

Annual Report 1999–2000

Safe  
DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE  
JUST  
Victoria

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October 2000

Hon. Rob Hulls, MP  
Attorney-General  
55 St Andrews Place  
Melbourne Vic 3002

Hon. Andre Haermeyer, MP  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Corrections  
55 St Andrews Place  
Melbourne Vic 3002

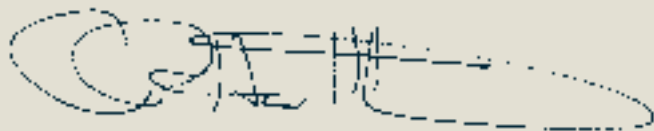
Hon. Marsha Thomson, MLC  
Minister for Consumer Affairs  
55 Collins Street  
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Ministers

**Annual Report 1999 – 2000**

As required by the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I have much pleasure in submitting the Annual Report of the Department of Justice for the year ended 30 June 2000 for you to present to the Houses of Parliament.

Yours sincerely



**Peter Harmsworth**  
Secretary

# justice portfolio

The Justice Portfolio comprises four ministerial responsibilities:

- Attorney-General.
- Police and Emergency Services.
- Corrections.
- Consumer Affairs.

During the year in review, the administration supporting the ministerial responsibility of Women's Affairs was transferred to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Justice Portfolio comprises the Department of Justice, as the central coordination agency for the portfolio, and a number of statutory agencies, statutory offices and judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. The Department and the portfolio agencies exist to enhance community safety and crime prevention, to provide an accessible and affordable system of criminal and civil justice, and to protect the community's rights and the rights of the disadvantaged. Many of the portfolio responsibilities have a special and independent nature that are the basis of our democratic system of government and the rule of law.

During the reporting year, there was a change of government and, therefore, ministerial responsibilities. In October 1999, the Hon. Rob Hulls was sworn in as Attorney-General, the Hon. Andre Haermeyer as Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections, and the Hon. Marsha Thomson as Minister for Consumer Affairs. Minister Hulls and Minister Thomson also have ministerial responsibilities outside the Justice Portfolio.

The powers and duties of each of the Justice Ministers are primarily reflected in the legislation for which each Minister has been allocated responsibility by the Premier. This list is extensive and represents a significant proportion of Victoria's statutes. A list of the legislation is included in the appendices to this report. The agencies for which each Minister has responsibility are shown in the organisation chart in Appendix A. The overall ministerial responsibility for the Department of Justice is shared by the three Ministers, and the Attorney-General has the coordinating role.

In the exercise of their portfolio responsibilities, the Ministers are assisted by Mr Richard Wynne, MP as Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Justice.

**Justice Portfolio Ministers**

The Hon. Rob Hulls  
Attorney-General

The Hon. André Haermeyer  
Minister for Police and Emergency  
Services  
Minister for Corrections

The Hon. Marsha Thomson  
Minister for Consumer Affairs

Mr Richard Wynne  
Department of Justice  
Parliamentary Secretary



# secretary's foreword

The last 12 months could best be characterised as a period of great change and re-positioning of the Justice Portfolio's strategic directions.

Following the election of the Bracks Labor Government in October 1999, the Department has extensively reviewed its Strategic Directions Framework in the context of the new Government's key policy focus of 'building a safe and just society'.

The three associated key policy objectives for the Justice Portfolio are:

- A safer community built around:
  - A coordinated approach to crime and its causes.
  - Enhancements to road safety.
  - A better coordinated and resourced community-based network of professional and volunteer emergency services.
  - A more constructive correctional system in which greater emphasis is accorded to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders within the community.
  - A strengthening of the operational capacity of Victoria Police.
  - An investment in the development, replacement or upgrade of metropolitan and rural police stations.
- A just society built around:
  - Protecting basic legal rights.
  - Ensuring timely access to affordable justice.
  - Facilitating community-wide debate of law reform issues.
  - Promoting a greater range of alternative dispute resolution arrangements.
  - Enhancing equal opportunity for all Victorians and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups and individuals.
- Protection of consumer rights by:
  - Raising awareness of consumer rights.
  - Improving trader behaviour and compliance with the law.

The new policy direction brought with it a period of intense activity in a number of critical areas and resulted in:

- The Government's election priorities for 1999 – 2000 being advanced early.
- A significant legislative program to address the Government's key policy commitment of 'restoring democracy to Victoria' being developed and progressed.
- The capital investment program being refocused on improving access to justice facilities, and a commitment made to the greater co-location of the State's emergency services.
- Government savings requirements being achieved to address urgent budget pressures.
- The commissioning of a number of reviews touching on significant policy areas such as the governance and administration of the Victoria Police, the management and operation of Victoria's private prisons, the future role and functions of Community Correctional Services, the development of a strategy to reduce crime and re-offending, and the development of a 10-year master plan for Victoria's correctional facilities
- The Commonwealth Government's Technology Productivity Gold Award to the Department for developing new and innovative IT systems in Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria.



While there was much change, it was a time of significant program achievement. Key examples include:

- Signing the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement.
- Establishing the Emergency Services Commissioner.
- Opening the Ballarat and Sunshine justice complexes and the new Children's Court.
- Establishing the fuel pricing initiative.
- Developing a range of initiatives aimed at tackling the drug problem across the criminal justice system.
- Commencing construction of the new County Court Complex in the city.

At an administrative level, the Department has been successful on a number of fronts. It has:

- Managed the Y2K issue in the Department's computer systems and overseen Y2K emergency management contingency planning across government.
- Planned the implementation of the Commonwealth Government's tax reform package.
- Planned for the development of a comprehensive Internet-based online access to legal services (Legalonline).
- Rolled out continuous improvement initiatives across the Department.
- Won, for a third year in a row, the Government's energy conservation award. This is due to the indefatigable work of our people in prisons, courts and head office.
- Won the State Training Board's Public Employer of the Year Award. This award recognises our innovative people management strategies, especially our commitment to trainees.

All these achievements, in a time of considerable turbulence, are directly attributable to the hard work, dedication, innovation and professionalism of Justice staff. They have worked closely with our agencies, our stakeholders and key community groups with the aim of making a difference. They have done well. My sincere thanks.

Peter Harmsworth  
Secretary

# the department in profile

The Department provides the primary organisational, policy and management focus for the four ministerial responsibilities (Attorney-General, Consumer Affairs, Police and Emergency Services and Corrections) and the various agencies that comprise the Justice Portfolio.

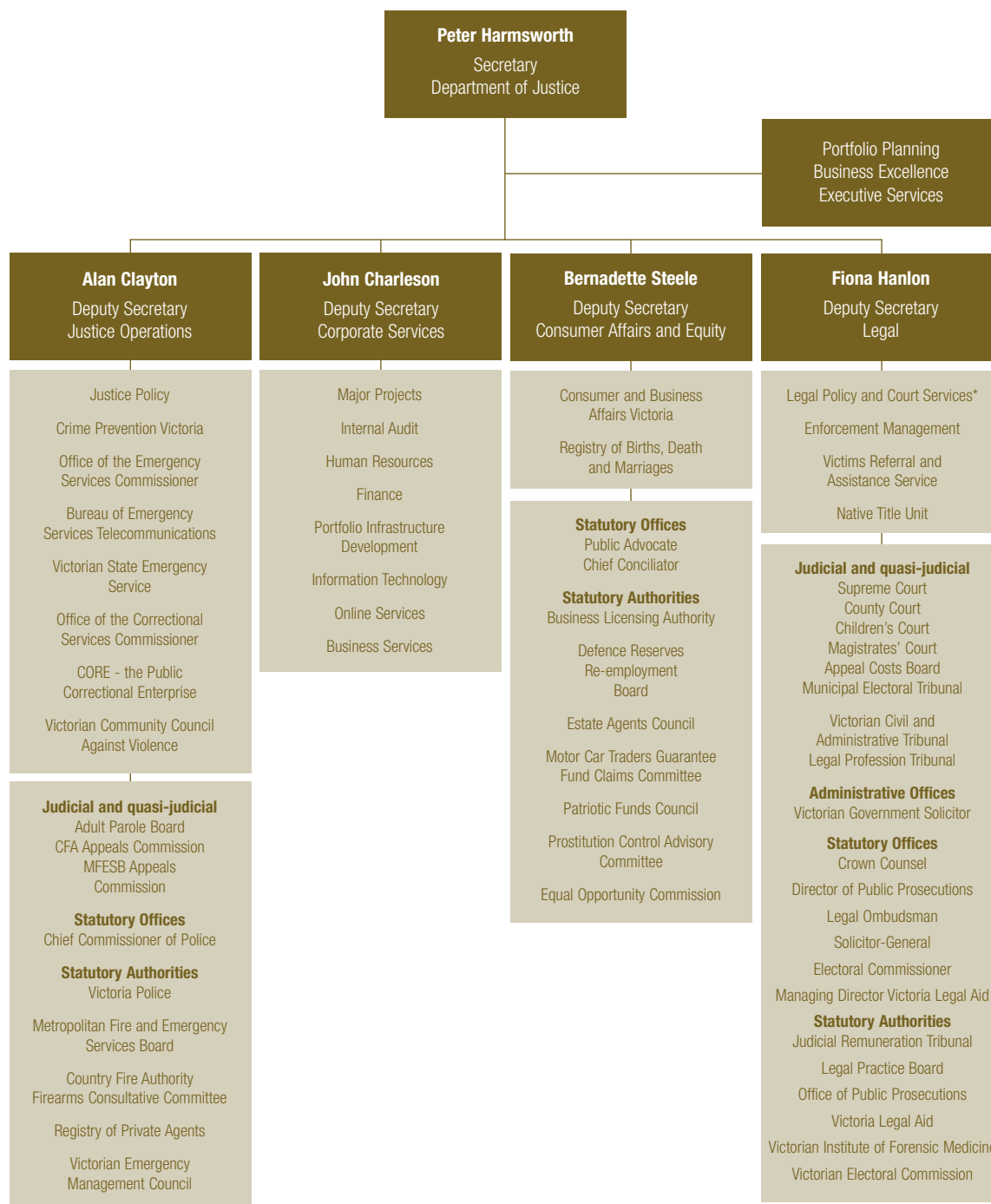
To achieve this, the Department is structured around the four portfolio groups comprising three core functional areas – Justice Operations, Legal, and Consumer Affairs and Equity – and a corporate support group that provides corporate services, planning and review strategies, business improvement strategies, and ministerial services and coordination functions.

The Department Executive: left to right, Mr Peter Harmsworth (Secretary), Ms Fiona Hanlon (Deputy Secretary, Legal), Ms Bernadette Steele (Deputy Secretary, Consumer Affairs and Equity), Mr John Charleson (Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services), Mr Alan Clayton (Deputy Secretary, Justice Operations).



# justice portfolio overview (as at 30 June 2000)

A complete organisation chart is included in the appendices.



\* On 17 April 2000 the Attorney General's Policy Division and the Courts and Tribunal Services Division combined to form the Legal Policy and Court Services Division

# justice portfolio budget

The 1999 – 2000 budget initially provided for a range of services to be delivered by the portfolio in 11 output groups. The 11 output groups, and the agencies responsible for achieving them, are:

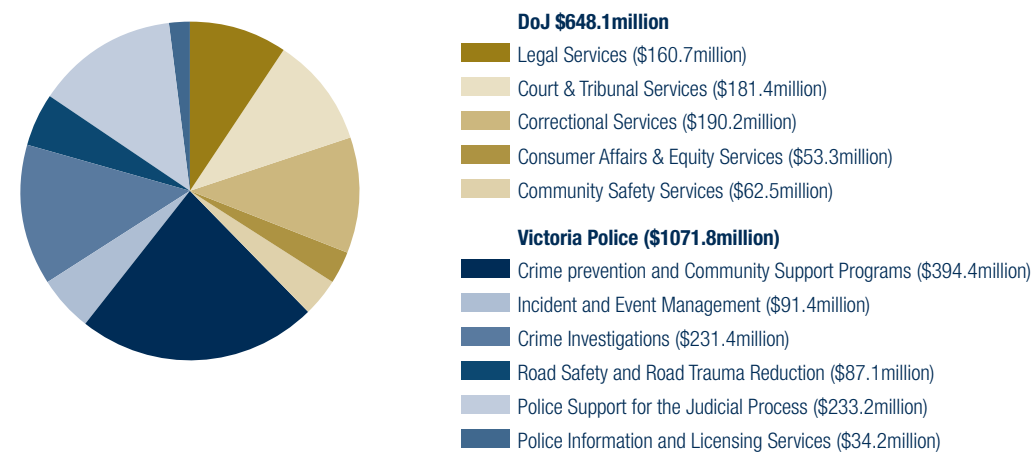
1. Legal Services: Department of Justice, Office of Public Prosecutions, Victoria Legal Aid, Victorian Electoral Commission.
2. Court and Tribunal Services: Department of Justice, Supreme Court, County Court, Magistrates' Court, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
3. Consumer Affairs and Equity Services: Department of Justice, Equal Opportunity Commission, Office of Public Advocate.
4. Correctional Services: Department of Justice.
5. Community Safety Services: Department of Justice, Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, Country Fire Authority.
6. Crime Prevention and Community Support Programs: Victoria Police.
7. Incident and Event Management: Victoria Police.
8. Crime Investigations: Victoria Police.
9. Road Safety and Road Trauma Reduction: Victoria Police.
10. Supporting the Judicial Process: Victoria Police.
11. Information and Licensing Services: Victoria Police.

The first five outputs are primarily performed by the Department of Justice and some statutory agencies and courts/tribunals. The other six cover programs and activities carried out by Victoria Police.

This report deals with those activities for which the Department has primary carriage. The annual reports of the other agencies and statutory bodies will report on activities for which they are responsible. All of the agencies identified above prepare separate reports to Parliament.

The 1999 – 2000 budget for the entire Justice Portfolio was \$1719.9 million. The diagram below shows how the budget is allocated across the various services provided by the Department and the portfolio agencies.

Figure 1: Justice Portfolio funding by output groups (1999 – 2000) as per 1999 – 00 Budget Paper No. 3



# major achievements

## Major achievements against government priorities

The Department of Justice's core responsibilities provide the framework and processes for the proper administration of justice in Victoria. These responsibilities are clearly central to the Government's priority policy themes of:

- A just society.
- A safer community.
- Protection of consumer rights.

Overlaying these themes is a special orientation to the needs of the more vulnerable members of the community. Therefore, attention is given to how these people interact with the Justice system, and to how the services provided under the Justice umbrella can better help them in their daily lives.

The Department's five output groups are directly related to these three themes:

- Legal Services.
- Court and Tribunal Services.
- Consumer Affairs and Equity Services.
- Correctional Services.
- Community Safety Services.

The specific relationships between the output groups and the three policy priorities are:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| A just society             | Legal Services<br>Court and Tribunal Services<br>Consumer Affairs and Equity Services |
| A safer community          | Legal Services<br>Correctional Services<br>Community Safety Services                  |
| Protecting consumer rights | Consumer Affairs and Equity Services  |

There are a number of individual outputs under the five output groups. Those delivered by the Department of Justice and not reported on elsewhere are outlined in the following pages. These individual outputs reflect the nature of the services delivered by the Department. These range from services to the Justice Ministers to assist them with their portfolio and policy responsibilities, along with their accountabilities to Parliament and the community; to direct involvement in the delivery of services to the community and programs that benefit and protect the community.