

# Corporate Services

**The Department of Justice supports the delivery of high quality justice services by providing responsive and efficient corporate support.**



*The new sustainable waste management system has reduced the amount of waste going to landfill by up to 95 per cent at a pilot location and has now been rolled out in two major office locations.*

# Corporate support

## **Corporate services establishes and maintains over-arching standards, systems and processes to meet the complex needs of the highly varied functions of the Department.**

As at 30 June 2004, the Department of Justice had more than 50 business units and service agencies, and a budget of \$974.9 million. The Department had around 4,900 staff, with more than 1,000 located throughout rural and regional Victoria. Staff work in environments ranging from small country courts and Sheriff's Offices to emergency services, administration, prisons and community correctional services.

Corporate Services provides a range of services and strategic advice on resource management issues. It also plays a coordinating role across the wider Justice Portfolio in relation to issues such as capital infrastructure planning, delivery of major projects and development of strategic communications plans.

## **Planning for Victoria's future**

A rigorous planning process strengthens the Department's strategic planning capability and ensures successful delivery of the Government's policy agenda in response to changing community needs and expectations.

The Department is building on gains made over the past five years working within a common approach to planning through initiatives to improve the rigour of planning.

A planning support team has been established to help managers and relevant staff ensure key issues are addressed and the results incorporated in planning documentation with optimal strategic outcomes for the Department.

## **Strengthening the Justice Portfolio**

In early 2004, the Department undertook a major restructure as a response to reviews and stakeholder surveys which highlighted the:

- need for a common partnership approach across the organisation in dealing with statutory agencies and bodies;
- need for the Department to move towards a more collective and collaborative approach to working with other portfolio agencies;
- need for more responsive and joined-up service delivery at the community level; and
- demand for greater community involvement in public policy development.

The new structure has been designed to deliver more integrated approaches to cross-cutting issues; realign resources to ensure the Department has the capacity to proactively respond to emerging whole-of-government imperatives; enhance customer oriented corporate services; and engage more effectively with portfolio partners.

An organisational chart can be found at Appendix A, on page 126.

## **Statutory Partnerships Project**

Established in April 2004, the Statutory Partnerships Project recognises the vital role of the Portfolio's statutory entities in delivering justice outcomes for the community. The relationships that exist within the Justice Portfolio are the foundation that supports the Government's justice policy directions.

The desire to build on these established relationships has led the Department to initiate the Statutory Partnerships Project. The Statutory Partnerships Project is designed to enhance the working relationship between the Department and statutory entities within the portfolio in the effective delivery of Government services.

This will be achieved by building a partnering approach, by harnessing existing synergies within the Justice Portfolio, to create a robust intellectual and cultural environment that is shaped by cooperative and flexible ways of working. These will be mutually beneficial, produce concrete outcomes and build robust long-term relationships through closer inter-entity cooperation and collaboration and facilitated joined up responses to complex issues – ultimately resulting in benefits to the community.

A partnership framework between the Department and entities within the portfolio is expected in 2004–2005.

## **Communities of Practice**

The Department of Justice set out its *Knowledge Strategy* in early 2002 with the aim of driving learning and innovation across its core business functions and providing further impetus to its continuous improvement program. A key component of this strategy is the Communities of Practice program.

Communities of Practice bring together people who share an interest in a similar subject area and agree to work together in sharing knowledge, developing expertise or solving problems. One of the unique strengths of communities is their ability to hold, share and grow knowledge which otherwise may become lost in an organisation.

In 2003–2004, there were over 25 active communities operating across the Department, including the Web Content Managers Forum, Finance Officers Group and the Librarians Network. The communities focus on problem solving, knowledge sharing, and innovation and contribute to the continuous improvement of our business services.

# Corporate support continued

## Supporting our people

The Department's goal is to create and maintain a high performance organisation where flexible, broadly skilled professionals are encouraged and enabled to contribute to the best of their ability.

The Department promotes health, wellbeing and safety in the workplace. The Department aims to provide a working environment which is supportive, free from discriminatory behaviour and engages people in the decisions which affect them. The Department recognises the importance of fostering an environment where work-life balance is a real consideration in the workplace.

### Improving safety

The Department is committed to a safe and secure workplace. Key achievements under the *Occupational Health and Safety* (OH&S) strategy in 2003–2004 include:

- an audit of Departmental OH&S governance;
- the conduct of a risk assessment of OH&S and WorkCover exposure focusing on specific areas, including Community Correctional Services, some Prisons and the Supreme Court;
- the implementation of quarterly reporting mechanisms in order to identify and prevent hazards;
- the development of a pilot program to provide line managers with the skills to identify and manage stress;
- participation in the development of stress-intervention pilot programs in partnership with the Departments of Human Services and Education and Training; and
- the implementation of a self-referred employee assistance program to support staff who may require counselling for work-related or personal issues.

The Department is committed to ongoing learning to develop the appropriate skills, experience and knowledge in our people to meet existing and future challenges, both at a corporate and individual level and to meet the needs of the broader supporting Victorian community.

A key initiative undertaken in 2003–2004 was the development and implementation of a new statewide career structure. The project was carried out collaboratively across the Victorian Public Service and included developing appropriate policies and guidelines, implementing changes to classification and payroll information and undertaking a series of targeted learning and development programs and information sessions.

A number of important links across Government departments were made, and are helping to form the basis of a consistent and innovative approach to people management issues across the Victorian Public Service.

Key ongoing activities in 2003–2004 include the following:

- extensive consultation on the development of the Victorian Public Service (VPS) Agreement 2004. The consultation process involved central government agencies, key departments, such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well as the Community and Public Sector Union. Information sessions were conducted with staff across the State. The VPS Agreement covers approximately 90 per cent of the Department's staff and provides for salary increases and employment conditions until June 2007; and
- the Partnership Awards – these awards continue to acknowledge and reward people who are outstanding in the workplace. In 2003–2004, Partnership Awards were

presented to 218 Justice staff across Victoria to recognise outstanding achievement in such areas as customer service, ideas and improvements and community spirit.

## Industrial relations

The Department was involved in progressing a number of Agency Specific Occupational Category matters including those for Prison Officers, Community Corrections Officers, Sheriffs Officers, Clerk of Courts and Legal Officers. The Department of Justice worked with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to progress these issues by reaching agreement with the Community and Public Sector Union or through arbitration by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

In March 2004, the Prison Officer classification structure was substantively resolved and the Prison Officers were translated into the new classification structure with performance progression points aligned to the central Victorian Public Service classification structure.

## Encouraging diversity

The Department supports people management consistent with the merit and equity principles outlined in the *Public Sector Management Employment Act 1998*, and aims to maintain an organisational culture which positively values a diverse workforce and manages it for improved productivity.

Department of Justice policies aim to ensure organisational functions are delivered in a fair and equitable manner, where staff and customers are not subject to discrimination, bullying or harassment. Fair and reasonable treatment of all is paramount to providing a best practice service for Victoria.

In 2003–2004, the Department delivered a number of programs to enhance and encourage workplace diversity, including women and youth programs. Further information on Koori programs is available under the 'Enhancing access to justice' section on page 23 of this report.

## Supporting women

The Department is strongly committed to supporting the engagement of women within senior roles – in July 2003, Pamela Tate was appointed as Victoria's first female Solicitor-General and in November 2003, Justice Marilyn Warren was appointed as the first female Chief Justice of Victoria.

For the second year running, the Department of Justice has met or exceeded the whole-of-government commitment to achieve 40 per cent representation of women for appointments to new and existing boards and committees.

The Department also participated in the Girls-2-Government scheme, which saw 20 young women learning about careers within the Justice Portfolio. As well as attending seminars led by senior women in Justice, the group debated justice issues and were provided with an opportunity to interview female Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Advisors and Chiefs of Staff.

## Supporting youth

The Department of Justice Youth Employment Scheme offers employment to young people aged 15 to 24 years who are unemployed and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2003–2004, the scheme placed 128 trainees across the Department and the wider Justice Portfolio, including 11 Indigenous trainees and five trainees with a disability. Upon completion of the scheme, 85 per cent of trainees remain with the Department and continue to make a significant contribution to Justice.

## Improving our systems

Knowledge management provides a framework for capturing, sharing and applying information for day-to-day business needs and for analytical and research-orientated activities. In 2003–2004, the Department worked alongside other state departments in the planning and valuation of the following Whole-of-Victorian-Government (WoVG) initiatives:

- directory infrastructure roll-out;
- replacement of current obsolete telephone facilities with new equipment capable of supporting voice and data integration;
- evaluating tenders for new WoVG voice and (computer) data services; and
- an Enterprise Content Management System tender.

It is anticipated that these initiatives will be progressively implemented throughout 2004–2005.

The Department is working with Multi-media Victoria and the Office of the Chief Information Officer as part of a whole-of-government approach to delivering 'e-Government' services. Strategies for the project were developed in May 2004, and implementation began in August 2004.

In a Victorian first, the Department achieved a major milestone in 2003–2004 with the implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) to manage electronic and hardcopy records. EDMS also assists staff in developing, capturing, controlling and sharing key business documents and records. Justice is the first Department to deliver such a solution and is widely recognised as a leader in this field. The system commenced operations in January 2004.

Commencing in 2002, the Government Information Management System Project (GIMS) aims to manage departmental assets such as lands, buildings and roads. GIMS will assist in improving policies, practices and business protocols to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of asset management. In 2003–2004, pilot tests were conducted with the Victoria Police and the Country Fire Authority.

## FOI online

The Department launched stage 2 of the Freedom of Information (FOI) online project in December 2003. The project provides a one-stop-shop for ten government departments and Victoria Police – previously applicants had to write to individual agencies. With a 40 per cent increase in FOI requests over the three years to 2002–2003, FOI online is providing a faster, more efficient way to lodge requests. The addition of an online transaction facility allows the public to also submit and pay for FOI requests to the departments and Victoria Police electronically.

*Back row from left to right: Wendy Harris, Helen Sharpe, Melissa Stevens, John Charleson, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice Jenny Mikakos, Andrew Jackomos. Front row from left to right: David Simmons and Karen Maynard attending the Commissioner for Public Employment's People Management Awards for 2004. Human Resources won three of four awards in the Managing Diversity category.*



# Corporate support continued

## Delivering sound financial management

The Department continually strives for excellence in delivering sound financial management to the Victorian community, and has developed a number of financial management initiatives.

The whole-of-government Financial Management Compliance Framework (FMCF) came into effect on 1 July 2003, and all accounting policies and procedures have been updated to reflect this framework.

The Department developed a model to optimise organisational performance through improved outcomes at equivalent or reduced cost. The model analyses prison resources in relation to tasks and processes, cost behaviours and work practices and provides a tool to increase budget allocation sophistication and improve strategic decision making.

Departmental efforts in developing a rigorous financial policy framework have been recognised by the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), which has accredited the Department to approve purchases up to \$10 million without reference to the VGPB. Justice is the first Department to achieve this level of accreditation.

## Environmental management

The Department of Justice is committed to improving environmental performance. Following the development of the Environmental Management Policy in August 2003, the Department commenced implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) covering offices, prisons and courthouses.

During 2003–2004, a number of environment committees were established, waste audits conducted and sustainable waste management systems implemented. One office site reduced the waste sent to landfill by 95 per cent. Around 140 staff participated in two tree planting days, planting nearly 5,000 trees.

In 2003–2004, the Department increased its prison waste recycling by providing waste compactors to two of its major prisons. The compactors allow greater volumes of materials to be recycled and reduced the frequency of materials collection, reducing both the financial and environmental costs associated with transportation.

A detailed account of the Department's environment reporting data for offices can be found at Appendix E on page 136.

## The governance framework

The Department's administrative and audit programs ensure the probity and integrity of our business. The Department's governance framework includes audits of financial regularity and compliance, as well as compliance with relevant legislation. In 2003–2004, the Department undertook a number of audits relating to these responsibilities, which resulted in:

- enhanced compliance with laws and Government and departmental policy;
- improved financial regularity through better accounting processes, records and reporting;
- minimised risks and improved controls to prevent fraud;
- suggestions for more efficient and automated systems; and
- cost savings in relation to identification and recovery of overpayments and reductions in fleet costs.

A complete list of the Department's audit committee members can be found at page 145.