

COURT
SERVICES
QUEENSLAND

STRATEGIC PLAN
2018 - 2021





Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Court Services Queensland would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land upon which we live and work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Accessibility

Court Services Queensland is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. To receive this publication in an accessible format, contact 13QGOV (13 7468) and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you.

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Message from the Deputy Director-General, Justice Services

Court Services Queensland (CSQ) has an important role in the delivery of justice in Queensland.

Across the State, over 1,000 skilled and dedicated staff work to deliver a range of services which support our independent judiciary.

We deal with matters that affect every facet of life in Queensland and have a significant impact on the communities in which we operate. Reflecting Queensland's dispersed geography, we deliver court services in 117 locations. In some communities we are one of a handful of government agencies providing face to face services. This places us in a unique position.

We are also operating in an increasingly complex environment, where the communities' expectations about what services we deliver and how we deliver them is changing. New technology brings both benefits and challenges to our service delivery.

In developing our CSQ Strategic Plan it has been important to recognise the diversity of our community, changing expectations and this increasing complexity. We need to be focussed on delivering and contributing to outcomes for the communities in which we operate. It is important that we think carefully about how we will deliver services which are sustainable, accessible and modern, enabling people to fully participate in the justice system both now and into the future. In doing this, we contribute to a society which is safe, vibrant and fair.

The Queensland Government has set clear priorities for the future of Queensland, including a commitment to Keep Communities Safe and Be a Responsive Government. CSQ has a central role to play keeping communities safe by ensuring Queensland Courts operate to uphold the law and deliver justice. This Strategic Plan highlights not only CSQ's critical role in supporting safe communities, but also our commitment to ensuring that court services are accessible and meet the current and future needs of all Queenslanders.

Our Strategic Plan is the culmination of a significant body of work in which many of you will have participated. Thank you to those of you who have been part of this process. I expect that our Strategic Plan will enrich the way in which we do business and provide a template for future action.



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Jennifer Lang
Deputy Director-General,
Justice Services

Message from the Executive Directors of Court Services Queensland

Court Services Queensland (CSQ) was established in 2012 to support the judiciary to deliver justice in Queensland. As the CSQ Executive Directors, we are proud to be leading and shaping the future of court operations through innovation, insight and commitment. We gain immense satisfaction from contributing to a court system which continually evolves to deliver justice focussed solutions to the community and court users. However, it must be recognised that CSQ operates in an environment marked by rising demand for our services and increasing complexity of the matters that come to court.

This Strategic Plan looks at how we can maximise the public value delivered by our operations. In developing this Plan, our focus was to ensure CSQ offers accessible, quality, efficient and affordable services to all court users. It addresses some of the greater known challenges like advancing technology and changing expectations of court users to which CSQ must respond to ensure our services are sustainable and stay relevant.

We take this opportunity to thank staff for helping to develop and implement this Plan which captures your enthusiasm to improve our business.

We look forward to making our 2018-21 Strategic Plan a reality.



As the CSQ Executive Directors, we are proud to be leading and shaping the future of court operations through innovation, insight and commitment.



Julie Steel
Executive Director Supreme,
District and Land Courts'
Service



Brigita Cunnington
Executive Director
Magistrates Courts Service



Stephanie Attard
Executive Director Reform
and Support Services

Our Organisation at a Glance

Court Services Queensland provides all Queenslanders with direct, timely and affordable access to justice.

Our services are centred on our court users, and we are focussed on delivering fair, timely, accessible and high-quality justice solutions for all Queenslanders.

The independence of the courts is central to maintaining public trust and confidence in our justice system. Our purpose is to support an independent judiciary. We do this by providing a range of services that underpin the judicial, quasi-judicial and administrative functions of Queensland's courts.

Independent Courts

The independence of the judiciary and courts is integral to the way we operate. Each court operates independently of government and the executive, while we operate within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG). We play a unique role in bringing together the judiciary and diverse partners within the justice system to deliver exceptional court services across Queensland.

Our work ensures the independence of Queensland's judicial functions is preserved and maintained. Working with the judiciary to ensure access to justice and confidence in the justice system is central to what we do.

We have informal and formal channels for engaging with the judiciary to seek judicial input into the administrative operations of the courts.

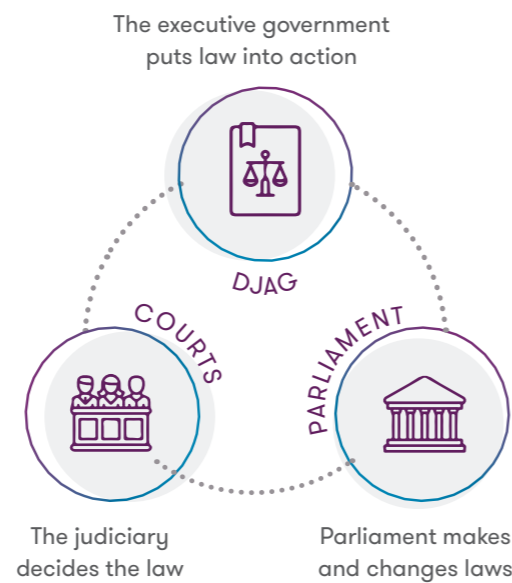
Our Services

Court Services Queensland delivers a range of services that support independent judicial decision-making.

Our services include case management, registry services, transcription services, victim support services, court referral and support programs, and community engagement initiatives.

We also work collaboratively with our partners to provide a client focused justice response to address social issues through a range of specialist courts and other court programs, for example, the specialist domestic and family violence court and the Murri Court. These courts and programs aim to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, connect defendants with service providers and help keep victims safe.

Most importantly, we are working hard to make things better for our court users. We recognise our court services must put the needs of our court users first, so that people who come into the system have access to the most timely, appropriate, and affordable court services.



Our services at a glance

202,160

criminal defendant cases lodged in the Magistrates Court

32,072

domestic violence applications lodged in the Magistrates Court

6,937

criminal defendant cases lodged in the District Court

73,352

civil claims were lodged across all Queensland courts

2,740

criminal defendant cases lodged in the Supreme Court (including appeals)

10,686

applications for probate were lodged in the Supreme Court

*2016-17 financial year

Our People

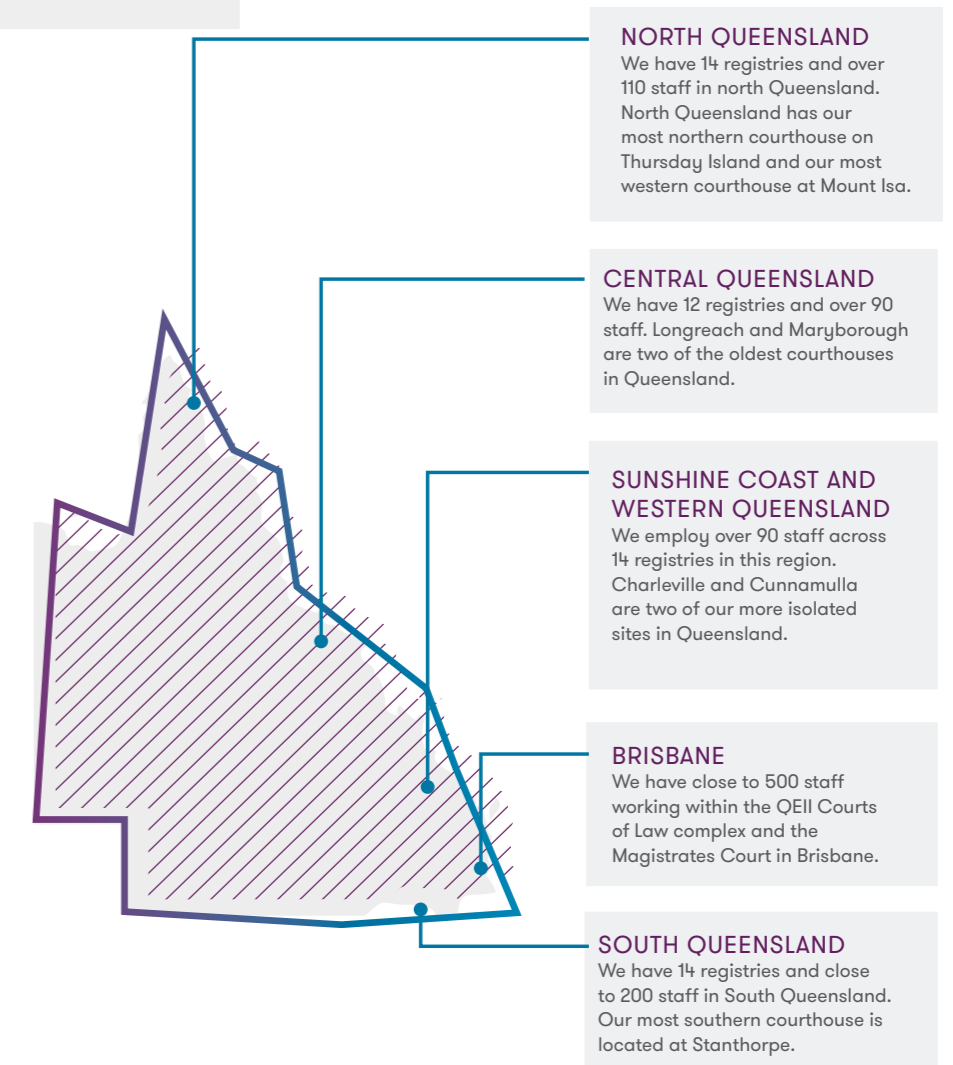
Court Services Queensland's success is driven by our talented and dedicated workforce. We have close to over 1,000 staff located across metropolitan, regional and rural Queensland. Our officers are employed by DJAG but many also perform quasi-judicial functions and do so as officers of the court.

We empower staff, so that Court Services Queensland can perform at its best and deliver what the government, businesses, the community and court users expect from us.

Our Locations

We deliver our services from a network of courthouses and community justice centres across Queensland. We operate at 117 locations in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas across Queensland.

Our services are geographically dispersed, and we have strong local connections in the communities in which we serve. We have broad reach and provide forums for people to connect with the right services, wherever they are in Queensland.



Our Drivers For Change

Queensland is experiencing significant demographic, social and economic changes. More than ever, Queensland needs a strong and enduring justice system that sustains and fosters social stability and economic growth.

Increasing and sustained demand for our court services in recent years is causing significant workload pressures for the courts and registry staff. More cases each with more charges in a complex legislative environment are creating challenges for the criminal justice system.

At the same time, issues in the civil jurisdiction are becoming more complex and taking longer to resolve. As such, Queensland's civil justice system needs to adapt to ensure that each matter takes the most appropriate, timely and cost-effective path through the system.

Government and community expectations influence the way services are delivered. Queenslanders expect higher-quality, more timely and individualised services. New technology and digital media are also creating opportunities for courts and the broader justice system to change the way we interact and engage with the community.

We will need to think deeply about how we can continue to evolve our court services to meet future service needs. We must continuously adapt to changing demands and expectations, and seize opportunities to improve. This is what Queenslanders expect from us, and it's what they deserve from their justice system.

A CHANGING QUEENSLAND



Queensland's major cities are **growing**. Rural-urban migration over the next decade will have a significant impact on communities and **change the way services are accessed** and delivered.



Changing and more complex patterns of crime and criminal behaviour are pressing our justice system to **continually evolve to meet community safety needs**.



Persistent and entrenched disadvantage is prevalent across some parts of Queensland. These areas often have high levels of disengaged youth, long-term unemployment and higher rates of crime.

EVOLUTION OF OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM



Queensland is experiencing **increasing and sustained service demand** across all areas of the justice system. In 2016-17, **criminal lodgements increased** in most jurisdictions compared to the previous year.



Issues within the justice system are becoming **more complex**. Problems that come before courts often have **broader social causes**, and matters in the justice system often have economic, environmental and societal interdependencies.



Digital transformation is impacting all areas of the justice sector. The public want to see **more technology-based services** used that are timely, transparent, affordable and accessible.

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS



Community expectations that government will provide **high-quality, integrated services** will continue to grow. The public sector is looking for ways to **better join up** strategic policy making and service delivery.



Government and community service organisations are moving towards **local approaches** to designing services that are **more agile and responsive** to individual needs and community aspirations.



Good government policy and service delivery must clearly **demonstrate its value** to the community. Outcomes that public sector organisations deliver need to be **identifiable and measurable**.





Delivering Public Value

Court Services Queensland is committed to ensuring our courts inspire confidence in the justice system.

Over the next three years, we will be working hard to make sure we can deliver on this commitment so that 5 million Queenslanders have access to high-quality, accessible, timely and affordable court services.

Queenslanders deserve a modern and agile justice system that delivers public value to individuals, families, communities, the economy, and the environment. Working closely with the judiciary is central to creating this public value and achieving our vision and strategic outcomes.

This Strategic Plan outlines our approach to making a positive difference for all Queenslanders. We strive to achieve the following public value outcomes:

Fair and just communities

All people across our diverse communities are

recognised as equal under the law and are treated fairly. Our open, transparent and accountable processes mean we are trusted by our communities to protect rights and uphold the law fairly and impartially.

Communities where rights are protected

Queenslanders value their quality of life and should be confident that their rights and liberties are protected. All Queenslanders have equal access to our courts and court services. We work with our partners in the justice ecosystem to promote fair outcomes, support everyone's right to resolve disputes, and improve access to justice everywhere.

A prosperous and thriving society

The ability to resolve civil and commercial disputes effectively is the cornerstone of Queensland's economic prosperity and social cohesion. Our civil justice system sustains and fosters social stability and economic growth. Confidence in our strong dispute resolution processes supports the way individuals, businesses and government interact and participate in our economy.

A safe and peaceful society

Our effective criminal justice system ensures communities are safe. It is an integral part of what makes Queensland a great place to live. Our court services and our partners in Queensland's criminal justice system work together to maintain a just, peaceful and safe society, so that Queenslanders can plan for and live their lives as they choose.

An Overview of Our Strategic Plan

Our Vision

Courts that inspire confidence in the justice system

Our Mission

Protecting rights and upholding the law fairly and impartially

Our Strategic Outcomes



OUTCOME 1

Contemporary and accessible court services and independent courts



OUTCOME 2

A diverse, dynamic and high-performing workforce



OUTCOME 3

A modern and agile organisation



OUTCOME 4

A whole of justice system approach



OUTCOME 1

CONTEMPORARY AND ACCESSIBLE COURT SERVICES AND INDEPENDENT COURTS

Shifting community expectations are influencing the way we deliver services to the Queensland community. Our goal over the next three years is to make sure our court services are contemporary and accessible to ensure the security, safety and wellbeing of the community.



Our Priorities

Providing contemporary and customer-centric court services

We believe that court services must keep up with change and adapt to new and emerging trends. We will continually improve our services so that they meet the evolving expectations and needs of Queensland's diverse communities.

Delivering accessible, equitable and timely court services

Queensland is a unique state with geographically dispersed communities. Our court services will be accessible and cost effective, providing court users with different ways of accessing our services, and connecting people with the services they need.

Maintaining confidence in the integrity and independence of the courts

Integrity and independence of the courts is integral to the way we operate. We will continue to support the judiciary in exercising its independence and deliver solutions that support the judicial decision-making process.

Keeping our courts safe for everyone

Delivering contemporary and accessible services requires court facilities that are safe and fit for purpose. In the years ahead we will invest in our court facilities and systems to provide a safe environment.

Our Actions

- > Conduct research and gather a robust evidence base to better profile demand for our court services.
- > Engage with the community to understand what accessibility and contemporary service looks like to them.
- > Enhance the management of our court assets to more effectively meet present community needs and future demand.
- > Design and tailor our services to meet the needs of diverse communities across metropolitan, rural and regional Queensland.
- > Assess the future safety needs of our court facilities and explore enhancements to security practices.

When We Achieve This Outcome...

- > The community will be able to access the court services they need.
- > Our rural and regional communities will be connected with timely, relevant services.
- > Our courts will be safe and fit for purpose.
- > Queenslanders will have a fair and accessible justice system, which respects and protects the independence of the judiciary.

Our Strategy In Action

Court Services Queensland has been the driving force behind significant reforms to strengthen the justice system's response to ending domestic and family violence (DFV).

We have trialled a specialist DFV courts in Southport. The court deals exclusively with all civil and criminal DFV matters in the Magistrates Court and is supported by a DFV registry. Following the success of the trial, the Southport DFV court has been made permanent and specialist DFV courts are now being rolled out in other locations across Queensland.

They offer specialised services that prioritise victim safety and ensure people have access to advice and are supported to participate in the court processes.

We have worked with community groups and people who have experienced DFV to co-design our services. This includes improving our domestic violence order forms, making them simpler and more intuitive.

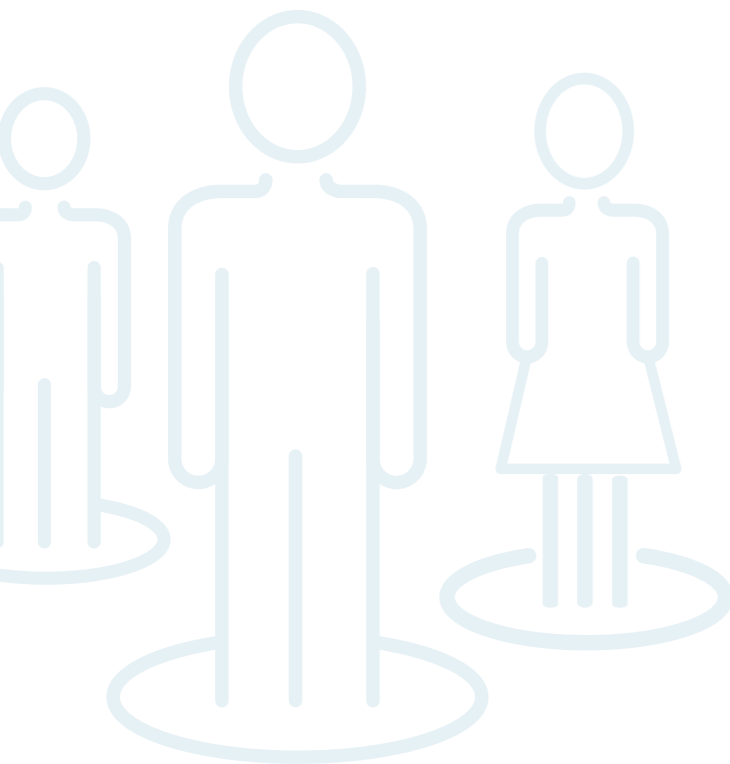
We have also produced digital education programs to present DFV court processes and information in a way that is easy to understand.



OUTCOME 2

A DIVERSE, DYNAMIC AND HIGH-PERFORMING WORKFORCE

Our passionate and committed workforce is the backbone of our organisation. Our people are valued, supported and empowered, and we continue to promote diversity and flexibility in our workforce. We believe it is important that every person at Court Services Queensland feels connected to and understands our purpose.



Our Priorities

Embracing innovation and high-performance

We will ensure our people feel connected and work as one to deliver on our strategic outcomes. We will empower our people to make decisions and be innovative. As a high-performing organisation, we will ensure our people develop the skills to succeed.

Keeping our people safe

We take the wellbeing of our people seriously, and we want to protect their wellbeing and provide them with a safe and supportive working environment.

Reflecting the community's diversity

We are committed to building an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve. We will strengthen our workforce planning practices to promote a workplace that is inclusive and encourages diversity.

Embedding an ethical working culture

Our people are the heart of our organisation. We aim to embed an ethical working culture where our people are valued. We are committed to achieving the highest ethical standards in all that we do.

Our Actions

Create systems that enable our people to develop their individual skills and experience satisfying career paths.

- > Shape our workforce profile and build the capabilities needed to be a high-performing organisation.
- > Nurture our organisation's values and behaviours, and explore how we live our values in our work.
- > Introduce employee wellbeing initiatives and programs that strengthen the health and safety of our workforce.
- > Develop and embed our performance management systems and enhance internal communication.
- > Explore opportunities to encourage and sustain employee innovation.

When We Achieve This Outcome...

- > Our staff will feel safe, supported and connected at work.
- > Our people will be equipped with the skills needed for the future.
- > Our workforce will reflect the community's diversity.
- > Our staff will embrace their potential to help transform our court services with their ideas.

Our Strategy In Action

In 2017, Court Services Queensland staff across Queensland participated in a series of three workshops to promote building positive workplace behaviours and encourage ongoing team conversations about team behaviours and culture. These workshops were in response to the 2016 Employee Opinion Survey results which identified a number of staff who reported being subject to or having witnessed incidents of bullying and harassment. The workshops involved team talks with court staff and their managers.

The first workshop focussed on raising awareness about bullying and harassment to help staff recognise and report inappropriate behaviour. The second workshop focussed on helping team members to manage their own behaviours during periods of high stress or conflict. The final workshop in the series focussed on designing positive workplace behaviours with the team developing agreed team behaviour standards.

The training was rolled out to all court staff in 2017.



OUTCOME 3

A MODERN AND AGILE ORGANISATION

As the Queensland justice system evolves and adapts to new challenges, innovation and creativity will translate good ideas into meaningful change. Working towards our priorities and actions over the next three years will help our organisation to be modern, agile and innovative, and support our leadership to respond to change.

Our Priorities

Simple work practices and less red tape

Reducing administrative workloads and simplifying our processes will open up opportunities to modernise and innovate. We will ensure our processes are efficient, and explore opportunities to streamline our work.

Responding to change

Changes in our society have a direct impact on our court services. We will change the way we do things to meet the continuously evolving needs and expectations of our society.

A sustainable organisation

Being a sustainable public value organisation means carefully managing our impact on the environment, community, society, and economy. We are committed to building an organisation that is sustainable and delivers enduring public value. We will enhance our business practices to deliver high-quality services, and strengthen the management of our strategic investments.

Investing in technology and systems

Embracing new technology will help us to adapt and innovate. Our strategic outcomes will push investments in new technology and digital capabilities, which will support and deliver court services for the future.

Our Actions

- › Ensure our organisational structure evolves to keep pace with our operational demands, strategic priorities and resourcing needs.
- › Embed change management practices across the business to better implement major projects.
- › Enhance our financial modelling and forecasting practices and deepen the evidence base to provide better business insights.
- › Explore smarter ways of doing business so that we are building sustainable, consistent and high-quality work practices for the future.
- › Enhance our IT systems and digital capability to better support access to and delivery of our services.
- › Streamline our issue and risk management processes.

When We Achieve This Outcome...

- › We will have fit-for-purpose systems and processes.
- › We will have a strong evidence base to support informed decision making.
- › We will understand our resourcing requirements and ensure Courts has a sustainable business model.

Our Strategy In Action

Matters involving child witnesses are complex. We take great care in protecting child witnesses and ensure they are supported through all parts of the justice system.

In Queensland, we have made significant changes to child witness procedures so that child witnesses feel safe, and have the care they need. Evidence of child witnesses is pre-recorded before a judge. The evidence of an affected child witness must be pre-recorded from a remote witness room and care is taken to ensure that all pre-trial hearings are completed before that occurs.

Our court services have quickly adapted to facilitate these reforms. Court Services Queensland invested in specialised IT systems and equipment to facilitate the pre-recording of evidence of child witnesses.

We also work alongside independent agencies and community service organisations to provide further support for child witnesses.

Court Services Queensland continues to research new technology to further enhance this process to efficiently and sensitively handle evidence involving child witnesses.



OUTCOME 4

A WHOLE OF JUSTICE SYSTEM APPROACH

Addressing the complex issues Queenslanders face today requires a shift so that government systems are structured around the needs of people and communities. Our commitment to a whole of justice system approach ensures we are working alongside our partners in Queensland's justice ecosystem to deliver services that make a positive difference for all Queenslanders.



Our Priorities

Delivering person-centred justice solutions

Queenslanders want to see people at the centre of service delivery. We will work hard to tailor our services enabling us to respond directly to the needs of individuals and communities.

Contributing to justice system outcomes

Our court services provide pathways to fair and equitable outcomes for all Queenslanders. We will contribute to civil, criminal and social justice outcomes and will identify what success looks like for the communities we serve.

Supporting meaningful engagement and partnerships

We will build stronger connections within and outside government, including with everyone who accesses our services. We will engage in a meaningful way with the community and bring all of our partners together to contribute to an integrated justice system.

Thinking differently about how government works

We need to work with our service partners in a more connected and innovative way to find solutions to complex issues in our justice system. We will find new ways of working within government so that people can connect and interact with the justice system more easily and effectively.

Our Actions

- > Create opportunities to engage with our stakeholders to strengthen Queensland's court services and deliver joined-up solutions for our communities.
- > Strengthen community engagement so that we harness the unique perspectives and deep local knowledge of our diverse communities.
- > Embed evidence-based thinking and decision making in our governance arrangements and work practices.
- > Explore opportunities to articulate the public value we deliver.
- > Investigate ways to identify, use and share valuable data with our justice system partners to better support an integrated justice system.

When We Achieve This Outcome...

- > Court users will benefit from our improved, integrated and innovative way of doing business.
- > We will have active partnerships across Queensland's justice system.
- > Court users will feel informed and supported to navigate the interface between court services and the broader justice system.

Our Strategy In Action

The reinstatement of Drug Court, Murri Court and other court referral and support programs has required a whole of justice system approach, to establish client centred programs that address social issues in our community.

The Drug and Specialist Courts Review involved extensive collaboration with government and non-government partners to develop options for a new drug court model and other court programs that are evidence-based and meet the needs of Queenslanders.

The Drug and Alcohol Court involves an integrated approach with a multidisciplinary team from the judiciary, court services, health, corrective services, police and legal aid. This approach fosters a shared understanding between criminal justice and health agencies. The court also works with housing and education to deliver accommodation support and training programs. This approach holds people to account while supporting recovery.

The establishment of the Murri Court involved extensive consultation and collaboration with stakeholders, including Elders and Respected Persons and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure that a culturally appropriate model was developed. Through Murri Court we work with Elders and Respected Persons to link defendants to cultural and support services to help them make changes in their lives.

All of our specialist court and referral and support programs acknowledge that tackling social and health issues such as drug and alcohol addiction and offending is a complex issue that requires a whole of justice response.

