

Question on Notice

No. 684

Asked on 23 June 2022

MR T NICHOLLS ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND MINISTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON S FENTIMAN) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the release of Hear Her Voice in December 2021—

Will the Attorney-General advise (a) if the Attorney-General has conducted an audit of all courthouses in Queensland for the safety they afford victims, (b) if so, how many courthouses have been identified as needing upgrades and (c) how long it is expected for all upgrades to be completed?

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) delivers court services through a wide range of geographically dispersed facilities including 87 courthouses located across Queensland, of which 65 are DJAG owned.

Since 2016-17, DJAG has completed significant domestic and family violence (DFV) upgrade works at Brisbane Magistrates, Beenleigh, Townsville, Southport, Pine Rivers, Richlands, Palm Island and Blackwater courthouses, with a total value of \$27.06 million. The scope of works included new dedicated DFV courtrooms, secure safe rooms, registries, and associated refurbishment works.

In 2021, DJAG undertook an internal assessment of DFV facilities across the courthouse portfolio. Additionally, DJAG is currently undertaking a comprehensive security and safety audit across DJAG's courthouse portfolio that will include the assessment of victim safety facilities. These two pieces of work will combine to identify and prioritise the courthouses that require future investment to improve victim safety.

A broader strategic program of work is being delivered with DJAG recently finalising a 15-year strategic infrastructure plan for sustainable courthouse infrastructure. This plan sets out an integrated investment strategy to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of Queensland's courthouses and delivery of safe and fair justice services into the future. DJAG's 15-year strategic infrastructure plan will inform a rolling annual program of work and long-term planning to improve victim safety across the courthouse portfolio.

In-line with DJAG's strategic infrastructure plan, from 2022–23 the Government has provided additional funding of \$148.5 million over the next four years, with \$20.4 million recurrently, to invest across the courthouse portfolio, delivering a range of infrastructure improvements and solutions to improve access to justice in Queensland. This funding includes a new courthouse at Beaudesert, delivering a DFV Courthouse Improvement program across eight prioritised locations and funding towards key safety, functionality, and security improvements across the portfolio.

The DFV Courthouse Improvement program commencing in 2022-23, will upgrade DFV facilities at eight courthouses including Toowoomba, Cairns, Maroochydore, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton, Caboolture, and Brisbane. Works include new dedicated DFV courtrooms, secure safe rooms, registries, and associated refurbishment works. The upgrades will provide safety and comfort for victims and their immediate support network when attending court and are anticipated to be completed over the next four years.

This forward investment will significantly improve the safety and security for all court users when attending Queensland's courthouses.

I will continue to work with the Heads of Jurisdiction in relation to the suitability of facilities for courthouses across Queensland.