

## Our vision for safer courts

Courts Services Queensland deliver an inclusive, safe, supportive, and accessible service for people impacted by domestic and family violence and sexual violence.

## Our purpose

Court Services Queensland deliver a fair, safe, accountable, and accessible service, in all court locations across Queensland for people impacted by domestic and family violence and sexual violence, and provide a trauma and culturally informed environment for all court users and staff.

## Our principles



### Principle 1

Queensland Courts are accessible and offer victims safe ways to participate in the court process.



### Principle 2

Courts Services Queensland staff are aware of, and understand, domestic and family violence, coercive control, and sexual violence (including systems abuse).



### Principle 3

Courts Services Queensland staff deliver responses that are trauma and culturally informed.



### Principle 4

Court Services Queensland staff offer person-centred support to victims and accused persons in all court locations across Queensland.



### Principle 5

Court Services Queensland delivers services in a way that protects and promotes the human rights of court users.

## Our priorities



### Priority 1

Queensland Courts are equipped to meet the safety needs of victims impacted by domestic and family violence, coercive control, and sexual violence (including systems abuse) through accessible justice services.



### Priority 2

Court Services Queensland staff receive continuous education and training to strengthen its capacity and capability to respond in a trauma and culturally informed way to domestic and family violence, coercive control, and sexual violence (including systems abuse).



### Priority 3

The design of Queensland Courts promotes safety, and positive health and wellbeing, for all staff and people attending courts with consideration of First Nations, LGBTIQ+, and culturally and linguistically diverse people, and people with disability.



### Priority 4

Court Services Queensland staff provide timely referrals to information and person-centred support for court users in all court locations across Queensland.



### Priority 5

Court Services Queensland commits to transparency and continuous improvement through collaboration, monitoring and evaluation.

## What do we mean by domestic and family violence and sexual violence?<sup>2</sup> Behaviours may include, but are not limited to:

### Domestic and family violence

- Behaviour that causes fear
- Physical abuse or violence
- Sexual violence
- Emotional, verbal, or psychological abuse
- Economic abuse
- Threatening or coercive behaviour
- Controlling or dominating behaviour
- Shouting, hitting, punching
- Property damage
- May include coercive control

### Coercive control

- Pattern of behaviour over time
- Isolates and intimidates
- Emotional, verbal, psychological abuse
- Micromanagement
- Gaslighting (manipulating a person by psychological means into questioning their own sanity)
- Stalking and surveillance
- Financial abuse
- Physical abuse or violence
- Sexual violence
- Animal abuse

### Systems abuse

- Making deliberately false accusations to child safety, police or other government agencies
- Misusing the court system
- Unreasonably challenging child support assessments
- Refusing to disclose financial information
- Seeking continuous delays to court proceedings
- Making deliberately false cross applications
- Lawyer shopping – used to stop the victim accessing Legal Aid or legal support

### Sexual violence

- Sexual assault (i.e. unwanted touching, kissing)
- Incest
- Forced sex and/or rape
- Reproductive control
- Contraceptive sabotage
- Stealthing (removing condom without knowledge or consent)
- Forced or coerced sterilisation
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images
- Forced exposure to pornography

1. This document will be updated periodically to reflect the changing nature of the DFV and SV reform program

2. For more on domestic and family violence, coercive control and systems abuse see [www.dvconnect.org/womensline/what-is-domestic-violence](http://www.dvconnect.org/womensline/what-is-domestic-violence); for sexual violence see [gsan.org.au/what-is-sexual-violence](http://gsan.org.au/what-is-sexual-violence)

Our commitments

<b>Principle and priority 1</b> Courts are accessible and equipped to support court users and staff.	<b>Principle and priority 2</b> Court staff are trauma and culturally aware through training and education.	<b>Principle and priority 3</b> Tailored responses and court design that promote positive health and wellbeing.	<b>Principle and priority 4</b> Proactive, person-centred and timely support in all courts statewide.	<b>Principle and priority 5</b> Promotes human rights and committed to transparency and accountability.
---	--	--	--	--

What we have done so far

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Queensland Intermediary Scheme Pilot is continuing for a third year to help vulnerable witnesses communicate in the court process.</li><li>• Completed an audit of victim safety across Queensland Courts as part of an ongoing program of work.</li><li>• Established specialist domestic and family violence registries for two new specialist domestic and family violence courts, and engaged additional registry staff in new and existing locations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supported development and implementation of a trauma-informed whole-of-government Domestic and Family Violence Training and Change Management Framework.</li><li>• Supported the Chief Magistrate to review and update the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i> Benchbook for Magistrates Courts.</li><li>• Implemented reforms within Queensland Courts arising from the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023</i>, including training for courts staff on new policies and procedures.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commenced designs for infrastructure upgrade projects at Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, Caboolture, Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Ipswich and Rockhampton courthouses.</li><li>• The Chief Magistrate launched expanded specialist domestic and family violence courts with two new courts established in Brisbane and Cairns.</li><li>• Developed saferoom protocols in existing specialist domestic and family violence court locations, including how the spaces are used by court users and stakeholders to deliver onsite support.</li><li>• Implemented the Domestic and Family Violence Live List Application in the Beenleigh Magistrates Court.</li><li>• Commenced construction at Cairns (early works package), Caboolture and Ipswich Courthouses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engaged an external contractor to develop a Victim Navigator Pilot Program at Rockhampton Courthouse to support domestic and family violence victims through the court process.</li><li>• Administered services to provide statewide, trauma-informed, specialised support for children, youth and adult victims of crime interacting with the criminal justice system.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supported development of a whole-of-government Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence System Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to measure and monitor outcomes achieved across the domestic and family violence and sexual violence service system.</li><li>• Commenced planning replacement of the Queensland Wide Interlinked Courts database with a modern, dynamic solution that allows for data to be extracted, analysed and leveraged to meet community expectations and inform future investment.</li><li>• Commenced evaluation of the Queensland Intermediary Scheme Pilot Program to support consideration of extending the scheme to adult victims of sexual violence.</li></ul>
--	--	--	---	--

What we plan to do

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support to the Chief Judge to consider piloting a voluntary case conferencing model for sexual offences in the District Court.</li><li>• Implement and operationalise domestic and family violence and sexual violence legislative reforms across civil and criminal law jurisdictions.</li><li>• Provide support to the Chief Judge to consider a specialist court list for sexual violence cases in the District Court.</li><li>• Build workforce capacity and capability within Queensland Courts to support delivery of trauma-informed frontline justice services.</li><li>• Implement a pilot expert evidence panel for sexual offence proceedings that can be used by the prosecution, defence and the court.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support the Chief Justice and Chief Judge to explore options to provide information to judicial officers and lawyers regarding the laws and procedures for sexual violence cases.</li><li>• Develop a trauma-informed and intersectional strategy for Court Services Queensland and Community Justice Services.</li><li>• Support development of a whole-of-government education and training framework to support consistency and promote responses compatible with human rights.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete construction of Ipswich and Caboolture infrastructure upgrades in 2024.</li><li>• Complete construction of infrastructure upgrades in Brisbane, Cairns, Maroochydore, Mackay, Rockhampton and Toowoomba progressively from 2024–2026.</li><li>• Upgrade Queensland Courts’ remote witness facilities, including by expanding the locations with video conferencing enabled courts and developing and rolling out a secure, modern evidence recording solution to support vulnerable witnesses to safely give evidence.</li><li>• Implement statewide specialist domestic and family violence court best practice elements that include a coordinated stakeholder approach by registries.</li><li>• Consider implementation of the Domestic and Family Violence Live List Application to further specialist domestic and family violence, and high-volume magistrates courts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consult with the Chief Magistrate on ways to strengthen court support offered to victims making private domestic violence applications for protection.</li><li>• Work with the Chief Magistrate to uplift the Domestic and Family Violence Online Application to enable end-to-end online submission.</li><li>• Transition to a new courts-operated video conferencing infrastructure, including the introduction of an improved approach for vulnerable witness recordings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish an evaluation framework and baseline of court users’ perception of safety to support future evaluations.</li><li>• Evaluate amendments to the <i>Evidence Act 1977</i> to better understand the impact of jury directions and expert evidence on misconceptions about sexual violence.</li><li>• Evaluate the impact of domestic and family violence and sexual violence related legislative reforms.</li><li>• Complete a review of how courts in Queensland deal with sexual violence cases in consultation with the Heads of Jurisdiction.</li></ul>
--	--	---	--	---