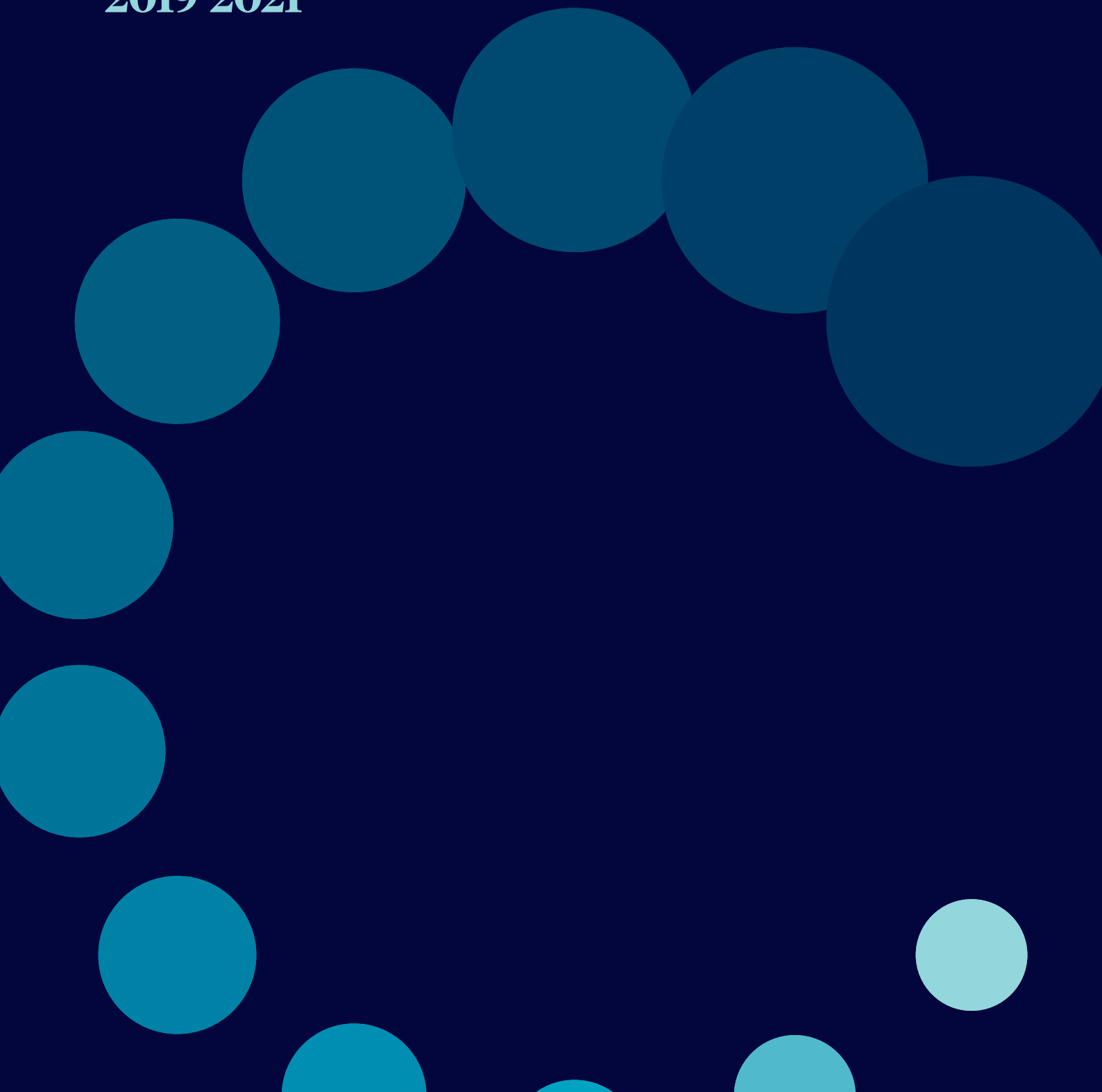


Statement of Priorities

2019-2021



Vision

Consistent access for all Victorians to a *specialist, independent Children's Court* where cases involving children and young people are heard in safe and culturally appropriate environments.

This Statement of Priorities 2019-2021 acknowledges past achievements and presents our planning for the next phase of the Court's evolution.

Towards our Vision

Consistent statewide access to a *specialist* Children's Court

Vision cont.

2012-2013

- CCV established as separate administration
- Conferencing model introduced

2014-2015

- Court Services Victoria established
- Education Justice Initiative
- Family Drug Treatment Court introduced
- CCV Family Division Complex opened at Broadmeadows
- Youth Diversion Pilot Program

2016

- Docketing Initiative
- Marram-Ngala Ganbu, Koori Family Hearing Day at Broadmeadows
- CYFA Permanency Amendments
- Submission - Royal Commission into Family Violence
- Family Law Council's Inquiry into Families with Complex Needs
- Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the CYFA Permanency amendments
- Attorney General's Access to Justice Review

2017

- Fast Track Remand Court
- Statewide expansion of Youth Diversion program

2018

- Youth Justice Reforms:
 - Intensive Bail Support Program
 - Youth Control Orders
 - Serious Youth Offences
- Melbourne Children's Court building works:
 - Cubby House
 - Child-friendly spaces
 - Safety improvements

2019-2021 - Immediate 2 Year Window

FIVE PRIORITIES

1

User-centric design & practice

2

Greater statewide specialist capability (environments/people)

3

Culture and practices that are outcome/evidence based

4

Public and professional /sector engagement

5

Capacity for growth to meet demands of system reform (CP/FV/YJ)

Our purpose

The Children's Court is a specialist court that hears and determines cases involving the care and protection, and criminal offending of children and young people.

As a specialist and dedicated court, we are able to focus solely on responding to the particular needs and interests of children, young people and their families. This focus guides our approach to the delivery of judicial, dispute resolution, registry and support services, as well as the physical environment of our courts.



Our unique role

The Children's Court expertly and fairly applies the law in cases involving children and young people. We work closely with youth justice, legal services, child protection and other community-based services to provide a multi-disciplinary court response to address the best interest of children in need of protection, whilst promoting the accountability and rehabilitation of young offenders and in doing so, improving community safety.

The Criminal Division, which includes the Children's Koori Court, hears matters relating to children and young people's criminal offending. Our targeted responses balance community safety with the young offender's developmental needs, whilst focussed on the dual need for accountability and promoting the rehabilitation the child.

The Family Division (not to be confused with the Family Court of Australia) hears applications relating to the protection and care of at-risk children and young people.

As a specialist, independent court we are uniquely equipped to work with distinctive:

- court users
- subject matter
- sentencing and intervention options
- judicial and administrative processes

Unique considerations of the cases before us are:

- complexity of presenting needs
- requirement to balance interests of both individuals' and families'
- inter-generational offending, vulnerability and disadvantage
- multi-jurisdictional issues
- need for holistic perspectives

Our judicial and administrative officers are passionate and dedicated to the work of the Children's Court and possess distinctive skills and qualities demanded by our specialisation, including:

- court craft
- interpersonal skills
- knowledge of child development
- awareness of family dynamics, including family violence
- knowledge of associated services, and capacity to access these on behalf of our users

We are aware that our role is only effective when we have knowledge of, and can rely on support provided by services related to:

- alcohol and other drugs
- homelessness and housing
- family violence support
- mental health
- financial support, including problem gambling services
- Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander and other over represented communities.

Strategic priorities

We are continually working to improve our services and expand the reach of the specialist Children's Courts which currently operate at Melbourne, Broadmeadows and Moorabbin.

Towards our vision, we will invest time, resources and effort in the following priorities for 2019 - 2021.

Culture and practices that are outcome/evidence-informed

Case Management System (to optimise case progression and outcomes): (i) Implement Bridge as an interim CMS (2019); (ii) Develop new CMS; with (iii) Full implementation (2021 onwards).

Create a definitive Children's Court **Service Delivery Model** (inc. workload & judicial wellbeing factors) through (i) Human Centred Design project (2018 - 2019); (ii) review and redesign of 4 specialist sites (see below); and (iii) eventual scaling up / replication statewide (2021 onwards).

Public and professional/sector engagement

Conduct consistent and rigorous evaluation of benefits of specialist children's court programs (emphasising problems solved and outcomes achieved)

Deliver on South Eastern (**Dandenong**) Specialist Children's Court initiative.
Enhance the operating environment (safety, services, accommodation) at **Moorabbin**.

As part of AJA4, expand reach of **Children's Koori Court & Marram-Ngala Ganbu** (MNG)

Build capacity for specialisation at **Shepparton** (inc FDTC / MNG).

Improve capacity and specialist service delivery at **Melbourne** CBD.

Identify priorities for, and plan to institute, **regional circuit sittings** of a specialist Children's Court model.

Appropriately influence the development the master planning for court facilities and operations at **Bendigo**.

Plan for, and address risks of, court and justice developments in **Wyndham**.

Strategic priorities cont.

Greater statewide specialist capability (environments/ people)

Conduct analysis of statewide demand / capability and create plan for priority statewide expansion (positioning for opportunities arising)

Continue and expand **lapsing funding programs**: (i) Fast Track Remand Court; (ii) Family Drug Treatment Court; (iii) YJ Reforms, i.e., YCOs and Intensive Bail.

Explore and identify **Family Violence best practice** in the Court's jurisdiction, by proposing key scenarios and recommending process improvements.

Evaluate MNG & review the **Children's Koori Court model**, to ensure it is tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal young people.

Create readiness for responsive interventions to work more effectively with **highest risk users** (e.g., mental health, drug and alcohol, "cross over" children) with potential for future containment / compulsory therapeutic treatment regime).

User-centric design & team-based practice

Enhance The Court's **public visibility** by articulating & disseminating the Court's purpose, role and outcomes via public education and content marketing.

Enhance **digital engagement** by (i) Modernising the the Court's website to reflect the current / future Children's Court purpose and priorities; (ii) Greater interactive engagement (e.g., social media and digital displays) with court users as well as employees / prospective employees).



Enablers

(Organisational Capability)

Capacity for growth to meet demands of system reform

Review current and future needs for corporate and business services in the context of de-centralised service provision.

People

Culture: Continue success in building a healthy workplace culture by improving access to, and capability of our people services and senior leaders. Support and reward our people by fostering inclusiveness, harnessing diversity and enhancing wellbeing.

Attraction: We will continue to attract the most capable people to build an exceptional, diverse, and culturally safe workforce. Ensuring our staff are connected to our role, purpose and vision will enable us to deliver our future organisational priorities.

Learning: Equip staff with transferable skills through development opportunities, a commitment to skill renewal and a focus on the skills and qualities demanded by our specialisation.

Safety & Wellbeing: Develop safety and wellbeing strategy that defines the foundations to build a health workplace.

Business capability and risk management

Financial management: Improve internal budget development, monitoring and financial management processes. Work with DJCS to secure sustainable funding for the Children's Court Clinic.

Procurement: Improve internal procurement knowledge, skills and capability. Integrity: Support local implementation of the CSV integrity framework.

Risk: Refine Children's Court specific risk management framework and reporting methodology

Business Continuity: Develop best practice Business Continuity and Emergency Management capability within the Court.

Enablers cont.

Information and data

Business intelligence: Review and improve performance reporting and business intelligence capability to inform our planning and strategy.

Technology

User Support: Develop internal capability to improve access, co-ordination and awareness of core helpdesk and support functions.

System Reform: Ensure the Court's resources and talent are aligned and supported to achieve the Court's organisational goals and objectives as part of the Case Management System Project.

Governance

Structures: Review current committees, roles and key responsibilities across the Court's leadership to ensure defined accountability across corporate, operational and policy portfolios.

Strategic Planning: Ensure effective governance frameworks and guidance enable high quality strategic, corporate, business and operational planning.



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