

MOORABBIN JUSTICE CENTRE

It's great to be here at the 10th Anniversary of the Moorabbin Justice Centre and I want to thank all those who organized this event and in particular Magistrate Anne Goldsbrough for inviting me to say a few words.

Of course I want to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and I pay my respects to their elders, past and present and any elders that may be here today.

I also want to acknowledge the Attorney-General, and my former Parliamentary Colleague, Martin Pakula for being here today.

Wow, 10 years ago, almost to the day, when the old Gas and Fuel site on this location was finally transformed into a State of the Art Justice Centre and opened its doors on the 29th of October 2007. As AG at the time I remember it well.

You know, I had a pretty simple philosophy as Attorney-General....pretty simple, pretty basic...a bit like me really!

That philosophy was that, where possible, the justice system, including our Courts, including this place, should be a positive intervention in people's lives.

As we know, a person's life can proceed along a path, and from time to time they will have their ups and their downs; their highs and their lows. Who knows, they might get their first job, or buy their first car or have kids and that will be exciting and put them on a high. Then they might lose that job, or car or there could be a tragedy in the family, and that will be a real low in their life that could lead to anxiety, depression, perhaps even drug or alcohol or some other form of addiction and then they might come into contact with the justice system.

Well my view was that when that contact with the justice system occurred, it should be a moment in time to take stock, and try and get their lives back on track.

That's why I'm an advocate for therapeutic and restorative justice practices. I am a firm believer in the justice system and the courts in particular, providing holistic, wrap-around services for people who so desperately need them.

You see unless we take this holistic, problem solving approach and address the underlying causes of why people come into contact with "the system", then as a community we will end up spending more money on prison beds than hospital beds or school classrooms. We will continue to warehouse people in our ever

expanding prisons...people who have an acquired brain injury, who have mental health issues, who are addicted to substances, who commit offences as a result of being victims of family violence, who are members of our Koori community.

The Moorabbin Justice Centre is a shining example of embracing this holistic, much smarter approach to justice. Whether it be its specialist Family Violence response, including mandated mens behaviour change programs, its Childrens Court, including the Family Division, the forthcoming roll out of the ARC list, the multi-jurisdictional nature of its work, its ability to engage with local Councils and its large multi-cultural community, this Justice Centre is a leader in innovative justice service delivery.

And the reason for that lies in the passion, the commitment the innovative thinking and the desire to serve the community that comes from our magistrates.

We often hear some so called media experts describe judicial officers generally and magistrates in particular as being out of touch and not knowing what is happening in the real world. Well nothing could be further from the truth.

The real world, whether we like it or not, whether we want to admit it or not, consists of people who are victims of abuse, and people who dish out that abuse, people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol and people who traffic those drugs, people who have an

acquired brain injury and people who have contributed to that injury, people who have mental health issues, people who are homeless, people who are discriminated against and people who discriminate, people who are being sued and people who sue.

Through the doors of this Justice Centre on a daily basis, and every Magistrate's Court for that matter, come such people.

Judicial officers at this Centre and right around this State, are at the epicenter of reality. They are more in touch with the real world than most of us. They work diligently and passionately to address difficult real world problems. They strive to make our communities better....and for that we owe them a real debt of gratitude.

To the Moorabbin Justice Centre and all who work tirelessly within her, I say Happy 10th Birthday and may you have many more.