



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Role for Hearing Rooms

Victoria's courts system will get a major boost when the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission completes its inquiry into Black Saturday.

Acting Premier and Attorney General Rob Hulls announced today that the Department of Justice will take over the Commission's hearings rooms and offices at 222 Exhibition Street.

Welcoming today's announcement, the CEO of the Commission, Ms Jane Brockington, said the hearings rooms represented a substantial investment and the Commission had been working for some time to find a suitable new tenant.

"The Commission is delighted the hearing rooms will have a continuing use," she said.

The hearing rooms are some of the newest and most technologically advanced of their kind in Australia and incorporate integrated information management, audio visual and web streaming systems.

"There wasn't a suitable facility available in Melbourne when the Commission got underway," said Ms Brockington. "We needed the capacity and flexibility to cope with an enormous volume of material and a large number of witnesses over more than 140 days of hearings."

She said the purpose-built hearing rooms and embedded e-court technology had greatly enhanced the work of the Commission and they will now be a valuable addition to the judicial infrastructure of Victoria.

The Commission's hearings will conclude next week and its final report will be delivered to the Victorian Government on 31 July.