

MEDIA RELEASE

Victorian Inspectorate welcomes the findings of the Integrity and Oversight Committee's performance report focusing on welfare of witnesses and accepts the recommendations.

Thursday 6 October 2022

The Victorian Inspectorate ('VI') has welcomed the findings of the report tabled today by the Integrity and Oversight Committee into the welfare of witnesses and accepts the recommendations in full.

The VI participated in the Integrity and Oversight Committee's ('IOC') inquiry into the performance of Victorian integrity agencies focusing on witness welfare on 9 May 2022, and it welcomes the findings of the report tabled today, 'Performance of the Victorian integrity agencies 2020/21: focus on witness welfare' which makes a valuable contribution in this most important area.

The IOC found that "the VI is committed to improving not only the standard of witness welfare management in the integrity agencies it oversees, but also in its own agency, by leading 'by example'."

The VI acknowledges the IOC's recommendations and accepts them in full, with a commitment to reporting back to the IOC on their implementation. The recommendations are: to improve the VI's case management system to better identify, record, analyse and report welfare risks; to use independent expertise to review and improve its welfare policy; to inquire into the feasibility of inhouse expertise and provide witnesses with free counselling services; and to introduce a timeliness performance measure for complaints.

The VI is committed to the continuous improvement of its operational processes and to improving its own expertise in welfare management.

The VI is pleased that the findings of the IOC's report have come after the VI initially shone the light on the focus of witness welfare in its [2018 Special Report, 'Welfare of witnesses in IBAC investigations'](#). The impact of the VI's Special Report is ongoing, ensuring witness welfare is embedded into investigation processes across the integrity system.

"We have always been acutely aware of the importance of witness welfare as evidenced from our 2018 special report. We welcome the recommendations as they relate to the VI and will work towards fully implementing them." Eamonn Moran, Inspector PSM KC

The VI has consistently championed the important focus of welfare management in the course of core functions across the Victorian integrity system and taken steps towards educating integrity agencies about their obligations and the broader community about their rights.

The VI recognises that integrity investigations are an inherently distressing process. The work of the VI in advocating for the welfare of witnesses, complainants, and persons of interest across the integrity system is to help minimise this distress.

“No matter who the witness is, or why they are being investigated, integrity agencies must demonstrate a regard for their welfare.” Eamonn Moran, Inspector PSM KC.

For media enquiries, please contact communications@vicinspectorate.vic.gov.au or Ginevra Johnson, Senior Communications Officer on 0457 105 620