



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General

Monday, 2 June, 2008

VCAT CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF ACCESSIBLE, EFFICIENT JUSTICE

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) today celebrates 10 years of providing a civil tribunal system which is modern, accessible, efficient and cost effective.

At a celebration tonight to mark the anniversary, Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Rob Hulls said VCAT had overseen a decade of significant change in the way justice was delivered in Victoria.

“We have embraced new ways of resolving disputes and exploring alternatives to the traditional lengthy and costly trial processes and I am pleased to say VCAT is helping to lead this charge,” Mr Hulls said.

He said VCAT began as the amalgamation of 15 boards and tribunals and has transformed into a successful and innovative civil tribunal system.

Now, in its 10th year, the Brumby Government has asked Tribunal President Justice Kevin Bell to review VCAT’s operations to ensure it continues to work effectively.

“We want to ensure that VCAT remains easily accessible to all Victorians and that it continues to expand opportunities for resolving disputes in a low-cost, timely and flexible manner,” Mr Hulls said.

“Impressively, over the past decade, VCAT has carved its niche in using mediation to help the community to understand and participate in the law.

“The Tribunal’s mediation services have led the way in achieving greater efficiencies in matter finalisation and the community is embracing this low-cost alternative.”

In 2006/07 the Tribunal received over 90,000 applications. Many of these applications were resolved through alternative dispute resolution using either compulsory conferences or mediations.

“The Brumby Government is working hard to shift the culture and model for dispute resolution away from adversarial models and towards less adversarial, more collaborative dispute resolution,” Mr Hulls said.

“There is no doubt in my mind that Victoria has not done all it can to promote this effective form of dispute resolution and it will continue to be a very high priority as we continue to modernise our court system.”

Mr Hulls congratulated VCAT President Justice Bell and the Tribunal Members, Sessional Members and staff who have nurtured the Tribunal over the past decade. “VCAT now sits in over 90 locations across Victoria including council chambers, hospitals, Magistrates’ Courts and even in Australia’s first Neighbourhood Justice Centre in Collingwood,” Mr Hulls said.

“Many would consider the Tribunal as a world leader which prides itself on delivering low-cost, accessible, independent, informal civil justice services, and I for one am looking forward to the Tribunal embracing new forms of innovation over the next decade.”

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