

**DISTRICT COURT OF QUEENSLAND**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025**

30 October 2025

The Honourable Deb Frecklington  
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and  
Minister for Integrity  
GPO Box 149  
BRISBANE QLD P 4000

Dear Attorney

Pursuant to s 130A (1) of the *District Court of Queensland Act 1967*, I am pleased to present my report on the operation of the District Court of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Devereaux', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Devereaux SC  
Chief Judge

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## Chief Judge's overview

This is the Court's 29<sup>th</sup> annual report. It deals with the operation of the Court in 2024-2025 ("the year"). Pursuant to s 70 of the *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*, this report incorporates the annual report of the Planning and Environment Court (the P&E Court).

I acknowledge and thank all the judges of the Court for their application to the service of the community, however busy the lists and challenging the cases.

The Court's performance and workload during the year are reflected in the statistics set out in this report. Where applicable, the statistical information accords with the method of reporting adopted by the Commonwealth Productivity Commission's *Annual Report on Government Services* (RoGS). The data reported in the RoGS, however, does not include all of the Court's work. Data for the P&E Court, for example, is not reported in the RoGS but is included in this report to present a more fulsome picture of the work of the Court.

The number of new criminal lodgements eased during the year, in Brisbane (by 6.8%), and in the rest of the State taken as a whole (by 3.2%). The result for the whole of Queensland was 4.3% less than 2023-2024. The number of trials commenced decreased from 664 to 630 with an average trial duration of 3.6 days.

The Court received 3928 civil lodgements, a decrease of 4.1% on the previous year. The P&E Court received 288 lodgements, about 12.% less than the previous year. The Childrens Court of Queensland (CCQ) lodgements decreased by 7% on the previous year. The District Court of Queensland remains one of the largest and busiest of the higher courts in Australia.

Apart from hearing and deciding cases, the judges of the Court regularly participate in committees whose work enhances judicial processes (for example, the Benchbook Committee, the Rules Committee) and benefit the legal profession and the community at large. Some of these are detailed below.

### *Departures and arrivals and a comment*

Judge Horneman-Wren SC retired from the Court after 12 years on the Court, first as Deputy President of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and then sitting on the Court at Ipswich. As the statistics below confirm, the Court at Ipswich continues to manage high case loads. Judge Horneman-Wren SC, with Judge Lynch KC and, recently, Judge Power KC, gave fine leadership to the Court community at Ipswich. His Honour's exemplary work and contribution to the Court were acknowledged at a valedictory ceremony in the Banco Court on 9 December 2024.

Upon Judge Horneman-Wren SC's retirement, Judge Chowdhury transferred from the Court at Beenleigh, where his Honour had conducted that exceptionally busy jurisdiction, to join Judges Lynch KC and Power KC at Ipswich.

Judge McGinness retired from the Court on 25 October 2024. Her Honour served on the Court for 15 years, much of that time at Southport, more recently at Brisbane. The judges celebrated her Honour's great contribution to the work of the Court with a valedictory dinner in October 2024.

In anticipation of the retirement of Judges Horneman-Wren SC and McGinness, Judge Philip McCarthy KC and Judge Dzenita Balic were appointed to the Court on 26 August

2024. They were welcomed at a public sitting in the Banco Court on 4 September 2024, where some of their Honours' interesting backgrounds was discussed.

At the time of appointment, Judge McCarthy KC held the position of Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, the culmination of a distinguished career as a prosecutor. Among other activities, his Honour was a member of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, which produced two comprehensive reports on the experience of women and girls in the criminal justice system and recommendations which led to significant legislative changes which affect the Court's conduct of many criminal cases.

After a stellar career as a prosecutor in countless trials and appeals, Judge Balic was appointed to the Magistrates Court in 2022. Judge Balic is the resident judge at Beenleigh. Born in Bosnia, English is her third language, after Bosnian and German. At the welcome ceremony her Honour spoke of the privilege of being appointed to serve the community of the City of Logan, "home to more than 234 different cultures".

Judge Christopher Kahler was appointed to the District Court at Townsville on 5 May 2025. At a welcome ceremony for Judge Kahler, held at Townsville, I recorded his Honour's experience as a solicitor in private practice at Innisfail and his strong and active community involvement for many years. His Honour joins Judges Lynham and Coker, both judges also local to North Queensland, returning the Court's permanent complement at Townsville to 3 judges. The appointment also brought the total of the Court to 44 judges.

During the year, Judge Smith AM, the Judge Administrator, acted in the position of Chief Judge during my absence from the jurisdiction and was re-appointed as Judge Administrator of the District Court from 15 November 2024 until his appointment to the Supreme Court on and from 31 March 2025. I record my appreciation of his Honour's vital, energetic and practical support as Judge Administrator since my appointment to the position of Chief Judge in August 2020. The judges of the Court wished his Honour well in the new role.

Judge Burnett AM was commissioned Judge Administrator of the District Court commencing on and from 11 April 2025. His Honour has already made a positive mark in the orderly and expeditious exercise of the jurisdiction of the Court.

In May 2025, Judge Clare SC commenced leave towards retirement. More about her Honour in next year's report.

The departure of Judges Smith and Clare led to the appointments of Judge Sarah Farnden KC on 9 June 2025 and Judge Dominique Grigg on 23 June 2025. Their Honours' appointments were hailed at a ceremony in the Banco Court on 23 June 2025.

Judge Farnden KC was born and educated in New Zealand. Her Honour's pre-judicial career comprised a long period of service with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, appearing in all the State's Courts and the High Court of Australia, taking silk in 2022 and practising at the Bar since early 2022.

Judge Grigg's path to the Court commenced with Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees at the University of Queensland. Her Honour's career included academia, practice as a solicitor and then barrister with a wide commercial practice particularly including intellectual property law, an international arbitration practice. She has sat on the Australian

Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Her Honour's community work includes governance and professional community board positions.

The diverse backgrounds, wide community and social interests outside the law and varied paths by which the judges have come to sit on the District Court is to be celebrated. What the judges have in common is deep learning and intellect, experience in the law and of people and an industrious will to serve the community. The judicial task is to listen to parties and decide cases by applying the law to facts agreed by the parties or found by the judge on the evidence presented in the hearing. Judges see members of the community at their best and not so. Judges work with juries at up to 32 places throughout Queensland. In sentencing hearings, they listen to victims and speak directly to defendants. Judges increasingly hear and determine cases with litigants-in-person (in civil cases) and defendants without legal representation (in criminal cases). The hearing of cases is almost always in public, judgments and sentencing remarks are published on the Supreme Court of Queensland Library website. With few exceptions, decisions of the judges of the District Court are subject to appeal to the Court of Appeal. The judges welcome informed discussion and criticism of their decisions. Unfortunately, judges are subjected to occasional misinformed comment about decisions and personal criticism, including threatening comments. These reactions are not reasonable nor responsible.

### *The registry*

Julie Steel, the Principal Registrar of the Supreme District and Land Courts Service, retired during the year. Ms Steel brought exceptional governance knowledge and skills, great experience in public-sector management and creative energy to the role and was an enormous support to me personally and to the District Court. She left the Courts with the best wishes of the judges for a long and contented retirement.

Amanda O'Brien, having seamlessly taken up the position of Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General of the Supreme District and Land Courts Service, has provided continuous support to the judges of the Court in endless ways. The Principal Registrar leads all the public-facing and internal departmental services which allow the Courts to function.

The Principal Registrar's contribution to this report commences at page 32. It is one of the joys of the role of Chief Judge to benefit from the talent and commitment of leaders such as Ms O'Brien. The judges of the Court appreciate the work of the entire registry throughout Queensland and echo the Principal Registrar's statement that their "ability to efficiently manage increasing workloads, while embracing innovation and adapting to change, is undoubtedly a significant asset to the Court."

### *Particular developments in the Court's work – Sexual Violence Case Management*

One significant aspect of the Court's work detailed in the Principal Registrar's report is the Sexual Violence Case Management Pilot. I reported last year on the genesis and development of the Scheme. After only one year, the case management scheme is already showing positive changes in the Court's management of sexual violence cases, namely more certainty about the timeline to trial and the court events along the way to trial. The pilot, implemented at Brisbane and Ipswich, is overseen by a steering committee comprising senior representatives of the ODPP, Legal Aid Queensland, the First Nations Justice Office, representatives of the Queensland Police Service, Bar Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society, leaders from organisations who support victims, and officers of the Court. The program is also vitally supported by local operational working groups in Brisbane and Ipswich.

While the pilot succeeds because of the commitment and support of all stakeholders, special mention should be made of the commitment of the Director of Public Prosecutions and defence lawyers to the early engagement of trial counsel. Legal Aid Queensland has developed special grants of aid, for lawyers attending the pre-trial hearings, from within existing resources.

The judges acknowledge the essential work of the Sexual Violence Case Reform program team led by Director, Lindsey Franklin-Browne. In May 2025, the project team co-ordinated the second Domestic Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) District Court Judicial Conference. This was a valuable exercise, bringing the Court together to hear from expert guests and colleagues on subjects including memory and witness testimony, an update on the operation of the Sexual Violence Case Management Pilot and an examination of the recent wave of law reform pertaining to DFSV proceedings.

#### *Particular developments in the Court's work – the P&E Court*

In last year's report, I wrote of the significant development in the P&E Court – the suite of Practice Directions issued in December 2023. The Practice Directions were the work of the judges of the P&E Court, Judge Michael Williamson KC in particular, in consultation with members of the profession whose suggestions upon drafts led to improvements in the Practice Directions. With the positive response of the profession and continued dialogue between the P&E Court judges and the profession, the Practice Directions have improved the efficiency of the Court, access to the Court and the timely progress of matters.

To facilitate the timely disposition of planning appeals that relate to large residential projects, the P&E Court created a new list and an associated Practice Direction, No 3 of 2025. The "Residential list" is closely managed to give priority access to the Court and to alternative dispute resolution. Funding provided by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning has enabled a pilot program whereby the Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Registrar, who conducts the Court-funded mediation service, may engage relevant experts to assist in the timely resolution of the appeals, avoiding the time and cost associated with a full merits hearing. I thank the Department for its support of the pilot program.

#### *Biennial Conference*

In May 2025, the judges hosted the Biennial Conference of the Judges of District and County Courts of Australia and New Zealand. The biennial conference is a unique opportunity to meet and learn from judges of equivalent courts from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand. The conference was an outstanding success. More than 140 delegates attended - the Court acknowledges the support of the Chief Judges of the Australian and New Zealand District and County Courts. The program was of excellent quality, providing a combination of practical and high-level papers by judicial, academic and scientific experts. The success of the conference flowed from the hard work of the organising committee, chaired by Judge Sheridan, with Judges Fantin, Jarro, Loury KC and Power KC.

#### *The Executive*

The Court gained much from regular meetings with the Attorneys-General – the Hon. Yvette D'Ath and the Hon. Deb Frecklington and their respective Directors-General. I also acknowledge, relevantly to the P&E Court, the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, who

carries the State Development, Infrastructure and Planning portfolio. The Court enjoys a positive and respectful relationship with the Executive, including senior departmental officers.

## Profile of the District Court

### Judges of the District Court

During the year under report the judges were:

Chief Judge	His Honour Judge Brian Devereaux SC
Judge Administrator	His Honour Judge Paul Smith AM (ceased 31.03.25)
Judge Administrator	His Honour Judge Michael Burnett AM (commenced 14.04.25)
	His Honour Judge Ian Dearden
	His Honour Judge Anthony Rafter SC
	Her Honour Judge Leanne Clare SC
	His Honour Judge William Everson
	Her Honour Judge Katherine McGinness (retired 25.10.24)
	His Honour Judge Gary Long SC
	His Honour Judge Bradley Farr SC
	His Honour Judge Alexander Horneman-Wren SC (retired 25.01.25)
	His Honour Judge Dean Morzone KC
	His Honour Judge Michael Burnett AM
	Her Honour Judge Suzanne Sheridan
	His Honour Judge Anthony Moynihan KC
	His Honour Judge David Kent KC
	His Honour Judge Milon Craig Chowdhury
	Her Honour Judge Nicole Jane Kefford
	His Honour Judge Dennis Lynch KC
	His Honour Judge Gregory Lynham
	His Honour Judge Bernard Porter KC
	Her Honour Judge Jennifer Rosengren
	Her Honour Judge Tracy Fantin
	His Honour Judge Michael Williamson KC
	His Honour Judge John Coker
	His Honour Judge Nathan Jarro
	His Honour Judge Glen Cash
	His Honour Judge John Allen KC
	Her Honour Judge Vicki Loury KC
	His Honour Judge Ken Barlow KC
	His Honour Judge Terry Gardiner
	His Honour Judge Michael Byrne KC
	His Honour Judge Rowan Jackson KC
	His Honour Judge Jeffrey Clarke
	Her Honour Judge Geraldine Dann
	Her Honour Judge Deborah Holliday KC
	Her Honour Judge Amanda McDonnell
	Her Honour Judge Jodie Wooldridge KC
	His Honour Judge Nicholas Andreatidis KC
	His Honour Judge Carl Heaton KC
	His Honour Judge Joshua Treviño KC
	His Honour Judge Benedict Power KC
	Her Honour Judge Katarina Prskalo KC
	His Honour Judge Philip McCarthy KC (sworn in 26 August 2024)
	Her Honour Judge Dzenita Balic (sworn in 26 August 2024)
	His Honour Judge Kahler (sworn in 5 May 2025)
	Her Honour Judge Farnden KC (sworn in 9 June 2025)
	Her Honour Judge Grigg (sworn in 23 June 2025)

## **Regional Judges**

During the year the following judges were allocated to the regional centres:

Maroochydore	Judge Long SC Judge Cash
Southport	Judge Jackson KC Judge Holliday KC Judge Wooldridge KC Judge Prskalo KC
Townsville	Judge Lynham Judge Coker Judge Kahler
Rockhampton	Judge Clarke
Ipswich	Judge Chowdhury Judge Lynch KC Judge Benedict Power KC
Cairns	Judge Morzone KC Judge Fantin Judge Joshua Treviño KC
Beenleigh	Judge Balic

## **Planning and Environment Court**

Judges holding appointment to the P&E Court during 2024-2025 are listed below:

Chief Judge Devereaux SC

Judge Richards

Judge Rafter SC

Judge Everson

Judge Long SC

Judge Horneman-Wren SC

Judge Morzone KC

Judge Kent KC

Judge Kefford

Judge Fantin

Judge Williamson KC

Judge Coker

Judge Cash KC

Judge Barlow KC

Judge Byrne KC

Judge Jackson KC

Judge Dann

Judge Holliday KC

Judge McDonnell

Judge Wooldridge KC

Judge Andreatidis KC

Judge Treviño KC

Judge Prskalo KC

## **Childrens Court of Queensland**

Childrens Court judges during 2024-2025 are listed below:

Chief Judge Devereaux SC	Judge Fantin
Judge Smith AM	Judge Williamson KC
Judge Richards - President	Judge Coker
Judge Dearden	Judge Jarro
Judge Rafter SC	Judge Cash
Judge Clare SC	Judge Allen KC
Judge Everson	Judge Gardiner
Judge McGinness	Judge Loury KC
Judge Long SC	Judge Byrne KC
Judge Farr SC	Judge Jackson KC
Judge Horneman-Wren SC	Judge Clarke
Judge Morzone KC	Judge Dann
Judge Burnett AM	Judge Holliday KC
Judge Sheridan	Judge McDonnell
Judge Moynihan KC	Judge Wooldridge KC
Judge Kent KC	Judge Treviño KC
Judge Chowdhury	Judge Power KC
Judge Kefford	Judge Prskalo KC (25.07.24)
Judge Lynch KC	Judge McCarthy KC
Judge Lynham	Judge Balic
Judge Porter KC	Judge Kahler
Judge Rosengren	

## **The work of the District Court - Disposition of Caseload**

The Court has wide civil, criminal and appellate jurisdiction, as provided in the *District Court of Queensland Act 1967* and other legislation.

The District Court hears and determines most charges of serious criminal offences - the Supreme Court deals with homicide cases, attempted murder and trafficking in Schedule 1 drugs. Criminal trials are usually heard with a jury.

The Court exercises equitable and other jurisdiction within its civil monetary limit. Civil matters are normally heard by a single judge.

Judges of the District Court also sit as P&E Court judges and CCQ judges.

The Court hears appeals from orders of the Magistrates Court in criminal and civil proceedings, including under the *Justices Act 1886*, *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, the *Child Protection Act 1999* and a range of “regulatory prosecutions”, for example, under the *Building Act 1975*.

The judges have adopted a protocol that judgments are usually to be delivered within three months of the conclusion of the hearing. The Chief Judge monitors the judges’ reserved judgments load. Finding time to write reserved judgments is an individual and whole-of-court challenge.

### **Criminal jurisdiction**

Most defendants charged on indictment appear before the District Court.

The Court deals with offences under Commonwealth and Queensland criminal laws, including the *Corporations Law*, the *Migration Act 1958* and federal and state revenue laws.

The Chief Judge and the Judge Administrator, with assistance from other judges, manage the criminal list in Brisbane, plan the Court’s calendar and monitor the Court’s circuit priorities. In regional centres, the lists are managed by the resident judges. Certain judges are allocated responsibility for managing the lists at centres at which the Court sits on circuit.

The Court co-operates with the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid Queensland for the purpose of improving the efficiency of circuit sittings. To this end, the Chief Judge met on a regular basis with the Director, Mr Fuller KC and the Public Defender, Mr Briggs and the Court acknowledges their co-operation and leadership.

Depending upon the lists, each year the judges might sit at up to 32 centres throughout Queensland — that is in Brisbane, the seven regional centres and other centres where jury trials can be held. When required, with the co-operation of the involved parties, the Court sits at other more remote communities, including those in the Gulf, Cape and Torres Strait.

Table 1 summarises the Court’s criminal case load for the year.

**Table 1: The activity of the District Court criminal list 2024-2025**

Centre	Number of Defendants <sup>1</sup>			Clearance Rates <sup>4</sup>	Backlog Indicator <sup>5</sup>	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		% > 12 mths	% > 24 mths
Brisbane	1,953	1,976	1,036	101.2%	27.6%	10.1%
<b>Regional centres</b>						
Beenleigh	548	456	324	83.2%	24.9%	6.8%
Cairns	587	587	209	100%	20.1%	5.3%
Ipswich	475	483	291	101.7%	31.6%	11%
Maroochydore	348	337	158	96.8%	18.4%	5.1%
Rockhampton	271	263	46	97%	15.2%	2.2%
Southport	556	540	287	97.1%	18.1%	4.2%
Townsville	684	514	140	75.1%	22.9%	7.1%
Total for Brisbane and regional centres	5,422	5,156	2,491	95.1%	24.9%	8.1%
<b>Circuit centres</b>						
Bowen	4	5	3	125%	0.0%	0.0%
Bundaberg	117	137	38	117.1%	18.4%	0.0%
Charleville	9	12	2	133.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Charters Towers	1	7	2	700%	0.0%	0.0%
Clermont	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cloncurry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cunnamulla	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dalby	56	52	46	92.9%	28.3%	13%
Emerald	62	74	17	119.4%	5.9%	0.0%
Gladstone	56	49	41	87.5%	14.6%	4.9%
Goondiwindi	16	17	14	106.3%	28.6%	21.4%
Gympie	41	51	30	124.4%	20%	3.3%
Hervey Bay	45	57	25	126.7%	12%	4%
Hughenden	-	-	-	-	-	-
Innisfail	20	43	14	215%	21.4%	14.3%
Kingaroy	64	65	33	101.6%	38.2%	20.6%
Longreach	2	4	-	200%	0.0%	0.0%
Mackay	75	174	80	232%	15%	3.8%
Maryborough	49	55	20	112.2%	35%	10%
Mt Isa	53	129	55	243.4%	27.3%	5.5%
Roma	22	23	7	104.5%	14.3%	0.0%
Stanthorpe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Toowoomba	237	223	126	94.1%	32.5%	3.2%
Warwick	22	40	21	181.8%	14.3%	4.8%
Total for circuit centres	951	1,217	574	128%	23.5%	6.1%
State total	6,373	6,373	3,065	100%	24.7%	7.7%

(1) A “defendant” is counted based on the national Report on Government Services counting methodology, i.e. each defendant is counted once per case. If the same person is named on more than one case within the reported period, they will be counted once for each case on which they are named. Defendants with outstanding bench warrants and defendants with secondary charges such as breaches of court orders are excluded. Also excluded are Defendants who have been committed to the District Court and are awaiting presentation of indictment.

- (2) A “case” consists of one or more charges lodged together by a prosecuting authority.
- (3) The unit of measurement of workload is the number of defendants per case. Where a case has multiple defendants each defendant is counted separately. Where the same defendant has two cases lodged on the same day they are counted as two lodgements. Where the same defendant has multiple cases lodged on different days they are counted once for each case.
- (4) The above figures are not comparable to years prior to 2018-19 due to the change in counting rule as outlined in (2) applied in 2018-19. In previous years a defendant who had two cases lodged on the same day was counted once whereas it is now counted twice.
- (5) Clearance Rate: finalisations/lodgements
- (6) Backlog Indicator: the number active defendants with proceedings older than the specified time.

The Court received 6,373 lodgements, compared to 6,659 for the 2023-2024 year. At year’s end there were 3,065 (3,053 in 2023-2024) outstanding matters with 6,373 (6,684 in 2023-2024) matters having been finalised. This represents a clearance rate of 100%, compared to 100.4% in 2023-2024.

Of the active cases, 24.7% were more than 12 months old (from date of indictment presentation) and 7.7% were more than 24 months old. This represented small but concerning increases in the percentage of cases older than 12 months and 24 months. The Court regularly examines the “backlog” cases. Of course, a case might remain active for a long time for several reasons. It might be a re-trial after a successful appeal or a hung jury. There are still some long delays while parties wait for the results of DNA testing of potential exhibits. In some cases, a defendant has been arrested after having absconded. Others, because of the complexity of the indictment or because of legislative provisions, require numerous pre-trial hearings. Some matters are suspended pending a determination in the Mental Health Court. Also, some cases are delayed while parties await a restorative justice process.

In Brisbane, 1,953 new cases were presented during the year, compared to 2,095 in 2023-2024. The year ended with 1,036 outstanding criminal cases, having disposed of 1,976 matters. The clearance rate in Brisbane was 101.2%, a slight decrease from 102.1% last year. The percentage of cases outstanding after 12 and 24 months increased – from 25.3% to 27.6% for cases more than 12 months old and 10.1% from 7% for cases more than 24 months old.

In the major regional centres where judges are based – Beenleigh, Cairns, Ipswich, Maroochydore, Rockhampton, Southport and Townsville – a total of 3,469 new cases were presented during the year, compared to 3,478 last year - and those major centres ended the year having disposed of 3,180 cases (3,286 last year) with 1,455 outstanding.

The statistics set out in the Table do not account for court time taken up with pre-trial applications and the pre-recording of evidence and other directions hearings. These proceedings do not inform the data collated by the Commonwealth Productivity Commission’s Annual Report on Government Services (RoGS). A pre-trial hearing might be short and uncomplicated – e.g. an unopposed application for a witness to give evidence by video link – or difficult and time-consuming, both in court and in judgment-writing – e.g. an application to sever an indictment charging numerous counts of offences alleged to have been committed against several complainants.

The legal and factual issues to be addressed in applications brought under the protected counselling communications (*PCC*) provisions of the *Evidence Act 1977* continue to interrupt the progress to trial of an indictment and occupy increasing judicial time. It is understood the legislation is under much-needed review.

Many children are required to give evidence in matters involving charges of sexual or violent offences. During the year the judges ordered 188 pre-recordings involving 311 witnesses for the District Court or the CCQ and conducted 312 pre-recordings. The child's evidence will usually be pre-recorded from a remote witness room, with a support person sitting nearby. The witness sees only the person speaking to them. That is, although the defendant sits in court and can see the witness on a screen, the witness cannot see the defendant. The Court will be closed to the public. The pre-recording is listed as soon as possible after the indictment is presented, but regularly, pre-trial issues must be settled before the evidence of the child is recorded. The recorded evidence is later played to the jury at the trial. To preserve their integrity and security, all video recordings, no matter where recorded in Queensland, are kept by the Principal Registrar in Brisbane.

Similar measures are often ordered for the taking of evidence of persons declared to be a special witness. The term, 'special witness', includes a person against whom a sexual offence is alleged to have been committed and a person against whom domestic violence has been or is alleged to have been committed. In the year under review there were 156 pre-recordings ordered involving 178 special witnesses and 241 pre-recordings conducted in the Brisbane District Court, the regional centres and the CCQ.

It is pleasing to record that the Queensland Intermediary Scheme Pilot Program, introduced by the insertion of Division 4C in Part 2 of the *Evidence Act 1977*, is funded for the next 4 years but still only in the pilot locations, Brisbane and Cairns. More details of this scheme are set out in the Principal Registrar's report below. While recognising the practical difficulties that inhibit expansion of the scheme in our decentralised State, the judges would be glad to work with the Executive to achieve that aim. The scheme creates another interlocutory step between presentation of indictment and trial in relevant cases, yet it tends to improve the efficiency of the examination and cross-examination of the witness and the experience of the witness without impairing the ability of defence Counsel to challenge the witness and present the defence case.

### Civil jurisdiction

The Court received 3,928 civil lodgements, compared to 4,096 in 2023-2024, a decrease of 4.1%. 3,947 matters were finalised, compared to 3,838 the previous year. This represents a clearance rate of 100.5%. There were, at the end of the reporting year, 4,300 active matters, of which 25.6% were more than 12 months old and 5.7% were more than 24 months old.

**Table 2: Clearance rate in civil cases**

Centre	RoGS Non Appeal Cases			Clearance Rate *	Backlog Indicator	
					From filing date	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		%>12 mths	%>24 mths
Brisbane	3,153	3,112	3,456	98.7%	25.5%	6%
Beenleigh	11	14	11	127.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Cairns	83	99	86	119.3%	27.9%	3.5%
Ipswich	20	24	21	120%	33.3%	14.3%
Maroochydore	99	129	105	130.3%	27.6%	4.8%
Rockhampton	41	39	47	95.1%	34%	4.3%
Southport	284	326	316	114.8%	24.1%	4.4%
Townsville	138	101	150	73.2%	26%	5.3%
State Total	3,928	3,947	4,300	100.5%	25.6%	5.7%

\*Clearance rate - finalisations/lodgements

Backlog Indicator: the number active defendants with proceedings older than the specified time.

The State Totals in the Table include lodgements and finalisations in circuit centres, which are not listed.

The Report on Government Services (RoGS) unit of measurement for the civil jurisdiction is a case. Secondary processes, such as interlocutory applications, are excluded. RoGS files include all claims and originating applications.

The impact of civil proceedings on the Court's resources depends primarily on whether matters come before a judge. Most resolve without any judicial intervention.

The District Court's civil jurisdiction is mostly conferred by section 68 of the *District Court of Queensland Act 1967*. Section 69 confers on the Court, for the purposes of exercising that jurisdiction, all the powers of the Supreme Court. The Court has an extensive general jurisdiction enabling it to deal with, among other matters (subject to the monetary limit of \$750,000):

- all personal claims, including equitable claims, to recover money sums
- any claim (without monetary limit) referred to the Court by the Supreme Court for assessment
- by the consent of the parties, any claim which could be brought in the Supreme Court (apart from claims under the *Corporations Act* that must, under that Act, be heard in the Supreme Court regardless of the amount involved)
- actions for possession under any mortgage or other security
- actions to grant relief from mistake and for rectification
- actions seeking declarations and consequential orders arising from partnership disputes
- family provision applications pursuant to the *Succession Act 1981*
- construction of wills, deeds and other documents.

The Court's monetary limit was set in 2010 following a recommendation in the Report of the *Review of the civil and criminal justice system in Queensland 2008*. The report recommended the monetary limits of the District and Magistrates Courts be reviewed "at least every 5 years, and adjusted to reflect the then current value of money and other relevant considerations." The judges have confidence the Court is ready for a substantial review of the jurisdictional limit.

#### *Trials of claims and originating applications*

A person may commence a civil proceeding in the Court by filing a claim or originating application. Most civil matters in the Court's original jurisdiction are resolved other than by trial, frequently by settlement or by parties not taking steps in the proceeding such that it is deemed resolved.

Most of the civil proceedings in the Court are filed in the Brisbane registry. Matters are listed administratively, in consultation with the parties, forthwith on a request-for-trial being filed. This process reduces the delay between a proceeding being ready for trial and the allocation of trial dates. Continuous listing also makes it possible more easily to list another trial, or an appeal, when a judge becomes available on the late settlement or late adjournment of a trial.

The Brisbane registry has introduced a pre-trial review for any trial listed for hearing, which occurs about two weeks before trial. The purpose is to try to ensure that the trial will be fully ready for efficient hearing and determination on the day the trial is listed to commence. This step appears to have reduced the number of last-minute adjournments, with the associated waste of time and resources such adjournments cause.

These steps have improved the efficient use of judge time and increased the rate at which civil proceedings are listed and resolved. The Brisbane registry rarely has any proceeding ready for trial which is waiting to be allocated a trial date, and trial dates can usually be allocated within 3 months of the matter being certified ready for trial.

The Court does not case-manage all civil cases. That would be inefficient. However, identified cases are managed when it becomes clear to the Court, either of its own motion or because of an application by the parties, that management is required. Civil cases on the Commercial List are managed.

Regional courts handle their civil load in a manner which is efficient in the view of the judges based in those regions. Occasionally, a matter which requires urgent attention may be transferred to the Brisbane registry if the interests of justice favour that course.

A significant number of civil proceedings involve self-represented parties. Generally, these require much more judicial time in preparation and conduct of a trial. The pre-trial reviews provide an opportunity for the Court to try to ensure a self-represented party is as ready as can be.

#### *District Court Commercial List*

A Commercial List was established in October 2010, to promote the prompt resolution of commercial disputes by judges with experience in commercial litigation. During the year the Commercial List judges were Judge Kefford, Judge Porter KC, Judge Barlow KC, Judge Jackson KC and Judge Andreatidis KC. Their Honours are all based at Brisbane except for Judge Jackson KC who is based at Southport.

Matters are placed on the list by application of the parties or, occasionally, by a judge. The Commercial List has seen steady numbers over recent years. During the year, 47 cases were placed on the list and 33 finalised.

In December 2020, the Court issued a Practice Direction which provided for parties to place matters commenced in Townsville and Toowoomba on the Commercial List with interlocutory management by video link but for trials to be conducted in the regional Court.

The management of matters by the Commercial List judges, including hearing of interlocutory applications, is mostly conducted outside their Honours' normal sitting calendars and frequently continues while their Honours are on circuit by use of video link technology.

#### *Interlocutory applications*

An interlocutory application is one made, after a proceeding has been filed, to resolve an issue which arises prior to trial. These can usually be disposed of in less than two hours and nearly always within half a day. Almost all judges sit in the Applications list during a calendar year. Judges may hear applications while on circuit at any of the circuit centres. Experienced judges regularly deal with simple applications on the day of the hearing. Other

applications, including for orders which would end the litigation, need often to be reserved for the required consideration.

### Appellate jurisdiction

The District Court has jurisdiction to hear criminal and civil appeals. The Court's criminal appeal jurisdiction arises under the *Justices Act 1886*. The civil appeals comprise mostly appeals from civil judgments of the Magistrates Court and appeals from magistrates' decisions under the *Child Protection Act 1999* and the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, in which the District Court is the final court of appeal.

Sixty civil appeals and 286 criminal appeals were lodged during the year. There were 60 civil and 273 criminal appeals finalised, representing clearance rates of 100% and 95.5% respectively. All judges hear and determine the whole range of appeals that come to the Court.

**Table 3: Clearance rate in criminal and civil appeals**

	RoGS Appeal			Clearance Rate *	Backlog Indicator	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		From filing date	
Civil						
Brisbane	43	33	24	76.7%	0.00%	0.00%
Beenleigh	3	7	2	233.3%	0.00%	0.00%
Cairns	2	4	2	200%	50%	50%
Ipswich	0	0	0	0.00%	-	0.00%
Maroochydore	3	4	2	133.3%	0.00%	0.00%
Rockhampton	1	1	0	100%	0.00%	0.00%
Southport	4	1	7	25%	57.1%	0.00%
Townsville	1	2	1	200%	0.00%	0.00%
State Total	60	60	44	100%	18.2%	4.5%

The State total includes 3 appeals, one each at Gympie, Hervey Bay and Kingaroy.

	RoGS Appeal			Clearance Rate *	Backlog Indicator	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		From filing date	
Criminal						
Brisbane	179	172	65	96.1%	7.7%	0.00%
Beenleigh	10	4	9	40%	11.1%	0.00%
Cairns	12	13	3	108.3%	33.3%	0.00%
Ipswich	5	5	8	100%	25%	0.00%
Maroochydore	14	16	7	114.3%	0.00%	0.00%
Rockhampton	4	2	3	50%	0.00%	0.00%
Southport	26	23	18	88.5%	22.2%	5.6%
Townsville	9	6	6	66.7%	0.00%	0.00%
State Total	286	273	142	95.5%	9.9%	0.7%

\*Clearance rate - finalisations/lodgements

Backlog Indicator: the number active defendants with proceedings older than the specified time.

The State Totals in the Table include lodgements and finalisations in circuit centres, which are not listed.

Appeals against sentence only are heard in the criminal list of the Court. In Brisbane, appeals against conviction and all civil appeals are heard in the civil list of the Court.

In Brisbane, Judge Moynihan KC, after reforming the Court's management of appeals, handed responsibility for their oversight to Judge Jarro. Together, Judge Jarro and Judge Porter KC, who manages the civil list, facilitate the prompt resolution of appeals. Where the appeal challenges a sentence that includes a very short period of imprisonment, the appellant may apply for an urgent hearing of the appeal. For the civil list appeals, the Court has adopted the practice of listing appeals as reserve matters against the prospect of civil trials settling or adjourning. An appeal which is ready for hearing will usually be allocated a date within two months from the date of listing.

### **The Planning and Environment Court**

The P&E Court is constituted by a District Court judge appointed to it (a P&E Court judge). There is a concentration of P&E Court judges in Brisbane and, with the exceptions of Beenleigh and Rockhampton, P&E Court judges are based in each regional centre. The Court may sit anywhere.

The P&E Court was first constituted in 1966 as the Local Government Court, was renamed in 1991 pursuant to the *Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1990*, then continued pursuant to the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* and now, pursuant to the *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*. The Court's rules and Practice Directions are made under the Act.

The P&E Court exercises jurisdiction over a wide variety of planning and/or environmental disputes. These may be complex and have significant environmental, social and economic consequences. The Court has unlimited monetary jurisdiction. It may make declarations and interim and final enforcement orders; conduct full merits reviews of decisions of local governments and government entities; hear claims for compensation and punish for contempt.

Practice and procedure in the P&E Court is characterised by active list supervision, individual case management and the comprehensive deployment of ADR mechanisms.

The P&E Court enjoys a high international recognition for the efficiency of its structure as an adjunct of the District Court; as a leader in individual case management; its alternative dispute resolution process; its efficient management of expert evidence; its regional service and the commitment of its judges to review and reform.

In that spirit, the Brisbane judges of the P&E Court adopted new Practice Directions which were issued on 7 December 2023. Practice Directions are procedural guidelines that complement existing legislation, rules and regulations. These Practice Directions are designed to provide consistent but flexible case management, primarily for the Court sitting at Brisbane. They spring from, among other places, section 10 of *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*. It provides that in conducting P&E Court proceedings and applying the Rules, the P&E Court must facilitate the just and expeditious resolution of the issue; and avoid undue delay, expense and technicality. Section 10 also provides that parties to a P&E Court proceeding impliedly undertake to the court and each other to proceed in an expeditious way.

The Practice Directions were also prompted by feedback from the profession. The Court enjoys a close relationship with solicitors and barristers who practise in the P&E

jurisdiction. In significant part, this is generated by the active promotion of seminars and social events by the Queensland Environmental Law Association (QELA), with which the Court continues to enjoy a close and mutually beneficial association.

The 2023 Practice Directions represent evolutionary change, taking their lead from foundational principles contained in earlier Practice Directions:

- That the parties should be encouraged to prepare a proceeding for trial as quickly as they are able with limited court intervention – this minimises delay and cost;
- To encourage ADR – to assist the parties with early resolution at a minimum of cost: and
- Provide a framework of general guidance to practitioners about procedure while maintaining flexibility to tailor directions and orders on a case by case basis.

Much time, care and consultation went into the development of the Practice Directions. I acknowledge the work of the Brisbane P&E judges and the professional associations and thank them for it.

In the early months of 2024, Judge Williamson KC engaged with the legal profession at several QELA seminars. These provided forums for discussion and clarification of the Court’s expectations under the Practice Directions. The goal is balancing court supervision with allowing competent parties to conduct the case with autonomy.

As mentioned in the Chief Judge’s overview, the P&E Court created a new list and an associated Practice Direction, No 3 of 2025, to facilitate the timely disposition of planning appeals that relate to large residential projects. Funding provided by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning has enabled a pilot program whereby the Court’s ADR Registrar, who conducts the Court-funded mediation service, may engage relevant experts to assist in the timely resolution of the appeals, avoiding the time and cost associated with a full merits hearing.

Alternative Dispute Resolution remains an integral part of the P&E Court’s case-management process. Available to the parties without charge, mediation is built into the Practice Directions, including No 3 of 2025 which creates the “Residential list”. The Court is fortunate to have the services of ADR Registrar, Steven Adams, a highly respected practitioner, who manages and conducts the Court’s mediations.

**Table 4: Clearance rate in planning and environment cases**

Planning and Environment Court 2024-2025						
				Clearance Rate *	Backlog Indicator	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		From filing date	
					% > 12 mths	% > 24 mths
Brisbane	242	267	168	110.3%	24.4%	5.3%
Beenleigh	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Cairns	5	6	6	120%	33.3%	16.6%
Ipswich	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Maroochydore	24	31	28	129.2%	35.7%	10.7%
Rockhampton	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Southport	10	14	3	140%	0.00%	0.00%
Townsville	7	15	5	214.3%	40%	20%
State Total	288	333	210	115.6%	26.2%	6.6%

\*Clearance rate - finalisations/lodgements

Backlog Indicator: the number active defendants with proceedings older than the specified time.

As the table shows, during the year under review 288 new matters were lodged in the P&E Court (328 last year). The Court completed 333 matters (337 last year). This represents a clearance rate of 115.6%. Of the 210 outstanding matters, 26.2% were more than 12 months old from the date of filing and 6.6% more than 24 months old.

P&E Court files are open to inspection for any litigant, lawyer or member of the public through eFiles, an online service which makes court documents available to everyone. Whether originating in Brisbane or a regional centre, all active files are accessible through the Queensland Courts website [eCourts](#) facility.

The P&E applications list in Brisbane, referred to in previous reports, is a continuing success. Shorter applications are dealt with separately in a dedicated list, allowing more time for parties' submissions and judicial consideration, while allowing judges more time to prepare and consider longer cases. This continues to be an efficient use of judicial resources, well-received by the legal profession.

### **Childrens Court of Queensland**

The Childrens Court of Queensland (CCQ) is a specialist jurisdiction established under the *Childrens Court Act 1992*. Judge Richards is the President.

Many judges of the Court are appointed to sit as CCQ judges.

Judges sitting in the CCQ determine:

- charges of serious criminal offences brought against children, with a jury but regularly as judge alone;
- bail applications and sentence reviews, providing speedy access for child defendants being held on remand;
- appeals pursuant to section 117 of the *Child Safety Act 1999*; and
- applications for parentage orders under the *Surrogacy Act 2010*.

A separate annual report of the Childrens Court of Queensland is prepared under the *Childrens Court Act 1992* and further details of the Court can be found in that report. For the purposes of this report, it is sufficient to note that criminal lodgements in the CCQ were 7% fewer than the previous year, and 18% fewer than two years ago. The clearance rate was 99.5%. The Court heard 43 Sentence Reviews and 96 bail applications. The Childrens Court of Queensland remains a busy part of the work of judges of the District Court.

## Regional Centres, Circuits and Remote Communities

Table 5 shows the number of weeks the Court sat at the seven regional centres where 17 of the judges are based.

**Table 5: Judge sitting weeks at regional centres, including resident Judges and visiting Judges**

Regional Centre	Sitting Weeks
Beenleigh	74
Cairns	107
Ipswich	110
Maroochydore	91
Rockhampton	35
Southport	165
Townsville	89

The judges based in the regional centres control the lists in those centres and assist the Judge Administrator and Chief Judge in the preparation of the calendar. The judges also travel on circuit to other centres throughout the State and regional judges sit in Brisbane periodically during the year. At most circuit centres and at some regional centres the judges rely on such registry support as is available from staff of the Magistrates Court.

Judges based in Brisbane visit the regional centres according to need, including when the regional judges are in Brisbane or on leave.

Regional judges engage appropriately in community and legal professional activities. Some examples are included in the list of judges' contributions to professional development later in this report. The judges also consult local stakeholders in procedural matters with the aim of continuously improving the Court's processes.

### Cairns

Judge Morzone KC, Judge Fantin and Judge Treviño KC were the resident judges in Cairns managing the Court's lists there. This centre is also served by the Supreme Court's Far Northern Judge. The region includes Innisfail and Cape York. Each judge holds an appointment to the CCQ and the P&E Court. The judges undertook circuits to Thursday Island, Innisfail, Mt Isa, and Cape York.

### Rockhampton

The resident judge in Rockhampton, Judge Clarke, is also a CCQ judge. His Honour managed the Court's Rockhampton lists. Rockhampton is also served by the Supreme Court's Central Judge. Judge Clarke undertook circuits to Gladstone and Emerald. Gladstone and Emerald remain particularly busy. Other judges also sat at these centres.

### Townsville

Judge Lynham, Judge Coker and, since 5 May 2025, Judge Christopher Kahler, are the resident judges at Townsville, which is also served by the Supreme Court's Northern Judge. Judge Coker holds a commission in the P&E Court. All judges are appointed to the CCQ. They also undertake circuits in the region - to Bowen, Charters Towers, Cairns, Mt Isa and Mackay. Judge Coker managed the Mt Isa list during the year.

## **Maroochydore**

Most of the work of the Court at Maroochydore is undertaken by the resident judges, Judge Long SC and Judge Cash, with assistance from other judges who visit on circuit. In addition to the usual work within the jurisdiction of the District Court, Judge Long and Judge Cash sit in the CCQ and the P&E Court. Maroochydore conduct the Court's largest regional P&E Court caseload.

The Maroochydore-based judges undertake much of the circuit work at Gympie and Kingaroy, as well as assisting with Hervey Bay. Both judges undertake some circuit work elsewhere in the State.

## **Southport**

The resident Southport judges, Judge Jackson KC, Judge Holliday KC, Judge Wooldridge KC and Judge Prskalo KC, all hold commissions as CCQ judges. Judges Jackson, Holliday and Prskalo are P&E Court judges.

The Southport judges from time to time perform circuit work at centres elsewhere in the State. In particular, each sits regularly at Beenleigh, as do many judges from Brisbane.

## **Ipswich**

Judge Horneman-Wren SC, until his retirement and Judge Chowdhury, who moved from Beenleigh, with Judge Lynch KC and Judge Power KC, dealt with the Ipswich caseload. All Ipswich judges hold commissions in the CCQ. The judges undertook circuits to other centres, namely Toowoomba, Dalby, Mt Isa, Gympie and Warwick.

## **Beenleigh**

Judge Balic, upon Judge Chowdhury's move to Ipswich, is the resident judge in Beenleigh. His Honour, who also holds a CCQ commission, conducted circuits in other centres: Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mt Isa.

Given the caseload at Beenleigh, considerable assistance was provided by judges on circuit from other centres. For various reasons, between 5 and 10% of the criminal cases commenced at Beenleigh are transferred to Brisbane. It has long been obvious that the Court facilities at Beenleigh are inadequate. One result, despite the dedication of the resident Beenleigh judges, is an increase in the backlog of cases.

## **Circuit centres**

As the tables show, a significant part of the Court's work is conducted outside Brisbane. In particular, Table 1 shows that more than two-thirds of all the Court's criminal matters are lodged and finalised in centres other than Brisbane.

Judges of the District Court travel on circuit to many centres. At most places, the Court on circuit will conduct jury trials as well as any other proceeding within the Court's jurisdiction. At certain communities throughout the State, the judges travel to conduct sentencing hearings and civil matters.

During the year under review, as well as regional centres where there are resident judges, the Court sat on circuit at Bowen; Bundaberg; Charleville; Charters Towers; Dalby; Emerald; Gladstone; Goondiwindi; Gympie; Hervey Bay; Innisfail; Kingaroy; Longreach; Mackay; Maryborough; Mount Isa/Cloncurry; Roma; Toowoomba; Thursday Island and Warwick.

Through its circuit work, the Court is accessible to those in remote, rural and regional Queensland so that matters can be heard and decided in a timely fashion no matter in what part of the State.

The judges visited where necessary the remote Aboriginal and Islander communities on circuit. In the year under review, judges sat in Thursday Island in the Torres Strait and Aurukun in Cape York.

## **Operational matters**

### **Chief Judge's calendar**

In the year under review, I sat in the various jurisdictions of the Court at Brisbane and on circuit at Townsville, Mackay, Maryborough, Southport, Ipswich, Cairns, Rockhampton.

The judges of the Court met monthly, with many attending remotely from the regional or circuit centres.

I met regularly with the Chief Justice, the Director-General of the Department of Justice and senior officers of the department, the Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General, listings managers and Courts Information Technology staff.

Within the Courts, I attended meetings of the Courts IT Committee and the Focus Group. The Focus Group, chaired by the Senior Judge Administrator and comprising the Chief Justice, the President of the Court of Appeal, the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate and the Director-General, met with the Principal Registrar and other senior officers throughout the year. Its purpose is to keep the Courts informed about actual and proposed departmental initiatives for the state Courts, to provide an opportunity for the Courts to participate in the allocation of resources, and to ensure the regular monitoring of the Courts' registry and administrative operations.

The year saw the publication of Practice Direction No 3 of 2024 which introduced the Sexual Violence Case Management scheme. The pilot scheme at Brisbane and Ipswich is gaining pace and the evaluation process has already begun. In September 2024, the Court presented information sessions to the profession at Brisbane and Ipswich. I meet at least quarterly with the Director, Sexual Violence Case Reform, who leads the team that ensures the success of this important innovation. The Principal Registrar's report contains detail about the pilot scheme's progress. It continues to be a pleasure to work with such a highly qualified and committed team and to chair the meetings of the Steering Committee.

With the assistance of other judges, I respond to invitations from the Department of Justice to comment on legislative change.

Each month, the Chief Justice chaired a meeting of the Courts, the Department of Justice and, alternately, senior officers of justice system agencies (for example, Police, Corrective Services, Youth Justice, Parole) and representatives of the legal profession (for example, DPP, CDPP, QLS, LAQ, Youth Advocacy Centre). These short bi-monthly discussions present a valuable opportunity for the exchange of views and information and the timely adjustment of procedures.

I attended meetings of the Supreme Court Library Committee and the Financial and Risk Management sub-committee. The Supreme Court Library provides valuable service not just to the judges of the Supreme, District and Magistrates Courts, but to the legal profession and many members of the public. The Library's Annual Report is available at <https://www.sclqld.org.au/about/corporate-information>. A short summary is attached to this report.

During the year I met with organisations involved in the justice system, such as the Queensland Bar Association, the Queensland Law Society, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid Queensland and Protect All Children Today Inc.

With Judge Williamson KC, I presented at the annual conference of the Queensland Environmental Law Association conference.

The Chief Judges of the District and County Courts of Australia and New Zealand met at Adelaide in October 2024 and at Brisbane, before the Biennial Conference of Judges of District and County Courts, in May 2025. During the year I was appointed as nominee of the Chief Judges to the Council of the National Judicial College of Australia. The NJCA prepares and presents high quality educational programs for judicial officers of all courts and tribunals in Australia. [www.njca.com.au/about-us](http://www.njca.com.au/about-us)

### **Practice Directions**

During the year, 11 District Court Practice Directions were amended or issued. They are listed in Appendix 1.

### **Committees**

Many judges serve on committees with responsibility for developing and implementing policies and procedures for the continual improvement of the functioning of the Courts. These include the Supreme and District Courts Benchbook Committee, the Rules Committee, the Judicial IT Committees, and the District Court judges' committees.

#### *Procedure and Rules Committee*

The Rules Committee, chaired by Justice Bond of the Supreme Court, included the Chief Justice, other judges of the Supreme Court and, from the District Court, Judge Porter KC, Judge Barlow KC and Judge Jackson KC. The committee met monthly out of ordinary court hours.

#### *Benchbook*

The Supreme and District Courts Benchbook provides information and model directions for the judges conducting criminal trials. It is a work of collegiate endeavour. During the year under report, Judge Byrne KC, Judge Cash and Judge Wooldridge KC contributed on behalf of the District Court.

The Sentencing Benchbook is also under review. Judges Lynch KC and Power KC represent the Court on the review committee.

#### *IT – E-Court Committees*

Judges of the District Court who attended these meetings included Judge Morzone KC, Judge Porter KC, Judge Cash and Judge Andreatidis KC.

## **District Court Committees**

The Judges' committees assist and advise the Chief Judge in respect of the conduct of litigation by the Court and in responding to numerous law reform issues proposed by the Commonwealth or the State.

The membership of the judges' committees as at 30 June 2025 is as follows:

Criminal Law	Diversity and Inclusion
Judge Dearden	Judge Fantin
Judge Rafter SC	Judge Jarro
Judge Farr SC	Judge Clarke
Judge Kent KC	Judge Barlow KC
Judge Loury KC	Judge Wooldridge KC
Judicial Well-being and Education	Judicial Conditions
Judge Richards	Judge Farr SC
Judge Sheridan	Judge Williamson KC
Judge Williamson KC	
Judge McDonnell	
Judge Andreatidis KC	

## **Continuing judicial professional development**

The internal judges' conference, jointly organised with the Supreme Court, was a great success in August 2024.

As mentioned in the overview, in May 2025, the Sexual Violence Case Reform program team hosted the second Domestic Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Judicial Conference in Brisbane, Queensland. The conference explored best practice in responding to DFSV proceedings, recent and incoming legislative change. This was a valuable opportunity for the judges together to gain professional development directly relevant to a large part of the Court's jurisdiction. Sessions included an expert examination of memory and witness testimony to facilitate best evidence from vulnerable witness, an update on the operation of the Sexual Violence Case Management Pilot, experiences from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and the journey from community consultation to law reform in the criminalisation of coercive control, as well as an overview of the recent law reform pertaining to DFSV proceedings including significant amendments to the *Evidence Act 1977*. The attending judges gained much from the program and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Apart from these conferences, judges regularly attended seminars and conferences, usually during court vacation or the judge's long leave. Reference has already been made to the Australian Judicial Officers Association Colloquium. Other examples include conferences held by the Queensland Bar Association and regional bar associations; Queensland Law Society or regional law society seminars; the annual Queensland Environmental Law Association conference. Of course, judges are often called upon to present papers at these events.

## **Judges' contributions to the legal professional community**

Many judges, whether resident in Brisbane or a regional centre, contribute to local and national seminars, conferences, podcasts, moots or academic institutions. The following is a sample of the contributions made during the year –

## Presentations:

- The Callover podcast for QLS for NAIDOC week. Judge's progression into the law as a judge, July 2024.
- Witnessing to silence lecture Brisbane Magistrates Court.
- *Going to Court in Queensland* Victims Pathway Podcast, August 2024.
- Presented as part of an on-line seminar on civil domestic violence legislation in the South Pacific, August 2024.
- QELA P&E Law Moot as a Judge for law students, August 2024.
- Adjudicated the Women in Insolvency & Restructuring Qld Great Debate, August 2024.
- Presented at the STEP lunchtime seminar program on inter vivos transactions, September 2024.
- Taught in the Commercial Litigation Workshop as part of the BAQ team at the PNG Legal Training Institute in Port Moresby, September 2024.
- Presentation to the Sunshine Coast Bar Association conference on Ethics, October 2024
- Presented at the Bundaberg District Law Association conference, November 2024.
- Wrote foreward for Pasifika Lawyers Annual Report, December 2024.
- Presented as MC at QELA trivia night, February 2025.
- Judges of the P&E Court conducted moots for the QELA Advocacy workshop, March 2025.
- Presented at the QLS Symposium along with Lindsey Franklin-Browne, March 2025.
- Presented a seminar on the Commercial List at the QLS Symposium, March 2025.
- QELA Advocacy workshop as a judge for junior solicitors, March 2025.
- Presiding over a practice moot in the Court of Appeal for UQ Viz International Arbitration Moot, March 2025.
- Adjudicated the Law and Culture Moot, March 2025.
- Talk on Statutory Interpretation on Saturday for an organisation called Reasonable Cause March 2025.
- Panel discussion at QPS conference, March 2025,
  - Adult victims of sexual violence;
  - Body worn cameras;
  - Merging of ss 21A and 93A of the *Evidence Act*
- Member of Diversity and Inclusion Network, attended forum in Darwin, May 2025.
- Delivered P&E Court updates at QELA conference, May 2025.
- Presentation to the Queensland ODPP on Particulars in Criminal Prosecutions, May 2025.
- Presented at the Induction for New Members of the Legislative Assembly, June 2025
- Gave talk to Queensland Police Service of the life of a prosecutor, June 2025.
- Presentation and participation in panel discussion at the Queensland Magistrates' State Conference on the new Coercive Control offence, June 2025.
- Presented at information session of Queensland Intermediaries.
- Member Supreme Court Library Collection sub-committee.
- Member of the Benchbook Committee.
- Chair of the Steering Committee for the implantation of the Expert Evidence Panel .
- Member of the Sexual Violence List Operational Working Group Brisbane Committee.
- BAQ presentation
- North Queensland Law Association presentation.
- University of Queensland Law School presentation.

- NJCA facilitator.
- Jury management.
- Accessible judicial decisions – improving interpreters and communities.
- Delivered paper to Development Tribunal “Appropriate conduct and procedure when exercising a semi-judicial role”.

## **Office of the Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General Supreme District and Land Courts Service**

*Amanda O'Brien*

The Office of the Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General, Supreme District and Land Courts Service is responsible for the management and coordination of registry administration, as well as the provision of judicial support services for the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Ms Amanda O'Brien is the Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General, and is supported by executive, administrative and registry staff throughout Queensland.

Ms Amanda O'Brien is an ex-officio member of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting, and of the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board. She is also a member of the Supreme Court of Queensland Library Committee and the Public Records Review Committee at Queensland State Archives.

Ms Julie Steel PSM, former Principal Registrar and Assistant Director-General, retired in early 2025. Ms O'Brien extends her heartfelt gratitude to Ms Steel for her unwavering commitment and dedication to the administration of justice and acknowledges her 14 years of outstanding service as Principal Registrar.

### **Registry Services**

Court registries are responsible for:

- receiving and sealing documents for filing and service;
- providing procedural information about Court processes and the progress of particular matters;
- maintaining Court records and ensuring that documents such as Verdict and Judgment Records are created and distributed to give effect to orders of the Court;
- organising resources to enable matters to progress through the system and hearings to proceed; and
- performing all necessary administrative work associated with the criminal and civil jurisdictions of the Court.

There are permanent District Court registries at Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville. Registrars at those centres have the responsibility of determining certain applications without the necessity for judicial involvement such as default judgments and warrants to enforce the Court's civil orders.

Further registries with resident judges are located at Beenleigh, Ipswich, Maroochydore and Southport, and many other regional centres throughout Queensland are visited on circuit. Local Magistrates Courts registry staff perform the registry duties in those locations.

### **Registry Workloads**

Across the State, there were 6,373 criminal lodgements during 2024-2025, a decrease of 4.3% compared to 2023-2024, when 6,659 were received.

The number of trials before the District Court decreased from 664 during 2023-2024 to 630 in 2024-2025. The average period of juror engagement for those trials decreased from 3.7 days to 3.6 days.

Report on Government Services (RoGS) civil lodgements decreased by 4.1%, from 4,096 in 2023-2024 to 3,928 during 2024-2025.

### **Jury Management and Circuit Support Team**

The Jury Management and Circuit Support (JMCS) team commenced a pilot of a specialised approach to support registry staff to deliver more complex services to the District Court, in response to the Court Services Queensland Workforce Review.

Recruitment for three Registrar positions concluded in September 2024 creating a small, dispersed team with a Registrar based in Bowen, Hervey Bay and Brisbane.

The JMCS team ensures effective, consistent, and high-quality jury and circuit support services are delivered by registries across Queensland. The team has provided on-site circuit support to Emerald, Charters Towers and Hervey Bay District Courts and online support to many other registries. The team also provides training in the Juror Management System (JMS) and circulates regular procedural updates to staff.

Many of the day-to-day jury management tasks remain the responsibility of local registry staff. However, the JMCS team undertakes a number of tasks on behalf of those local registries. These tasks include critical processing tasks, such as scheduling sittings, criminal history checks, failed payment processing and other non-critical tasks including occupation, address and changes, printing and posting excusal letters.

In May 2025 the JMCS team delivered a Jury Management Learning and Development platform which provides staff with the tools required for managing juries like checklists, training videos, JMS user guides, links to legislation, policies, procedures, and practice directions.

The JMCS team forms part of the broader Specialist Court Services unit which will expand in July 2025 to include other specialist Courts' services such as support for affected child witness and special witness recording, eTrials and bailiff training activities.

### **Specialist Court Services**

Over recent years, the registry has been moving to a regional service delivery model, combining centralised services in Brisbane with increased support for regional registries. This approach was recommended by the Court Services Queensland Workforce Review and has proven highly effective in several key areas, including Wills and Estates, Jury Management and Circuit Support, recording of evidence for affected child and special witnesses, and bailiff training. The model leverages centralised teams of subject matter and system experts to deliver the following benefits:

- **Training:** Providing comprehensive training for new staff and ongoing training for existing staff on system, legislative and policy updates.
- **Implementation support:** Preparing for and facilitating the smooth transition of system, legislative and policy changes into the registries.
- **Workload management:** Centralising specific workflows or tasks to alleviate pressure on regional registries and ensure an equitable distribution of work.
- **Judicial circuit support:** Assisting regional registries in preparing for circuit sittings.

This model has delivered a consistent and uniform approach to decision making, improved and minimised preventable delays, thereby reducing impacts on Court proceedings. It has strengthened relationships with regional registries and enhanced the quality of service provided to the judiciary by ensuring staff are well-trained, skilled, and supported to meet the needs of the Court. Consideration will be given to expanding the specialist Court services model to additional skill areas.

## **Queensland Intermediary Scheme**

The Queensland Intermediary Scheme (QIS) commenced as a pilot program in Brisbane and Cairns in July 2021 in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's *Criminal Justice Report* (2017).

The scheme continues operation in these two locations and aims to overcome communication barriers and create a more accessible justice system by facilitating the communication of evidence that may not otherwise be heard. It does this by providing intermediaries, who are communication specialists, such as speech pathologists and social workers, to assess children under 16 years and adults with an impairment of the mind or communication difficulties who are witnesses in child sexual offences. The intermediary then advises police and the Courts about how to communicate with the witness to obtain their clearest evidence.

During 2024-2025:

- 125 referrals were received for eligible prosecution witnesses, of which 97 identified as female; 26 identified as male, and two identified as gender neutral.
- 87 referrals were for matters before the Court (58 in Brisbane and 25 in Cairns) and 38 at the police investigative stage (26 across Brisbane region and seven across the Cairns region).
- Ten referrals were outside of the scope of the scheme because they were for matters outside of Brisbane and Cairns or an offence other than a child sexual offence.

Referrals received identified 189 communication needs. The age of the prosecution witness (under 16 years) was identified as the greatest communication need often in conjunction with other reasons such as:

- physical impairments affecting speech;
- mental impairment;
- intellectual impairment;
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);
- Autism spectrum disorder;
- Fetal alcohol syndrome disorder; and
- language or speech disorders.

Recommendations made by an intermediary to enable effective questioning of the witness have included the:

- manner of questioning;
- duration of questioning and requirement for breaks;
- use of models, plans and other visual or communication aids; and
- use and/or adaptation of an audio-visual link or communication facility.

In the 2025-2026 budget, funding was granted to the QIS so it can continue providing communication assistance to vulnerable witnesses for the next four years.

## **Sexual Offence Expert Evidence Panel**

The Sexual Offence Expert Evidence Panel (the Panel) is being piloted in specified Courts in Brisbane and Townsville following recommendations from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report *Hear her voice: Report Two*.

The Panel's introduction is being staged and from 3 February 2025, has been open for referrals from parties seeking an expert witness to give evidence about whether the

defendant had a cognitive and/or mental health impairment at the time of the alleged offence and whether that impacted on their ability to say or do anything to ascertain whether the other person consented to the sexual act. One referral was received in the 2024-2025 financial year which was ineligible.

The implementation of the Panel is being overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by a District Court judge and comprised of representatives from various government departments, the legal profession and Office of the Victims Commissioner. Further, information sessions for the legal profession and interested stakeholders were conducted in the Banco Court in Brisbane on 22 January 2025 and the Townsville Courts precinct on 19 February 2025.

### **Protect All Children Today (PACT)**

In financial year 2024-2025, PACT continued to support over 2,500 children, young people, and vulnerable adults as they engaged with the justice system. With a strategic focus on “better, not bigger,” PACT has prioritised quality, consistency, and improved outcomes for victims and witnesses of crime, our volunteer community and key PACT stakeholders across Queensland.

Key highlights include:

- **Quality and governance:** A new Quality and Training Manager role was established, enhancing professional standards, safeguarding practices, and volunteer management to align with new child-safe and governance frameworks.
- **Volunteer Capability:** State-wide recruitment and engagement initiatives introduced ‘specialist’ volunteers, improved training resources, and peer support structures, resulting in greater consistency and improved client experiences.
- **Cultural and Community Responsiveness:** New service resources were developed, and access to First Nations and culturally diverse cultural competency training was expanded, supporting more inclusive and respectful service delivery.
- **Sector Engagement:** PACT actively represented our clients’ perspectives on key reform and advisory groups, including with the Victims’ Commissioner, Victims Advisory Service, and Sexual Violence Case Management pilot and in other relevant forums.
- **Technology and Risk Management:** An IT audit led to significant investment in systems and cyber security, increasing capacity, efficiency, and service integrity while reducing organisational risk.
- **Organisational Strength:** Staff renewal, new board appointments, and a focusing on a values-driven culture have positioned PACT for continued growth, stronger stakeholder relationships and improved victim support service delivery.

In financial year 2024-2025, PACT has exceeded previous levels of victim and sector support and we anticipate helped to improve consistency and trust of victims and witnesses required to participate in the Queensland justice process. It is the organisational intent for PACT to continue to invest in people, systems, and governance to further strengthen the quality of PACT’s state-wide service delivery and its contribution to sector reform and community confidence.

### **Sexual Violence Case Management Pilot**

On 2 September 2024, the Sexual Violence Case Management (SVCN) Pilot commenced in the District Court in Brisbane and Ipswich to improve the way sexual violence (SV) offence proceedings are dealt with in Queensland. The SVCN Pilot is underpinned by District Court Practice Direction 3 of 2024 which sets out best practice principles for the

management of SV offence proceedings state-wide, and protocol for the case management of SV matters in Brisbane and Ipswich.

The SVCM Pilot introduces dedicated SV lists, case management of SV offence proceedings and Mediated Case Conferencing in line with recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Key features of the SVCM Pilot include new forms for legal practitioners requiring parties to share information with the Court and consider the case earlier in proceedings, new Court events that provide monitoring and oversight of matters, dedicated Court resources to support the SV list judges and to facilitate matter continuity and progression and trial dates to be listed within eight months of indictment presentation. The SVCM Pilot seeks to address and minimise harm by supporting the early identification and resolution of pre-trial issues, minimise preventable delays to the Court process and provide greater certainty to all Court users including complainants and witnesses with SV matters before the Court.

As at 30 June 2025, 199 matters had been referred to the SV list in Brisbane in which 117 matters were active and 82 matters were finalised. Finalised matters comprised of 15 trials, 45 guilty pleas, 20 *nolle prosequi* and two matters referred for Adult Restorative Justice Conferencing. In Ipswich, 71 matters had been referred to the SV list of which 49 matters were active and 22 finalised. Finalised matters comprised of one trial, 17 guilty pleas and four *nolle prosequi*. In addition, a total of 121 Mediated Case Conferences have been held in which the Case Conference Registrar facilitated without prejudice discussions to narrow issues, settle agreed facts and worked with parties to reduce the likelihood of last minute Court de-listings to support trial stability.

Continuous improvement of the SVCM Pilot is informed by regular stakeholder engagement through Local Operational Working Group (LOWG) meetings in Brisbane and Ipswich and quarterly SVCM Pilot Steering Committee meetings led by the Chief Judge to provide strategic oversight of the program. In June 2024, the Griffith Criminology Institute was engaged to undertake an independent evaluation of the SVCM Pilot which is expected to be delivered in 2026.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am incredibly proud of the registry staff for their unwavering enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism in carrying out their duties. Their collective ability to efficiently manage increasing workloads, while embracing innovation and adapting to change, is undoubtedly a significant asset to the Court.

Many of these individuals have made timely and invaluable contributions, playing a crucial role in ensuring the Court's work continues seamlessly.

I also deeply value the patience, support and cooperation of judges and legal practitioners, particularly when challenges arise in delivering registry services. Their willingness to engage with the registry to enhance our service delivery is sincerely appreciated.

## **Your law library**

Supreme Court Library Queensland (SCLQ) continues to play a vital role in supporting the Queensland judiciary, legal practitioners and the broader legal community by providing reliable legal information services.

The past year has been defined by several notable accomplishments, including the development of a new funding model and improvements to services, collections, operational procedures and technology. These initiatives represent key milestones in our drive toward greater efficiency, sustainability, exceptional customer service and a positive user experience

I warmly acknowledge the continued advice and invaluable contributions from the members of the Library Committee and subcommittees—we are grateful for their assistance freely and generously given. The tireless efforts of the Committee and subcommittees are an essential part of the library's success as we continue to focus on developing business models at operational and strategic levels.

My special thanks are extended to the Chair of the Library Committee the Honourable Justice David Boddice (from 1 May 2025) and former Chair the Honourable Justice Peter Flanagan (up to 30 April 2025), Chair of the Legal Heritage Subcommittee the Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley and Chair of the Collection Subcommittee the Honourable Justice Frances Williams for their Honours' leadership and advice.

I sincerely thank his Honour Chief Judge Brian Devereaux SC for his Honour's time on and dedication to the Financial and Risk Management Subcommittee and the Library Committee, and his Honour Judge Michael Byrne KC for his Honour's contribution to the Collection Subcommittee.

I am grateful to the members of a small working party (former Library Committee member and Chair of the Financial and Risk Management Subcommittee the Honourable Justice Erin Longbottom, Dominic O'Sullivan KC and James Conomos) who oversaw the review and drafting of the new Supreme Court Library Rules 2025, which came into effect on 18 December 2024 with the approval of the Chief Justice.

### **CaseLaw and QGIS**

We continued to review the library website, CaseLaw and Queensland Sentencing Information Service (QGIS) to ensure these products meet the needs of our customers. We acknowledge there is room for improvement, and we are working with our partners to make incremental enhancements. These changes are informed by our users, and we openly welcome your feedback about our products and services.

During the year, we made several improvements to the CaseLaw search experience, including:

- highlighting search terms in search results
- the ability to sort (and reverse sort) CaseLaw search results by judgment date, court, party names and more
- the ability to select and save multiple results to 'My case list'.

Over 1990 new judgments were published in 2024-2025. We are proud to not only achieve but exceed our target to promptly publish judgments, with 98% of decisions published within two business days and most within one hour of receiving them. We also published over 1500 publicly available sentencing remarks transcripts from the Supreme and District Courts of Queensland.

We made several important improvements to QGIS with a complete revision to the data model. Working closely with Recording and Transcription Services (Department of Justice) we improved the flow of sentencing remarks transcripts for inclusion in the QGIS database, publishing over 8400 transcripts to QGIS this year.

There are now 4407 subscribers to QGIS, with 900 new users added in 2024-2025.

### **Legal information research service**

In 2024-2025, our dedicated team of knowledgeable legal research librarians responded to over 3800 research requests and supplied more than 9600 items, including case law, journal articles, and legal commentary. We exceeded our key performance measure by fulfilling nearly all requests within the required timeframe.

A core aspect of our service is assisting members of the Queensland judiciary in accessing critical legal information to facilitate justice outcomes for Queensland.

We continued to assist with access to legal information through the library's current awareness newsletter Queensland Legal Updater and by offering access to key legal information resources through the Judicial Virtual Library (JVL) for the judiciary and the Virtual Legal Library (VLL) for eligible legal practitioners.

We strengthened the legal research skills of the legal profession by delivering free training sessions tailored to different audiences. These included specialised programs for the judiciary, judicial associates and support staff, as well as sessions delivered through the Bar Practice Course and to members of Queensland Young Lawyers, early career practitioners, university students and graduates.

### **Regional libraries**

In 2024-2025 we maintained a strong focus on regional courthouse libraries and collections, recognising the importance of equitable access to services across Queensland.

The Regional Libraries Subcommittee was established with members the Honourable Justice Graeme Crow (Chair), the Honourable Justice David North and the Honourable Justice James Henry to commence meetings in 2025-2026.

The Cairns library continued to provide in-person services to local court users. Work is ongoing to reopen the Rockhampton and Townsville libraries, in consultation with the regional judiciary and with continued court support for a refreshed library model.

The Rockhampton library is undergoing a significant transition, with a dedicated librarian currently onsite one day a week to oversee the development of the physical collection and provide a local point of contact. The new library space, situated on level 2 of the Rockhampton Court building, has been formally agreed upon, with the design and furnishings now selected and approved.

Significant strides have been made in the planning and preparation for the reopening of the Townsville library. As part of the revitalisation effort with the Chief Justice's approval, the library is being relocated to a new level within the Court building, offering an opportunity to reimagine the space for improved accessibility and engagement. A full fit-out and refurbishment is currently in planning stages, with designs focused on creating a modern, functional, and welcoming environment. This development represents a major milestone in restoring essential library services to the Townsville legal profession.

To further support regional customers, the Brisbane library stayed open on the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) public holiday, ensuring uninterrupted remote assistance state-wide.

## **UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register**

In March 2025, we received recognition for our nationally significant documentary heritage, being awarded an inscription on the prestigious UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

The subject of the inscription is our series of historical catalogues and indexes, dating from 1881 to 1975, including a carved cedar lectern built as a catalogue stand in 1891, and a timber card index from 1896. This inscribed series was displayed in the library and represents unique and irreplaceable documentary heritage, tracing the library's growth over more than a century from our origins in 1862.

### **Education program**

Our free, quality education and engagement program continued to empower Queenslanders of all ages to explore, understand, and engage with the legal system through a varied suite of experiences:

- Observing real court proceedings: approximately 5250 visitors
- Participating in legal research talks and workshops (online and in-person): approximately 1300 participants
- Joining guided tours of the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law and our exhibitions: over 1800 visitors
- Engaging in immersive courtroom experiences to learn about legal principles and processes: approximately 2000 visitors.

Attendance at the popular Judge and Magistrate Talks grew by almost 25% on the previous year, with more than 2000 legal studies students taking part. These sessions offered a rare opportunity to hear directly from Queensland judges and magistrates, gaining first-hand insights into the State's legal system. Activities included mock trials, Q&A sessions and thought-provoking discussions on contemporary legal issues, with strong interest in topics such as youth justice, sentencing, career pathways and judicial work-life balance.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all District Court judiciary whose invaluable support, enthusiasm and participation makes this educational program possible. We are especially grateful that we could extend the reach of this program to students and educators in regional Queensland by providing them with opportunities to engage with the Queensland court system and legal professionals in a similar way to those located in South East Queensland.

### **Public programs**

Our latest major exhibition *We, the jury* opened in early 2025 in the Sir Harry Gibbs Legal Heritage Centre. It examines the vital role of juries in Queensland's justice system from their historical foundations to the challenges of representation and inclusion today focusing on civic duty, representation and reform. Visitors are invited to consider how jury service strengthens democratic participation and how legal systems can evolve to ensure greater equity and civic engagement. It is also available as a virtual tour and online exhibition, expanding access to regional and remote communities, and it is accompanied by a range of downloadable resources.

We curated several other displays during 2024-2025:

- *The shorthand of the law: stenography selections from the legal heritage collection* illustrated the evolution of the practice of shorthand and highlighted the progression of its use in the courtroom.
- A series of displays of items from our legal heritage collection in cabinets located throughout the library and Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law showcased some of our more significant donations and original holdings of historical material.

- Special exhibits for the nine legal practitioner admission ceremonies throughout the year highlighted the individual achievements of Queensland's talented legal professionals as told through the Roll of Solicitors.

We support community learning about Queensland's legal heritage by organising a program of Selden Society lectures throughout the year. With the generous support of the Chief Justice, the lectures are hosted in the Banco Court in the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law in Brisbane. We also livestream the lectures so they are accessible to the wider community and publish recordings of the lectures on our YouTube channel and in our Selden Society podcast series.

Our diverse range of community engagement programs are designed to give everyone in the community—not just those in the legal profession—the opportunity to connect with the library, engage with the Queensland legal system, and discover our legal heritage.

Throughout 2025-2026, we look forward to continually working to support Queensland's District Court judiciary and officers by providing a high level of support, training, and resources.

*Marian Morgan-Bindon, Supreme Court Librarian & CEO*

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Practice Directions

The following Practice Directions were issued by the Chief Judge during the year and are available on the Queensland Courts website, [Practice directions - District Court](#).

**Table 6: District Court practice directions**

Number	Description	Date issued
No 3 of 2024	Sexual Violence Case Management	19 July 2024
No 4 of 2024	Temporary Closure of Beenleigh District Court	9 October 2024
No 5 of 2024	Designation of Registry Holidays	18 October 2024
No 1 of 2025	Temporary Closure of Townsville Registry	2 February 2025
No 2 of 2025	Temporary Closure of Townsville Registry	3 February 2025
No 3 of 2025	Temporary Closure of District Court Registry – Brisbane, Ipswich, Beenleigh and Southport	5 March 2025
No 4 of 2025	Temporary Closure of District Court Registry – Maroochydore and Gympie	5 March 2025
No 5 of 2025	Temporary Closure of the Hervey Bay Registry	9 March 2025
No 6 of 2025	Temporary Closure of the Southport Registry	11 March 2025
No 7 of 2025	Citation of Authority	14 May 2025
No 8 of 2025	Commercial List	20 May 2025

## Appendix 2: District Court associates as at 30 June 2025

### Associates' appointments

Associates are appointed by the Chief Judge pursuant to s36(2) of the *District Court of Queensland Act 1967*.

Lara Boland	Associate to His Honour Chief Judge BG Devereaux SC
James Campbell	Associate to His Honour Judge MJ Burnett AM
Jaime Gunning	Associate to Her Honour Judge D Richards
Madeleine Goss	Associate to His Honour Judge IFM Dearden
Lillian Tanna	Associate to His Honour Judge AJ Rafter SC
Olivia Vincenzi	Associate to Her Honour Judge LJ Clare SC
Tobias Kennett	Associate to His Honour Judge WG Everson
Ilana Price	Associate to His Honour Judge GP Long SC (Maroochydore)
Xanthe Swan	Associate to His Honour Judge BW Farr SC
Hannah Treston	Associate to His Honour Judge DP Morzone KC (Cairns)
Grace McGahan	Associate to Her Honour Judge SC Sheridan
Olivia Callaghan	Associate to His Honour Judge A Moynihan KC
Patrick Cenita	Associate to His Honour Judge DR Kent KC
Patrick Forrest	Associate to His Honour Judge MC Chowdhury (Ipswich)
Holly Otto	Associate to Her Honour Judge NJ Kefford
Zoe Nickson	Associate to His Honour Judge DR Lynch KC (Ipswich)
Sammi Cheadle	Associate to His Honour Judge GP Lynham (Townsville)
John Hangodi	Associate to His Honour Judge BT Porter KC
Maddison Facey	Associate to Her Honour Judge JM Rosengren
Katherine Richards	Associate to Her Honour Judge T Fantin (Cairns)
Adrienne Soteriou	Associate to His Honour Judge M Williamson KC
Tiana Spratling	Associate to His Honour Judge J Coker (Townsville)
Isabella Strauss	Associate to His Honour Judge N Jarro
Nathan Vaitsas	Associate to His Honour Judge G Cash (Maroochydore)
Jacinta Thefs	Associate to His Honour Judge J Allen KC
Ruth Connor	Associate to Her Honour Judge V Loury KC
Madeleine Kane	Associate to His Honour Judge K Barlow KC
Isabelle Killen	Associate to His Honour Judge T Gardiner
Sophie Roiter	Associate to His Honour Judge M Byrne KC
Daisy Rice	Associate to His Honour Judge R Jackson KC (Southport)
Shona Jackson	Associate to His Honour Judge J Clarke (Rockhampton)
Scout Mackenzie	Associate to Her Honour Judge GB Dann (QCAT)
Harrison Gambling	Associate to Her Honour Judge D Holliday KC (Southport)
Keely Wilkinson	Associate to Her Honour Judge A McDonnell
Casey Feltham	Associate to Her Honour Judge J Wooldridge KC (Southport)
Catherine McLeod	Associate to His Honour Judge N Andreatidis KC
Isobel Davies	Associate to His Honour Judge C Heaton KC
Callum Copland	Associate to His Honour Judge J Treviño KC (Cairns)
Eva Wedge	Associate to His Honour Judge B Power KC (Ipswich)
Sophie Whitley	Associate to Her Honour Judge K Prskalo KC (Southport)
Caitlin Keech	Associate to His Honour Judge C Kahler (Townsville)
Olivia Vincenzi	Associate to Her Honour Judge S Farnden KC
	Associate to Her Honour Judge DK Grigg