

Statement

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General



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STATEMENT FROM ATTORNEY-GENERAL JILL HENNESSY

This tough year has prompted many Victorians to think about their lives, their families, and the things that are most important to them.

Political life can be hard on families. Mine is at a stage where they need more of me and even more importantly, I need more of them. Like everyone managing the collision between work and family life, sometimes something has to give, at least for a little while.

I have decided to step back from my ministerial role in the Andrews Labor Government and will focus on representing my wonderful constituents across the Altona District. I intend to recontest the 2022 State election, and with their continued trust, hope to continue to serve these terrific communities well into the future.

I do so for no other reason than to be more involved in the lives of my two daughters as they move through the last years of high school. They are wonderful smart girls becoming young women and despite the growing level of teenage sass, they continue to be my greatest source of joy.

With the conclusion of the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants, key legislative reforms to decriminalise public drunkenness, a spent convictions scheme and ban on change or suppression conversion practices introduced into Parliament – as well as key budget initiatives now rolling out – the time is right to step back.

I've made this decision with the help of my friend, a knowing dad of teenage children himself, Dan Andrews. We have discussed this for some time. He has demonstrated his support for colleagues through various stages of their life journeys before, and I am particularly grateful to him for his wise counsel, compassion and understanding about my decision.

I cannot thank him enough for his leadership, care and support. This year has been an extraordinarily tough one for all Victorians. In the Premier they have had someone absolutely dedicated to protecting their health and I look forward to returning that support as a member of the team focussed on our COVID recovery, particularly in Melbourne's west.

Under his leadership, Victoria is delivering the infrastructure, skills and jobs our state needs to be a high skill, high wage, jobs generator. We're building strong and connected communities who care for each other, all while strengthening fairness.

The Premier has provided me with the opportunity and support to be part of ground-breaking reforms in a Government that has put people first.

Issues such as voluntary assisted dying, safe access zones for women's health services, childhood vaccination, medicinal cannabis, nurse and midwife to patient ratios, wage theft, workplace manslaughter, holding perpetrators of child sexual abuse to account, and drug courts – and for that I am thankful.

However, none of these things would be possible without the support and collaboration of a strong team. I thank my Cabinet and caucus colleagues for their support and drive to deliver for all Victorians.

I have also been served by not only the best and brightest, but the most compassionate and dedicated staff. Their contribution to our reform agenda has been first class and I can't thank them enough for their extraordinary service.

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My devoted Chief of Staff for the past six years, Chris McDermott has been both a brilliant leader and wonderful human being. He has been integral to any success I have had, the success of the Government and his work has made a real difference to the lives of many Victorians.

I also acknowledge and thank the many dedicated and professional public servants with whom I have had the great pleasure to work.

My career has been a series of zigzags around the real stuff of life. There are many people juggling the demands of work with trying to be a good parent, partner or person. I am honoured to work with and know a lot of people, especially many amazing women, who do this every day with far less support than I have.

My husband has been tireless in his support of my career and time as a Minister in this government. I want to thank him for all that he has done and continues to do.

This year has made all of us think about what the “new normal” is, post coronavirus. I need a new normal for the challenges and priorities of the next period of my life – balanced with my passion to represent and deliver outcomes for community. That is why I have made this decision to take a step back, not a step down. I am so grateful for the privilege that has allowed me to make this choice, which is the right one for me and my family.

It has been the greatest of honours to serve as the Attorney-General – the opportunity to serve in these roles is something I have never taken for granted and I will continue to bring the same passion, dedication and service to the people of Altona.

This year has had an impact on every single Victorian, across every aspect of their lives and everyone is doing the best they can in an unprecedented and challenging set of circumstances. The strength and resilience Victorians have shown has been nothing short of amazing and I hope you all get the opportunity to relax, take stock and spend time with the people you love.