

DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS

Profile

The five output groups described earlier in this report are supported by a number of programs which provide the operational structure and the strategic planning framework across the Department. In most cases, these programs also have a role in coordinating and monitoring functional responsibilities in the Justice Portfolio.

Alignment with Government priorities

These programs establish the administrative, financial, budgetary, planning, physical and technology environment in which the Government's priorities can be pursued. In addition, there are some specific responsibilities that fall into this group, such as the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and online information, both being directly involved in achieving policy or program priorities for the Justice Department.

Results

Physical Infrastructure

New facilities completed

Lorne Police and Emergency Services Complex

On 20 March 2000, Minister Haermeyer opened the Lorne Police and Emergency Services Complex – Victoria's first multi-agency facility. Integrating the Country Fire Authority, Victoria Police, Victoria State Emergency Service and the Rural Ambulance Service, this \$2 million complex is designed to meet the needs of the community and its service organisations.

Prison Upgrades

In September 2000, the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre at Deer Park was taken over by the Bracks Government for a purchase price of \$17.8 million and renamed the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre.

Completed security upgrades were finalised in four prisons at a total cost of some \$3.7 million, as part of the Prisons Security Upgrade Program.

Major Infrastructure Investment in Corrections

The Government's strategy for correctional services is twofold. While addressing the need for stronger rehabilitation and prison diversion programs, it must at the same time, respond to the continuing growth in prisoner numbers.

The 2000–01 Budget allocation of an extra 357 prisoner beds should be expended by the end of 2002. This includes increases of 297 beds to five major prisons – Loddon, Barwon, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Port Phillip and Fulham – as well as three Community Transition Units with a total of 60 beds.

During 2000–01, the Government announced plans to invest \$214 million on new projects in the prison system, as well as undertake a cell safety project with an allocated cost of \$50 million.

New facilities underway

County Court Project

The County Court project commenced in June 2000 and during 2000–01, building continued on target. Progress has been such that construction and fit-out is expected to be complete by May 2002. The complex comprises 46 courtrooms (31 with facilities for juries), a jury pool area accommodating up to 500 persons, an outdoor courtyard and jury counselling and deliberating rooms. The new facility combines modern court design principles with state-of-the-art electronic technology, including video-conferencing and remote witness facilities. The IT infrastructure will integrate case management processes, courtroom allocation, in-court technology, security and court user flows.

Mildura Courthouse

Site negotiations for the \$8.9 million Mildura Courthouse continued during the first six months of 2001 and detailed project specifications were finalised for commencement of works in the new financial year.



Melbourne's new County Court complex is the first Partnerships Victoria project. Building works are on target for the Court to be in operation during 2002.

Wodonga Police and Courts Complex

Due for completion in 2002, progress on the \$11.9 million Wodonga Police and Courts Complex continued on schedule, at times engaging 60 tradespeople on site during the same period.



The Wodonga Police and Courts Complex – ready for use in 2002.

Warrnambool Court

During 2000–01, the Department acquired a site for the new \$8.8 million Warrnambool Court Complex, located beside the city's police station in Koroit Street.

The new Court will include separate areas for agencies such as the Salvation Army, the Court Network and Legal Aid, and will incorporate facilities for people with disabilities. The brief to engage a project manager was further developed during 2000–01 and it is anticipated that construction will begin following relocation of the current occupants.

Victoria State Emergency Services (VicSES)

New Home

Demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to the essential work undertaken by State Emergency Services and their volunteers, plans began on a purpose-built facility for the new VicSES Head Office and Central Regional Office.

The building, which will be located in South Melbourne, will contain specially-designed staff and volunteer training rooms along with advanced operations rooms which will increase the organisation's capability to respond to emergencies and improve its service to the community.

Other Projects

Historic Legal Precinct

The development of a new tourism precinct based around the former Magistrates' Court, the old City Watchhouse and the Old Melbourne Gaol was announced on 11 November 2000 by the Attorney-General and the Minister for Tourism. In conjunction with the National Trust and RMIT, the Department of Justice will oversee the development of the precinct, with an emphasis on educating the community in relation to Victoria's legal and constitutional systems. The Government provided \$870,000 from the Community Support Fund towards this project.

Management of Existing Assets

Government Infrastructure Management System

The Government Infrastructure Management System is a business system project, jointly sponsored by Justice and the Department of Treasury and Finance. It was further developed over the last 12 months to provide for effective storage and interrogation of data for asset management. The System provides the capability for planning and estimating performance, therefore improving the reporting measures for property, maintenance and projects throughout the Victorian Government.

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Energy Management Program

The Department of Justice's Energy Management Program aims to reduce energy costs and consumption while educating staff on the environmental impact of Departmental operations. The Program focuses on appropriate technological or design solutions which can be incorporated into existing, as well as new, buildings. Over \$200,000 was spent in 2000–01 on retrofitting works, primarily in courts and prisons.

During 2000–01, the Department committed to environmentally-sustainable design principles or 'green' elements for new buildings. Currently, 4% of all new construction budgets are dedicated to the design of energy management features.

The Department is a significant consumer of gas and electricity, having over 20 major sites (courts and prisons) that consume in excess of 160 Mega-watts of power annually. Since 1997, an energy management policy aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) by the year 2001, has been in practice; and by June 30 2001, its largest sites had achieved over 15% GGE reductions with \$2 million in cumulative budget savings from tariff negotiations and energy reduction works.

Departmental Property Leasing Activity

During 2000–01, the Department of Justice, in conjunction with the Department of Treasury and Finance, renegotiated the leases for Frankston and Dandenong Magistrates' Courts as part of restructure of the Victorian Accelerated Infrastructure Program. The outcome of this project was improved lease terms and conditions for the Department and a strengthening of the new lessor's commitment to the properties.

Other new or renewed leases undertaken during the year were in:

- Bendigo, for Victorian State Emergency SES;
- Berwick, Carlton, Frankston, Wangaratta and Warrnambool, for Community Correctional Services:
 - 589 Collins Street, Melbourne for BEST, Sale, for the Sheriff's Office;
 - 11 Queen Street, Melbourne for the Victorian Law Reform Commission and the Victorian Privacy Commission; and
 - 31 Queen Street, Melbourne for the Criminal Justice Enhancement Program.

New fitouts were provided for Community Correctional Services in Heidelberg, Ringwood, Werribee and Carlton.

Systems and Technology Infrastructure

Criminal Justice Enhancement Program (CJEP)

The Criminal Justice Enhancement Program aims to enhance access, quality and efficiency across the criminal justice system in Victoria through the introduction of improved processes and technology. As such, it crosses a number of output groups and portfolio responsibilities, and creates effective working partnerships between Victoria Police, Magistrates' and County Courts, Office of Public Prosecutions, Corrections, Victoria Legal Aid and the Legal Practice Board. Legal practitioners, accused persons, victims and witnesses also form an integral part of the criminal justice system.

During the year under review, Stage 2 of the Program was completed and Stage 3 initiated. Key achievements included:

- completion of a major systems study which confirmed selection of two new software applications for final development, and which also identified deficiencies needing to be addressed in technology infrastructure;
- development of the implementation plan for completion of software design, testing and acceptance;
- completion of key software design documentation;
- development of a new risk management framework in relation to persons in custody, including the sharing of 'at-risk' information between Victoria Police and Corrections;
- development of a systematic method for capturing County Court orders and sentencing outcomes, to provide information for analysis;
- selection and trialling of a new software product to form the basis of the 'Justice Knowledge Exchange' enabling the exchange of key data with other portfolio systems; and
- development of initial plans for training, procedure development and communications to staff about work changes and new systems.

Two new software systems were developed as a part of the rollout of CJEP:

- **E*Justice** handles the identification of accused persons, custody management, order management and briefs of evidence. It fulfils the portfolio's requirements in relation to creating a new Accused Management system, Electronic Brief and Progressive Disclosure system. The system is designed for use by over 11,000 users in Police, Corrections and Office of Public Prosecutions, and has the capability to disclose briefs to authorised defence counsel.

- **SCT Courts**, is a software system with the ability to handle case initiation, listing and scheduling, case management and recording of court orders. This system is designed for use by over 200 users in the County Court and includes: Caseflow Improvement initiatives in the Magistrates' Court (along with upgrades to the existing Courtlink system), as well as Case and List Management in the County Court (for both criminal and civil matters).

Whole of Victorian Government Technology Standard

In line with the Whole of Victorian Government standard, the Justice Department:

- rolled-out the Lotus Notes infrastructure across approximately 3,500 PCs;
- upgraded the Justice Portal, including People Directory, corporate Bulletin Board and quick find guide to Emergency Officers within the Department;
- migrated its computer network links across 120 remote sites from Telstra to the VicOne Whole of Government Network (managed by AAPT); and
- upgraded the Local Area Network, Wide Area Network and computing facilities across the Department.

The provision of technology upgrades, along with associated staff training, supports the information technology initiatives introduced to Business Units during the period under review.

The Legal Channel

Online Services launched the Legal Channel (www.legalonline.vic.gov.au) in October 2000. It is one of six 'Channel' websites developed by the State Government to provide the Victorian public with access to Government services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Legalonline has over 300 pages of user-friendly information about the law, citizens' rights, responsibilities and services, as well as links to a range of other helpful Internet sites. Since its launch on 31 October 2000, an average of 4,500 Internet users per month have accessed legal information, which is regularly updated by over 30 authors from Government business units and agencies.

The Legal Channel's communication strategy included presentations to Government agencies such as Victoria Legal Aid, Small Business organisations, skills.net centres, local Members of Parliament and libraries. Regional centres visited by the 'Legal Channel Roadshow' were Bendigo, Ballarat, Bairnsdale, Sale, Morwell, Wonthaggi, Shepparton and Echuca.



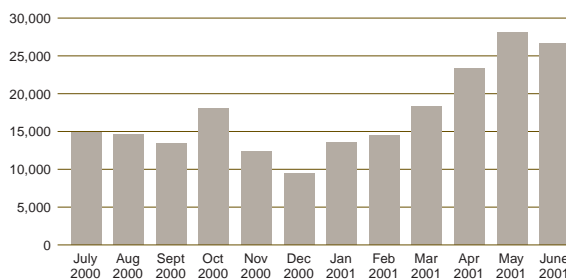
The launch of the new Legal Channel, www.legalonline.vic.gov.au in October 2000.

Justice website – www.justice.vic.gov.au

As a result of market research identifying the information needs of the broader Victorian community, the new Department of Justice website, www.justice.vic.gov.au, went live in November 2000. The redesign includes optimum navigation and an electronic authoring system, which means that content is easily found by users and updated more regularly by authors.

Since November 2000, public users of www.justice.vic.gov.au significantly increased their information requests and feedback to the Department. For the month of June 2001, the site recorded 27,000 visitors (figure collected via Webtrends software). A project to collate qualitative market research in relation to both the Department of Justice website and the Legal Channel was launched in June 2001.

Department of Justice Website Hits



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The Safety Channel

A scoping exercise was launched in 2000–01 to investigate the need for a ‘safety channel’ website. The project’s main objective is to research the need to deliver information electronically about safety and emergency procedures to the community. Key stakeholders in this project include VicRoads, Metropolitan Ambulance Service, Rural Ambulance, Country Fire Authority, Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, Department of Human Services, Emergency Management, Victoria Police, State Emergency Services, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Traffic Accident Commission, and Victorian WorkCover Authority.

Online Transactions – <http://online.justice.vic.gov.au>

A high priority of the Victorian Government is to make all its information and appropriate services available online by December 2001. For the Department of Justice, this will include services involving payments as well as non-payment transactions (e.g. legalonline information). These services will be available 24 hours every day of the week.

The first transaction put online in January 2001 was the renewal of business names. An additional 15 high volume transactions, including secure credit card payments, commenced development and will be further progressed in 2000–01.

Process Improvements and Compliance

Australian Business Excellence Recognition

At the Australian Quality Council’s (AQC) Business Excellence Awards event in March 2001, the Department’s Information Technology Business Unit was recognised for its efforts in pursuing business excellence through its continuous improvement program. Information Technology received recognition at the foundation level within the Business Improvement category of the AQC’s Business Excellence Awards.

Business Excellence

The Department strengthened its commitment to the principles underpinning the Business Excellence Framework and the continual learning cycle PDRI (Planning, Doing, Reviewing, Improving). During the 2000–01 year, the Business Excellence Network has:

- increased its membership in Justice by 23%;
- trained 124 people in the application of tools that support continuous improvement;
- developed and tested a new method of self-assessment; and
- formally recognised 11 people with Certificate IV in Quality Management Assessment.

The Victorian Public Service Continuous Improvement Network provides a forum for senior public servants to analyse management principles and practices. The network is supported by the Department of Justice in the provision of its chairperson, Departmental Secretary Mr Peter Harmsworth, and includes as its achievements for this period:

- delivery of seven seminars and five study tours;
- completion of a draft Improvement Framework Paper;
- review of the Network’s activities and functions;
- review of new draft for Cross-Departmental Mentoring Pilot Program; and
- organisation of the successful ‘People and Process Conference’.

Portfolio Planning and Research

Portfolio planning activities were further developed during 2000–01, via ongoing internal audit and review processes, which measure the Department’s capability to achieve its outcomes. The main activities included:

- deployment of the Department’s Approach to Strategic Planning with all Business Units and Agencies developing Three Year Strategic and Annual Action Plans;
- development of Departmental Objectives as well as a performance measurement framework; review of outputs and output measures for the Justice portfolio;
- coordination of the Department’s Submission to the Expenditure Review Committee, management of all contributions to the Budget process and of the Quarterly Performance Report for Justice; and
- development of the first stage of the Criminal Justice Modelling Project, as well as strengthening of the Department’s capability in forecasting and research.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

Implementation of recommendations from the OH&S Systems Audit began during 2000–01, and together with the Department’s WorkCover Premium Reduction Strategy, this will see continued improvement of OH&S for employees. The Audit assessed the following:

- awareness, compliance and application of legislation;
- OH&S consultative mechanisms;
- the level of awareness in relation to emergency procedures;
- the application of incident and injury reporting;
- the Role of a Return to Work Coordinator; and
- ratings and comments about the Department’s Employee Assistance Program.

Taxation Reform

The 2000–01 year was the first year in which the Department, along with thousands of other organisations across Australia, was required to meet the obligations under the Government’s National Taxation Reform Legislation. These obligations include:

- collecting and accounting for all goods and services tax (GST);
- pay as you go (PAYG);
- fringe benefits tax (FBT) on goods and services provided to, and by, the Department; and
- extracting appropriate embedded tax savings from the costs of goods and services.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu conducted a strategic GST compliance review of the Department in order to assure the Department of Justice and the Department of Treasury and Finance that the policies, procedures and systems that they put in place, are adequate to meet tax compliance obligations. The report commended the knowledge level of the Department’s taxation staff and noted favourably preparation of the first Business Activity Statement.

Risk Management

A key management activity for Business Units during 2000–01, was to review risk profiles in the Department and develop treatment plans where necessary. This resulted in facilitating strategic, risk workshops for the Executive Committee and its Portfolio Group Managers and establishing a Justice Portfolio risk forum. The Department further assessed its overall risks and developed treatment plans where necessary. It reduced its insurance premium as a result of three steps:

- wider consultation with key stakeholders on risk management issues;
- stronger focus on integrating Risk Management with the business planning cycle; and
- a review of insurance arrangements.

New Integrated Payroll – CHRIS

The new integrated HR/Payroll system (CHRIS) was implemented on target for the first pay in July 2000, with benefits to the Department that include enhanced electronic reporting and greater cost-effectiveness. Development continues on ‘kiosk’, the next step for the CHRIS system and one which will provide online access for staff and managers to view employment details and submit electronic leave applications.

People Management

Leadership and Management Development Strategy

The Department continued to develop its strategy to provide for future leadership capability, encouraging staff to participate in a 360 degree feedback process, aptitude testing and assessment.

The People Partnership Strategy Implementation

The People Partnership Strategy, relaunched by the Department of Justice in June 2000, sets objectives for each Business Unit to develop a consultative approach to staff training and planning needs in that Unit. Initiatives established during 2000–01 include:

- greater staff involvement in strategic business planning;
- greater links between individual performance plans and Business Unit plans;
- encouraging departmental Partnership Awards;
- developing local induction and orientation processes;
- conducting training analysis needs of staff; and
- using flexible work conditions to improve the work environment.

Victorian Training Awards – 2000

The Department of Justice received the ‘Employer of the Year’ Public Enterprise Award at the Victorian Training Awards 2000. The Award, nominated by Western Region Group Training, was for demonstrated excellence in the provision of training programs to employees, in this case, to youth trainees as part of the Youth Employment Scheme.

People Management Awards

For the period in review, the Commissioner for Public Employment presented the Department of Justice with two Victorian Public Sector People Management awards, recognising fair and ethical work practices, and acknowledging a diverse workforce. The first award was for the Department’s policy allowing employees flexible use of their accumulated long service leave entitlements. The second award recognised the Department’s internal mediation service, which was set up as an alternative to the formalised grievance process. The mediation service provides a less threatening avenue for resolving workplace issues and actively reduced the number of formal grievance hearings during 2000–01.

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Koori Recruitment and Career Development Strategy

The Koori Recruitment and Career Development Strategy is a comprehensive plan formulated as part of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement. The strategy aims to permanently increase the number of qualified Aboriginal staff employed across all areas and all levels of the Justice portfolio, through the development of appropriate career development frameworks and opportunities.

Implementation of the strategy during 2000–01 included:

- a scholarship program for Aboriginal students. In February 2001, eight Koori Tertiary Scholarships were granted to students studying in the targeted fields of law, criminology and juvenile justice;
- a mentoring program for Aboriginal employees to improve retention levels and career opportunities, with training provided for these partnerships;
- ensuring that a number of Koori trainees were included in the Youth Employment Scheme across the Justice portfolio; and
- the development of a support network for Koori employees, facilitated by the Co-ordinator, Koori Recruitment and Career Development Strategy.



Attorney-General Rob Hulls and Minister for Corrections André Haermeyer with Koori scholarship winners (l-r) Antoinette Braybrook, Melissa Stevens, Linda Lovett, Wayne Walsh, Sharon Barnes, Darren Lovett and Rudolph Kirby. The eighth scholarship winner, Hazel Hudson, was not present on the day of the presentation.

Graduate Recruitment Scheme

Each year the Department increases its sponsorship of graduate recruits. The Department's commitment to graduates doubled from seven graduates in 2000 to 13 graduates for 2001.

The graduates take part in a Justice-specific mentoring program, have regular informal meetings with the Secretary, a tour of Justice Business Units to provide further context to their work in the Department (e.g. Melbourne Assessment Prison, Supreme Court) and monthly peer support forums.

Youth Employment Scheme

In July 2000, as part of the Government's commitment to reduce youth unemployment, the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) was initiated. The Justice portfolio recruited 130 trainees for the year 2000–01, including three Kooris. Most trainee recruits will be offered ongoing jobs in various areas of the portfolio, on completion of their 12-month trainee period.

Health and Safety Week

The focus of Health and Safety Week 2001 was 'sprains and strains'. *Combrook* rehabilitation providers facilitated sessions in Benalla, Geelong, Traralgon and Melbourne, covering work station design and manual handling. Availability of the program in regional Victoria made it possible for up to 300 employees to participate.

