

Sexual Offence Expert Evidence Panel (the Panel)

Frequently asked questions about the Panel

General

What is the Panel?

A list of suitably qualified experts who have been assessed by the Chief Executive of the Department of Justice (DoJ) or delegate as having the expertise required to conduct assessments, write expert reports and give relevant evidence in sexual violence proceedings. Initially, the Panel consists of the following professions:

- psychiatrists;
- neuropsychologists; and
- psychologists.

The names and details of appointed Panel experts will not be communicated publicly by the Program Team. Requesting parties will be advised of the name, professional background and contact details of their matched expert on a case-by-case basis.

What are the benefits of utilising the Panel?

The Panel has two important but distinct functions, they are:

- to ensure that people with cognitive and mental health impairments are not unfairly disadvantaged by the introduction of a requirement that they demonstrate that they said or did something to affirm consent (Stream 1); and
- to address misconceptions about consent and sexual violence with the aim of reducing the risk that juries will use their own biases to reach conclusions not supported by evidence (Stream 2).

Stream 1 operations commenced on 3 February 2025. A date for the commencement of Stream 2 has not yet been finalised. The Panel is operating as a pilot program.

Who is eligible to access the Panel?

The following parties can make a referral

- The prosecution.
- The defence including self-represented defendants.
- The court (for Stream 2 operations only).

The Panel can be accessed in proceedings for offences against chapter 22 (Stream 1 and 2) and 32 (Stream 2) of the [Criminal Code](#) in specified courts in Brisbane or Townsville.

What are the benefits of utilising the Panel

The Panel will increase parties access to expert evidence for sexual offences in specified Courts in Brisbane and Townsville. The services of Panel experts – undertaking assessments of defendant's, writing reports and giving expert testimony in court - will be provided free of charge for eligible matters.

What if I am representing myself?

Self-represented defendants can self-refer to the Panel. The Program Team can provide additional support and guidance to self-represented defendants who want access to an expert on the Panel.

Do I need to pay to use the Panel?

No. Accessing an expert on the Panel is free for all eligible proceedings in Brisbane and Townsville.

A party outside of Panel locations is not precluded from seeking an expert outside of the pilot locations at their own expense.

What will the expert do?

- provide a report of their findings to the requesting party and be available to give objective, unbiased expert evidence in court on matters within the expert's specialised knowledge; AND
- meet with the defendant to assess their cognitive and/or mental health impairment and its impact on their ability to say or do something to affirm consent (Stream 1); OR
- give evidence about the nature of sexual offences and evidence about the social, psychological and cultural factors that may affect the behaviour of a complainant in a sexual offence (Stream 2)

What is the Program Team?

The Program team are a team of DoJ employees who are responsible for:

- recruiting and maintaining a list of experts to be included on the Panel;
- matching experts to matters based on the expert's field of expertise and the facts of a case;
- managing the Panel referral process;
- developing and delivering training to Panel experts; and
- administrative functions associated with all aspects of the Panel.

Who will see information about me and my case?

The requesting party, the Program Team and the expert.

The Program Team, and experts on the Panel must treat personal information received verbally or in writing with the utmost confidentiality in accordance Queensland and national privacy laws.

The Program Team will provide the expert matched to your case with information obtained from the referral form. The requesting party will be responsible for providing the expert with detailed instructions and additional information relating to the party or offence(s) subject to the proceeding.

On completion, the expert will provide their written report **directly to the requesting party** and not to the Program Team or other party to the proceeding.

The referral process

How do I make a referral to the Panel?

Use the referral form on the Sexual Offence Expert Evidence Panel webpage at

<https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/services/sexual-offence-expert-evidence-panel>



What happens after I have lodged my referral?

Referrals will be reviewed by the Program Team, who will identify the most appropriate expert based on the information provided the written referral form completed by the requesting party.

When undertaking the matching process, considerations will include, but are not limited to, the expert's field of expertise, their availability, and other matters specific to the facts of the case, such as the cultural or diversity factors or conflicts of interest.

Expert/s will be matched to a case within 10 business days. The Program Team will then provide the details of the matter and a Letter of Engagement to the expert. Once the expert has returned the signed Letter of Engagement, the Program Team will provide the requesting party with the contact details of the expert and the requesting party will then provide the Panel expert with detailed instructions and other information/materials relevant to the engagement.

What if my referral is refused?

If you make a referral and you are not eligible to access the Panel, the Program Team will notify you.

Applying to be an expert on the Panel

Who can apply to be an expert on the Panel?

Suitably qualified professionals with specialist skills and knowledge in assessing mental health and cognitive impairments and/or the impact of sexual violence on complainants and the community generally.

Applicants must:

- be able to demonstrate specialist knowledge, gained by their training, study or experience;
- be experienced in writing court reports;
- understand how culture, race, ethnicity, age, disability and other intersectionality's impact upon individuals and the community generally; and
- have specialist knowledge and experience in dealing with matters that involve sexual offending.

Applicants must NOT have:

- been the subject of professional discipline;
- been denied, or removed from, professional registration; or
- have a criminal history that indicates a lack of suitability to give relevant evidence about a defendant in a relevant proceeding.

How do I apply to be an expert on the Panel?

If you are submitting an application under a rolling recruitment process, you should submit your application directly to the Program Team at SDLCS.EEP@justice.qld.gov.au

If you are submitting an application as part of a procurement process, you should follow all the instructions on the VendorPanel website.

Troubleshooting

I am having trouble submitting my application or a referral

If you are unable to submit a document or the attachment is not uploading, confirm that:

- all attachments are in the correct format: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, .png, .xls, and .xlsx;
- the size of each document is not more than 100MB; and



If these steps do not rectify the issue, please contact the Program Team for assistance.

Is assistance available when making a referral?

Yes. Please contact the Program Team by:

- calling (07) 3564 7748 or
- via email on SDLCS.EEP@justice.qld.gov.au

