

BUILDING A BETTER VCAT: STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-17 – September 2014 Update

Strategic Direction 1: Better Access	
Improved support for people who represent themselves at VCAT	Commenced a review of VCAT's customer service framework, to improve how we engage with users. Koori Inclusion Action Plan in development. Compliance with government website accessibility standards has been incorporated into the scoping document for our website redevelopment project.
Plan for future accommodation needs	Refurbishment of hearing room in Moe Town Hall, to replace our current facility at Moe Magistrates' Court, has been completed and hearings will commence from October 2014. In response to growing demand in the area, twilight hearings have commenced at Dandenong Magistrates' Court and negotiations are underway with Darebin City Council for VCAT to take up its lease option on Preston Court House.
Support the development and use of multi-jurisdictional facilities through CSV	Commencement of a long-term accommodation strategy for VCAT awaiting preliminary work by Court Services Victoria (CSV).
Modernise hearing room facilities and improve security at 55 King Street	Refurbishment of our 55 King Street facility on track for completion by late December 2014. Designs for improved security have been approved and installation scheduled for late November 2014.
Strategic Direction 2: Community Involvement And Engagement	
Work in partnership with our stakeholders	Stakeholder engagement strategy in development and will consider results of user group meetings and forums audit.
Review and improve community engagement and user group forums	Audit commenced of current user group meetings and forums. New forum being organised for newly-established Building and Property List.
Seek feedback from people who have had a matter heard at VCAT	Customer satisfaction survey program in development. Timelines agreed. First survey results due March 2015. Complaints processes reviewed and evaluated. Results fed into process improvement strategies.
Improve the way we provide information and build knowledge about VCAT	External communications strategy developed and endorsed and implementation commenced. Website review project in development, including mobile device functionality and compliance with Government web accessibility guidelines. New internal and external media policies drafted. Information sessions delivered at Courts Open Day. Media training completed by senior management. Participated in videoconference information session with rural communities.
Strategic Direction 3: Modernising Service Delivery	
Review and suggest updates to the VCAT Act and enabling provisions	Continued to develop rules of practice and procedure, and practice notes, to help parties make applications and prepare for hearings.
Support the development of Court Services Victoria	Continued to support CSV, including our President chairing CSV Portfolio Committees and our senior management actively participating on these committees to support the effective management of CSV.
Engage earlier with government stakeholders in the legislative process	Continued to provide information to stakeholders and VCAT users regarding legislative change. Ongoing consultations with government departments and statutory agencies continue, where new or amending jurisdiction is conferred on VCAT.

Review and expand the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	Formal analysis of VCAT's investment in ADR being scoped, with the aim of determining where ADR is best used and what other types of matters could benefit from ADR processes.
Drive process improvements in Registry	Commenced a review of VCAT's customer service framework, to improve our processes and systems and provide better service to our users. Commenced program of destroying time-expired records, making better use of our storage capacity.
Expand our use of information technology	Six major online forms being developed and integrated into case management system. On track to deliver new hardware and software to replace outdated versions. Commenced iManage pilot to replace hard copy files in a select group of matters with electronic files. Reviewing implications of expanded access to VCAT Online, opening it to private landlords and tenants.
Strategic Direction 4: Improving Efficiency	
Improve governance arrangements	New risk management framework developed and adopted, including risk identification and treatment strategies, to be implemented from October 2014. Financial accountability framework developed and implementation started, including training of relevant staff. Terms of Reference for all internal committees have been reviewed and endorsed.
Drive process improvements for Listings	Business case being developed for obtaining a new resource management tool for Listings, to simplify and improve the allocation of resources.
Review performance measures and ensure data integrity	Currently undertaking a review of our performance framework, including how we provide performance information to key stakeholders.
Monitor the impact of fee regulations	Regulatory Impact Statement project team established to prepare for the sunseting of the current fee regulations on 30 June 2016. First stage of analysis underway, focusing on the Human Rights Division.
Strategic Direction 5: Investing In Our People	
Improve the way we manage our workforce	External review of VCAT management structure completed and a proposal for a new management structure is currently under IR negotiations. Internal communication strategy developed, endorsed and commenced, including launch of new intranet, VCAT-wide e-newsletter and informal briefings with President and CEO.
Improve training and development opportunities for Members and staff	Learning and Development program currently being developed, focusing on addressing skill gaps and providing new opportunities for professional development. Membership of Staff Development Committee renewed. Planning commenced for annual VCAT conference.
Maintain transparent appraisal processes	Following the transition to CSV, VCAT is maintaining the current Personal Development Plan process in 2014-15.