended claims pending as at 30 June		1695	1767	1786	1890	1881	2209	17%
Of the pending cases, the amount of cases that have been pending for over 12 months		136	181	196	171	183	188	3%

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

Applications								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Application types	1							
Interlocutory applications		1146	1216	1142	1118	1194	927	-22%
Applications for preliminary discovery		43	18	15	54	52	197	279%
Applications for substituted service		2887	3612	3982	3936	4193	4005	-4%
Applications for summary order		63	71	69	64	32	39	22%
Applications to extend complaint		185	353	254	217	271	312	15%
Application for rehearing		3227	3390	3353	3326	3436	2736	-20%
Applications under s24 of Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989	2	319	371	275	282	255	180	-29%
All remaining applications		274	329	143	149	137	97	-29%
Enforcement applications	1	6008	5302	5122	4552	6070	3022	-50%
Applications finalised		14,152	14,662	14,355	13,698	15,640	11,515	-26%

Note 1: There are numerous types of applications that can be determined in the civil jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. Some applications are heard in conjunction with a case also before the court, whereas others can be listed independent of a pending case. The total applications above also capture the applications in the civil enforcement section below, except for warrants to seize property. Common application types are highlighted above.

Note 2: Applications under s24 of the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 1989 are generally dealt with by a registrar. Persons who identify their property at a second-hand dealer or pawn shop, and have sufficient evidence to prove it is their property, can apply to the court to obtain an order to have their goods returned.

Civil enforcement								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Oral examinations finalised (including those under the <i>Judgement Debt Recovery Act 1984</i>)	1	4470	3810	3659	3314	4606	2307	-50%
Attachment of earnings hearings finalised	1	1170	1180	1151	904	1207	753	-38%
Attachment of debt hearings finalised	1	77	53	71	109	84	47	-44%
Applications for instalment order finalised	2	291	259	241	191	173	146	-16%
Warrants to seize property issued	3	4129	4007	3548	3643	3324	3289	-1%
Total		10,137	9309	8670	8161	9394	6542	-30%

Note 1: The above are hearings where a debtor in a civil matter must attend. These hearings are conducted by a registrar of the court.

Note 2: A debtor or creditor can apply to the registrar for an instalment order. The applicant does not need to appear for a determination to be made.

Note 3: Warrants to seize property are requested by the creditor and filed with the Sheriff's Office of Victoria for execution.

INTERVENTION ORDERS

Intervention orders summary - family violence and personal safety combined

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Total finalised cases with one or more interim orders		23,365	24,256	26,528	26,932	28,800	24,880	-14%
Total original matters finalised		43,105	43,434	44,093	43,151	44,608	41,189	-8%
Total applications finalised		6,155	6,861	7,471	7,336	7,616	7,479	-2%
Total matters		72,625	74,551	78,092	77,419	81,024	73,548	-9%
Total listings for finalised matters		111,639	122,909	131,301	139,741	139,999	131,455	-6%

Caseload

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Family violence intervention order applications								
Finalised cases with one or more interim orders	1	17,711	18,865	20,622	21,073	22,487	19,837	-12%
Original matters finalised	2	32,614	33,763	33,748	32,790	33,914	32,094	-5%
Application for extension	3	1550	1686	1842	1876	1874	1686	-10%
Application for revocation	3	852	770	796	707	686	726	6%
Application for variation	3	3302	3850	4333	4215	4501	4601	2%
Total		56,029	58,934	61,341	60,661	63,462	58,944	-7%
Personal Safety intervention order applications								
Finalised cases with one or more interim orders	1	5654	5391	5906	5859	6313	5043	-20%
Original matters finalised	2	10,491	9672	10,345	10,361	10,694	9095	-15%
Application for extension	3	266	317	280	307	307	259	-16%
Application for revocation	3	36	42	43	43	45	29	-36%
Application for variation	3	149	195	177	188	203	178	-12%
Total		16,596	15,617	16,751	16,758	17,562	14,604	-17%
Total family violence and personal safety matters		72,625	74,551	78,092	77,419	81,024	73,548	-9%

Note 1: Interim orders can be made before a final order is made on the case. The number expresses the amount of finalised cases that had an interim order made during the case. If more than one interim order was made on a case, only one is counted in this total.

Note 2: Original matters refer to finalising orders made on an application and summons, an application and warrant or a family violence safety notice. Finalising order does not necessarily mean an intervention order has been made.

Note 3: Applications refer to application for extension, variation and revocation. These applications can occur at any time of the hearing, and after a final order made. Any party to the proceeding is able to make an application.

Caseload (Continued)

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Family violence and personal safety matters per region								
Barwon South West		5740	6041	6430	6587	6360	5389	-15%
Broadmeadows		5733	5785	6073	5860	5771	5339	-7%
Dandenong		6657	6962	7086	7204	7665	6685	-13%
Frankston		8828	8353	8880	8019	8447	7910	-6%
Gippsland		6736	7343	7128	6999	7579	6646	-12%
Grampians		3447	3968	4070	3992	4043	3568	-12%
Heidelberg		5480	4835	6029	6455	6567	5546	-16%
Hume		3700	4098	4704	4636	5460	4949	-9%
Loddon-Mallee		5700	5663	6027	6050	6780	6731	-1%
Melbourne		5940	6352	6383	6497	6765	6500	-4%
Ringwood		5604	6010	6405	6356	6294	5672	-10%
Sunshine		8299	8262	7950	7923	8350	7614	-9%
NJC		761	879	927	841	903	999	11%
Total		72,625	74,551	78,092	77,419	80,984	73,548	-9%

The above totals breakdown the cases finalised by region. Across the state, court locations are divided into 12 regions. Each region consists of a headquarter court and some regions are made up of satellite courts. If more than one interim order was made on a finalised case, only one interim order is counted in these totals.

Mode of issue

	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
FV and PSIO applications commenced (by initiation type)								
Application and summons	1	29,496	28,093	28,636	27,628	27,754	24,733	-11%
Application and warrant to arrest		6755	7146	7459	7537	8244	7831	-5%
Family violence safety notice		13,009	15,056	15,469	15,317	16,226	16,104	-1%
Total		49,260	50,295	51,564	50,482	52,224	48,668	-7%
Family violence applications commenced (by applicant)								
Victoria Police	2	26,000	27,951	28,931	28,212	30,226	30,147	0%
Private application		12,318	12,118	11,788	11,376	10,747	8957	-17%
Personal safety intervention orders commenced (by applicant)								
Victoria Police	2	2477	2728	3171	3413	4063	3923	-3%
Private application		8465	7498	7674	7486	7186	5638	-22%
Total Victoria Police applications		28,477	30,665	32,102	31,625	34,289	34,070	-1%
Total private applications		20,783	19,610	19,462	18,862	17,933	14,595	-19%

Note 1: The above shows a breakdown of how the family violence or personal safety intervention order case commenced. Applications and warrants and safety notices are commenced by Victoria Police.

Note 2: The above shows the breakdown between applications in which police were applicants and private applicants.

Listings								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Number of family violence listings		87,215	98,861	106,356	112,135	112,728	108,375	-4%
Number of personal safety intervention order listings		24,424	24,048	24,945	27,606	27,271	23,080	-15%
Total		111,639	122,909	131,301	139,741	139,999	131,455	-6%

The above total represents the number of listings the finalised cases in the specified financial years had before completion. A case may come before the court on multiple occasions before it is finalised.

Family law								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Family law finalisations		1088	1050	995	981	1107	1054	-5%

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria has limited powers under the Family Law Act 1975.

After-hours service								
	Notes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% diff 19-20
Intervention order applications received by after-hours service		10,055	10,681	10,465	9931	10,098	9382	-7%

A significant proportion of the after-hours service of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria comprises family violence and personal safety intervention order matters.

SNAPSHOT

Cases finalised per court region							
	Criminal	% diff 19/20	Civil	% diff 19/20	IVOs	% diff 19/20	Total
Barwon South West	9074	-12%	567	-29%	5389	-18%	15,030
Broadmeadows	10,304	-21%	1340	-17%	5339	-9%	16,983
Dandenong	11,786	-17%	1409	-12%	6685	-7%	19,880
Frankston	14,630	-16%	1998	-12%	7910	-1%	24,538
Gippsland	8033	-27%	476	-25%	6646	-5%	15,155
Grampians	5527	-12%	405	-29%	3568	-11%	9500
Heidelberg	9895	-29%	1062	-4%	5546	-14%	16,503
Hume	6946	-22%	548	-30%	4949	7%	12,443
Loddon-Mallee	9028	-11%	525	-12%	6731	11%	16,284
Melbourne	23,944	-25%	10,030	-8%	6500	0%	40,474
Ringwood	11,889	-26%	1820	-9%	5672	-11%	19,381
Sunshine	13,756	-28%	1969	-14%	7614	-4%	23,339
NJC	1028	-19%	-	-	999	19%	2027
Total	135,840	-22%	22,149	-12%	73,548	-5%	231,537

% diff 19-20 - percentage increase or decrease in 19-20 compared to 18-19.

IVOs - Family violence and personal safety intervention orders, including interim orders made and applications.

VOCAT APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE LODGED, FINALISED AND PENDING

Caseload	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number applications lodged	6053	6221	7312	7351	8067	8041
Number orders made finalising claims	6113	5910	7209	7655	7666	8492
Number applications pending on 30 June	6039	6757	7207	7292	8176	8169
Case processing times						
Proportion of applications finalised within nine months of lodgement	54.70%	47.60%	51.50%	51.40%	53.50%	54.80%
Proportion of applications finalised within 12 months of lodgement	69.40%	62.90%	65.70%	67.40%	68.90%	69.80%
Age of pending caseload						
Proportion of applications pending for nine months or more on 30 June	39.60%	40.60%	36.10%	37.20%	38.90%	41%
Proportion of applications pending for 12 months or more on 30 June	29.30%	31.30%	26.60%	27.10%	27.70%	30.80%

COURT LOCATIONS

ARARAT

Cnr Barkly & Ingor Streets
PO Box 86
Ararat 3377
T: 03 5352 1081
F: 03 5352 5172

BACCHUS MARSH

Main Street
PO Box 277
Bacchus Marsh 3340
T: 03 5367 2953
F: 03 5367 7319

BAIRNSDALE

Nicholson Street
PO Box 367
Bairnsdale 3875
T: 03 5152 9222
F: 03 5116 1616

BALLARAT

100 Grenville Street South
PO Box 604
Ballarat 3350
T: 03 5336 6200
F: 03 5336 6213

BENALLA

21 Bridge Street
PO Box 258
Benalla 3672
T: 03 5761 1400
F: 03 5761 1413

BENDIGO

71 Pall Mall
PO Box 930
Bendigo 3550
T: 03 5440 4140
F: 03 5440 4173

BROADMEADOWS

Cnr Pearcedale Parade
& Dimboola Road
PO Box 3235
Broadmeadows 3047
T: 03 9221 8900
F: 03 9221 8901

CASTLEMAINE

Lyttleton Street
PO Box 92
Castlemaine 3450
T: 03 5472 1081
F: 03 5470 5616

COBRAM

Cnr Punt Road &
High Street
Cobram 3644
C/- PO Box 607
Shepparton 3630
T: 03 5872 2639
F: 03 5871 2140

COLAC

Queen Street
PO Box 200
Colac 3250
T: 03 5234 3400
F: 03 5234 3411

CORRYONG

11 Jardine Street
Corryong 3707
PO Box 50
Corryong 3707
T: 02 6043 7000

DANDENONG

Cnr Foster &
Pultney Streets
PO Box 392
Dandenong 3175
T: 03 9767 1300

DROMANA

Codrington Street
PO Box 105
Dromana 3936
T: 03 5984 7400
F: 03 5984 7414

ECHUCA

Heygarth Street
PO Box 76
Echuca 3564
T: 03 5480 5800
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EDENHOPE

Shire Offices
West Wimmera
Shire Council
49 Elizabeth Street
Edenhope 3318
C/- PO Box 111
Horsham 3400
T: 03 5362 4444

FRANKSTON

Fletcher Road
PO Box 316
Frankston 3199
T: 03 9784 5777
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GEELONG

Railway Terrace
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F: 03 5225 3392

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Hamilton 3300
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F: 03 5572 1653

HEIDELBERG

Jika Street
PO Box 105
Heidelberg 3084
T: 03 8488 6700
F: 03 9458 3456

HOPETOUN

Shire Offices
Shire Of Karkarooc
75 Lascelles Street
Hopetoun 3396
PO Box 111
Horsham 3400
T: 03 5362 4444

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22 Roberts Avenue
PO Box 111
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F: 03 5362 4454

KERANG

Victoria Street
PO Box 77
Kerang 3579
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F: 03 5452 1673

KORUMBURRA

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PO Box 211
Korumburra 3950
T: 03 5658 0200
F: 03 5658 0210

KYNETON

Hutton Street
PO Box 20
Kyneton 3444
T: 03 4465 3102
F: 03 4465 3107

LATROBE VALLEY

134 Commercial Road
PO Box 687
Morwell 3840
T: 03 5116 5222
F: 03 5116 5200

MANSFIELD

Cnr High & Highett Streets
PO Box 105
Mansfield 3722
T: 03 5775 2672
F: 03 5775 3003

MARYBOROUGH

Clarendon Street
PO Box 45
Maryborough 3465
T: 03 5461 1046
F: 03 5461 4014

MELBOURNE

233 William Street
GPO Box 882
Melbourne 3001
Phone: 03 9628 7777
F: Committal coordinator
03 9628 7733
F: Criminal coordinator
03 9628 7808
F: Criminal registry
03 9628 7826
F: Civil coordinator
03 9628 7736
F: Civil pre-hearing
conference
03 9628 7837
F: Civil registry
03 9628 7728
F: Family law
03 9628 7874
F: VOCAT
03 9628 7853

MILDURA

56 Deakin Avenue
PO Box 5014
Mildura 3500
T: 03 5021 6000
F: 03 5021 6010

MOORABBIN

1140 Nepean Highway
Highett 3190
PO Box 2042
Moorabbin 3189
T: 03 9090 8000
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MYRTLEFORD

Myrtle Street
Myrtleford 3737
T: 03 5752 1868
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110 Macpherson Street
Nhill 3418
PO Box 111
Horsham 3400
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Shire Offices
Main Street
Omeo 3898
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Bairnsdale 3875
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ORBOST

Wolsley Street
Orbost 3888
PO Box 367
Bairnsdale 3875
T: 03 5154 1328

OUYEN

Shire Offices
Oke Street
Ouyen 3490
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Mildura 3500
T: 03 5021 6000

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67 Cliff Street
PO Box 374
Portland 3305
T: 03 5523 1321
F: 03 5523 6143

RINGWOOD

39 Ringwood Street
PO Box 333
Ringwood 3134
T: 03 9871 4444
F: 03 9871 4463

ROBINVALE

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Robinvale 3549
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Mildura 3500
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Sale 3850
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F: 03 5144 7954

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St Arnaud 3478
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F: 03 5495 1367

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F: 03 5358 3781

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121 Curlewis Street
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24 Faithfull Street
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Werribee 3030
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WODONGA

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARC	Assessment and Referral Court
CASO	Court advice and support officer
CISP	Court Integrated Services Program
CROP	CISP Remand Outreach Program
CSV	Court Services Victoria
DTO	Drug treatment order
ERP	Elders and Respected Persons
FV	Family violence
FAS	Financial Assistance Scheme
ISP	Individual support plan
KLO	Koori liaison officer
MCV	Magistrates' Court of Victoria
NJC	Neighbourhood Justice Centre
NTV	No To Violence
OMC	Online Magistrates' Court
PBT	Preliminary breath test
PSIO	Personal safety intervention order
SFVC	Specialist Family Violence Court
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VOCAT	Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal

**Magistrates'
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