



Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry

MEDIA RELEASE

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CHILD PROTECTION INQUIRY STARTS REGIONAL SITTINGS

The Inquiry into child protection has begun holding Public Sittings across regional Victoria as part of its extensive community consultation, starting in Geelong today.

The Chair of the Inquiry, former Supreme Court Judge the Hon. Philip Cummins said it is proposed that the Geelong Public Sitting will be followed over the next two to three months by Sittings in Ballarat, Bendigo, Morwell, Shepparton and in metropolitan locations such as Melbourne, Broadmeadows, Dandenong and Werribee.

"We will now start our Public Sittings across all parts of the State and we invite anyone wishing to make a verbal Submission to come when we are holding one in their region," Mr Cummins said.

The *Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry* was announced by the Victorian Government earlier this year to develop recommendations for improving the overall child protection service system and strengthening the protection of children who are at risk of, or have experienced abuse. The Panel will be providing a Report to the Minister for Community Services by 4 November 2011. The Report will be tabled in Parliament.

Mr Cummins said the Inquiry began the process by inviting written Submissions from individuals and organisations, which formally closed on 29 April 2011.

He said the Panel, which includes Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott OAM and Mr Bill Scales AO, is looking forward to the opportunity to visit different parts of the State and hear the community's views on how the service system can be strengthened and improved.

Although written Submissions have formally closed, the Inquiry will receive Submissions at any stage of the process. However, the Panel's ability to adequately consider Submissions received after the due date will obviously be limited.

Written Submissions will be published on the Inquiry website by 1 July.

For more information on the Inquiry, the Submissions process and upcoming Public Sittings, visit www.childprotectioninquiry.vic.gov.au

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