



Cubby House

Providing comfort for children dealing with traumatic family situations

An award-winning, Australian-first initiative providing a customised safe space for children under the care of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) at the Broadmeadows Children's Court and Melbourne Children's Court.

Staffed by a qualified and experienced youth worker from the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, the Cubby House aims to reduce the effects of trauma associated with attending court by providing a safe, calm and engaging space for children and young people who have been removed from their home because they are at risk.

In traditional court environments, children are often placed in a room with few amenities and minimal comfort or entertainment, which can be highly negative and an unsuitable environment for traumatised children and young people.

The Cubby House plays a critical role in promoting wellbeing and reducing trauma and conflict by providing an environment where children and young people feel relaxed and at ease. It is adjacent to a work space for DHHS Child Protection staff where they can monitor their clients and maintain their duty of care while at court.

An external evaluation found that the Cubby House:

"significantly improves the experience of spending time at court for young people in emergency care", that "it enhances children's capacity to provide instructions to their lawyer in a calm and relaxed state", and "improves productivity and efficiency for court staff, child protection staff and lawyers".

The Cubby House also provides Australia with the opportunity to be at the forefront of this new child-centered design approach – and approach to care – in a Children's Court.

The Cubby House has been developed in partnership with, and with the continued support of, the Broadmeadows Children's Court, the Melbourne Children's Court, the Department of Health and Human Services of Victoria and Court Services Victoria.