



SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25



SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND

CHAMBERS OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

30 October 2025

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Dear Attorney,

I enclose my report, under s 19(1) of the *Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991*, on the operation of the Supreme Court for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bowskill
Chief Justice

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Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



CHIEF JUSTICE'S OVERVIEW 2024-2025

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Performance

This overview concerns the performance of the Supreme Court over the 2024-2025 reporting year. The following statistics have been collated on the basis of the requirements of the Australian Government's Productivity Commission for the production of its annual "Report on Government Services" (RoGS).

Disposition of Caseload

Trial Division

Criminal

Over the reporting year, there were 1,626 lodgements in the criminal jurisdiction, compared with 1,604 for the 2023-2024 year. The Trial Division ended the year with 651 outstanding cases (compared with 659 in the previous year), having disposed of 1,627 cases; a clearance rate of 100.1%.

Of the outstanding cases, 19.0% were more than 12 months old (from date of presentation of indictment), and 4.8% were more than 24 months old. Some of the latter group would result from orders for re-trials made on appeal and some would result from referrals to the Mental Health Court.

Civil

In the civil jurisdiction, there were 3,720 lodgements, compared with 3,526 lodgements for the 2023-2024 year.

At the end of the 2024-2025 year, there were 4,048 outstanding matters (compared with 3,691 in the previous year), the Court having disposed of 3,394 matters; a clearance rate overall of 91.2%.

Of the outstanding matters, 30.5% were more than 12 months old, and 9.8% more than 24 months old.

Court of Appeal Division

The Court of Appeal division disposed of 308 criminal appeals this year (274 last year), representing a clearance rate of 104.8%. As at 30 June, 275 criminal appeals awaited disposition (287 last year).

The Court of Appeal also disposed of 160 civil appeals (139 last year), with a clearance rate of 104.6%, leaving 93 outstanding at the end of the year (100 last year).

Observations on the Court's Caseload

Criminal lodgements in the reporting year remained at the level of the previous year (only 1% (22 defendants) greater than the previous year). The most common offence types lodged by way of indictment continue to be Drug Offences (76%), followed by Assault (4%), Weapons and Explosives Offences (4%) and Sexual Offences (4%).

During the 2024-2025 reporting year, a change in offence classification occurred which has resulted in small differences in offence volumes across division categories, and the renaming of some divisions. For example, Acts Intended to Cause Injury are now classified as Assault. Homicide (murder and manslaughter) is a separate category, which accounted for 2% of offences in 2024-2025 (114 charges in 2024-2025, in contrast to 136 charges in 2023-2024).

A substantial number of criminal proceedings resolve by guilty plea (about 77% of cases), but Homicides rarely resolve in that way. Across the offence categories, those that proceed to trial involve complex issues and the trials are becoming longer. During this reporting year the number of criminal trials increased by 70%.

and the duration of the trials also increased, by 42% (from an average of 5.2 days to an average of 7.4 days).

There are a number of Homicide offences which remain in the pre-committal stage in the Magistrates Court, due to delays associated with DNA testing and analysis. The Court needs to be prepared for an increased workload, once these delays start to resolve.

The active case management undertaken by the Resolution Registrar (Crime) in accordance with Practice Direction 5 of 2024 has been of significant benefit to the efficiency of criminal proceedings in the Court. It is hoped that funding will be made available to make this a permanent position, following the completion of the pilot.

Civil filings in the Trial Division were slightly (about 6%) higher than in the previous year. Finalisations were 10% (320 cases) greater than the previous 2023-2024 year. The overall clearance rate in civil matters increased from 87.2% in the previous year to 91.2%. The number of matters outstanding for more than 12 months (about 30%) and more than 24 months (about 9.8%) is relatively stable in comparison to previous years.

Bail applications, applications for forfeiture, probate and admission as a legal practitioner, and proceedings under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* are not recorded as part of the RoGS statistics, but nonetheless form a substantial amount of the work of the Court.

The number of bail applications lodged has again increased significantly. This year, 1,302 applications were lodged, compared to 1,026 applications in the 2023-2024 year, which was itself a notable increase on numbers in previous years. The reason for the increase in bail applications remains unclear, although may be related to increased police activity (and consequent charging) as well as increased remand rates. Despite earlier speculation, the increase does not appear to be related to any overall increase in the rate of bail refusals in the Magistrates Court. Bail applications once again represented a significant amount of the work undertaken by the Court in its Applications jurisdiction during the reporting year. Consequently, consideration is being given to changing the way in which these applications are managed and heard by the Court.

A substantial number of applicants for bail represent themselves. Data provided by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions suggests that about one quarter of bail hearings involve self-represented applicants. This can result in difficulties, and adjournments, due to deficiencies in the evidence relied upon. I reiterate, as I have in previous years, that the assistance previously provided to self-represented applicants by organisations such as Caxton Legal Centre and Sisters Inside, when their bail assistance programs were funded, was valuable and worthwhile. The resumption of programs of this kind would be welcomed by the Court.

The number of fresh applications under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* remained constant (with eight new applications filed, the same number as the previous year). Nevertheless, this remains a substantial area of work for the Court, due to ongoing case management reviews and orders, contravention hearings, and annual reviews where continuing detention orders have been made, in addition to the substantive first hearings of applications for orders under the Act. The overall number of Court events increased in the reporting year (from 435 in 2023-2024, to 490 in 2024-2025).

The increase in probate applications being lodged continues, with lodgements this year being 4% greater than in 2023-2024.

In the Court of Appeal, the reporting year saw a small increase overall in the number of lodgements (3.7%). This was balanced between a decrease in criminal lodgements (of about 3.0%) and an increase of 19.5% in civil lodgements. The Court of Appeal criminal clearance rate increased (from 90.4% last year to 104.8% this year). The civil clearance rate decreased slightly, but still remained high at 104.6% this year.

In relation to Admissions, there were 1,150 new lawyers admitted to the legal profession as lawyers this year, at ten ceremonial sittings of the Court held in the Banco Court. This also represents an increase in comparison to the previous 2023-2024 year, when 970 lawyers were admitted. The work of the volunteer members of the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board which assists the Court in relation to these applications is gratefully acknowledged.

When taken together the increase in workload across both the Trial Division and the Court of Appeal has

been marked and is placing pressure on the current judicial resources (and associated services, including within the registry and the profession). The time is approaching, if it is not already here, when additional full time judge(s) of the Supreme Court will be required.

Practice and Procedure Developments

The Court issued a new Practice Direction 14 of 2024, in relation to Expert Evidence in Criminal Proceedings. The purposes of this Practice Direction include to enhance the quality and reliability of expert evidence relied upon in criminal trials, and to encourage the early identification of issues in dispute that will be the subject of expert evidence. The Practice Direction commenced on 15 July 2024, and applies to criminal proceedings in the Supreme Court commenced by an indictment presented on or after that date (other than sentences). The Court did not become aware of any practical issues in relation to the operation of the Practice Direction, during the reporting year. A review of the Practice Direction will commence in July 2025.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Court continued its commitment to practical recognition of diversity and inclusion in a number of ways, including through the work of a combined Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which comprises members from the Supreme District and Magistrates Courts, QCAT and Registry leaders.

The Annual Faith Service for the judiciary and the profession was held on 30 April 2025 at St John's Anglican Cathedral. It was the first time an inter-faith service was held for this purpose, incorporating people from many different faith communities in a substantive way.

In January 2025, work began on a completely revised edition of the Equal Treatment Benchbook. In the previous Report, it was noted that work was being undertaken to update the Equal Treatment Benchbook. A complete review of the Benchbook in late 2024 revealed the need for a far more substantial revision than merely updating. Ms Rebecca Fogerty and Dr Brooke Thompson were engaged to undertake the revision work, which it is hoped will be completed by December 2025.

Rules of Court in relation to interpreters, based on those recommended by the *Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters* published by the Judicial Council on Diversity and Inclusion, were enacted as part of the *Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 1999* (Qld) and the *Criminal Practice Rules 1999* (Qld) in May 2024. The Queensland Courts and Tribunals' Guidelines on Working with Interpreters were also updated.

Bowen 150 Years

On 21 October 2024, a combined ceremonial sitting of the Supreme, District and Magistrates Courts of Queensland took place in Bowen, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Supreme Court in Bowen. The bench comprised the Chief Justice, Justice North, the Chief Judge, Judges Lynham and Coker, the Chief Magistrate, Deputy Chief Magistrate Gett and Magistrate Howard. It was the first time in Queensland's history that a joint ceremonial sitting of all three Courts had been held.

Court Technology

Work on the Courts & Tribunals Digitisation Program continued during the reporting year, with some tangible changes delivered.

The new online Wills and Estates system, enabling probate applications to be filed and dealt with by the Court electronically, commenced in December 2024. In addition to the benefit of electronic lodgement, the digitisation of this work has also enabled the registry to introduce a state-wide allocation process for the assessment of applications by Registrars, ensuring a more equitable distribution of workload.

From 30 June 2025, parties to civil claims (new and continuing) in the Brisbane Supreme Court were able to electronically lodge documents, via the Queensland Courts and Tribunals Online Services Portal. This was a significant development, and one the legal profession and the judiciary welcomed, as we wait for the overall project to be completed (anticipated for the end of June 2026).

It is essential that the impetus of the project is maintained, to ensure time frames for final delivery are not delayed, which means that funding and other resourcing must be maintained. Consideration must also be given to the need for appropriate hardware in Courts, to enable judges to properly use the new system once it has been implemented. The current computers on judges' benches in Courts are not adequate for this purpose.

Separately, the Court is still awaiting progress in relation to the establishment of a dedicated and contemporary website. The current "Queensland Courts" website has not been fit for purpose for some time.

Continuing Judicial Education and Development

During the reporting year, in addition to the heavy workload of court work, judges of the Court contributed a significant amount of time teaching or presenting at legal seminars and conferences, including judicial education programs, as well as attending such programs as participants. What follows is a broad summary.

In addition to the many externally organised lectures, seminars or conferences, the Supreme Court's annual judicial education seminar was held on 11, 12 and 13 August 2024, at the Gold Coast. The seminar was once again organised jointly with the judges of the District Court, recognising our shared interest in a number of areas of knowledge and learning, and resulting in cost efficiency. Almost all the judges attend this seminar, which is an important professional development, educational and collegiate event. Topics covered at the conference included judgment writing and judicial decision-making, juries in the digital age, artificial intelligence, expert evidence in criminal proceedings, the impact of acquired brain injury and consequent cognitive impairment, compassion and judicial wellbeing.

A number of judges of the Court (in particular, the Chief Justice, Justice Mullins AO, Justice Martin AM, Justice Henry and Justice Burns) are regular teachers at programs organised by the National Judicial College of Australia (including the National Judicial Orientation Program, the Judgment Writing Programs, the National Magistrates Orientation Program, and the Jury Management Program). Justice Martin AM continued as the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee of the NJCA until October 2024. The Chief Justice was then appointed Co-Chair of that Committee, with Justice Robert Beech-Jones of the High Court of Australia.

A number of judges presented lectures or presentations on a wide range of topics at educational events organised by the Court, the Supreme Court Library of Queensland, the Australian Academy of Law, the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, Universities, the Australian Bar Association, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society, regional law associations, other professional associations and external conference organisers.

The judges who sit as members of the Mental Health Court, Justice Wilson and Justice Ryan, presented and participated in a number of seminars in relation to issues which arise in, and the practice and procedure of, that Court. This is an important element of endeavouring to address the substantially increased workload of the Mental Health Court, including by improved efficiencies.

Justice Freeburn, on behalf of the Court, attended a Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges which was held in Indonesia in September 2024 organised by the Honourable Muhammad Syarifuddin, Chief Justice of Indonesia and the Honourable Sundares Menon, Chief Justice of Singapore.

In addition, some judges are involved in providing continuing legal education to our colleagues in the South Pacific Region, which is facilitated by the Bar Association of Queensland's South Pacific Region CLE Committee.

Many judges attended conferences, seminars and lectures, locally (including the conferences organised by regional law associations), nationally and internationally. A number of judges also attended the Colloquium organised by the Australian Judicial Officers Association, held in Auckland, New Zealand in October 2024. Many judges attended the annual Supreme, Federal and New Zealand Senior Courts Conference which was held in Adelaide in January 2025. The Chief Justice, Justice Boddice and Justice Copley also attended the Pacific Judicial Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, in February 2025, at which judges from countries across the Pacific, including 20 Chief Justices, were present.

Many judges participated in the education program facilitated by the Supreme Court Library, by speaking to groups of school students throughout the year. This program has been extended to community groups. Many judges also contribute to the Bar Practice Course each year, either as presenters or as judges in the “mock hearings” which form part of the assessment for the Course. Judges also contribute their time and encouragement to law students through their involvement in university based, state-wide and national mooting programs and competitions.

Judicial education encompasses a broad range of topics including substantive and procedural law, judge-craft skills and social context. The commitment demonstrated by the judges of this Court to ongoing judicial education, whether as teachers, presenters or participants, is essential to the effective administration of justice and, in turn, maintaining public confidence in the Court. I commend the judges for their continued efforts in this regard, which requires a substantial time commitment outside of their usual court work, including during periods of leave.

Rules Committee

The function of the Rules Committee is to provide advice to the Attorney-General about any law giving jurisdiction to the Supreme District and/or Magistrates Courts, to consider and approve the making of rules of court and also to approve forms for use under certain legislation. During the reporting year, the members of the Rules Committee were the Chief Justice, Justice Bond (Chair), Justice Brown, Justice Cooper, Judge Barlow KC, Judge Jackson KC, Magistrate Sinclair and Magistrate McKenzie. In carrying out its functions, the Rules Committee is also assisted by the Principal Registrar, representatives from the Queensland Courts Registry and the Legal Policy and Procedures Unit and Ms Riethmuller from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. The Rules Committee met regularly throughout the year and addressed a wide range of matters. I once again express the Court’s gratitude to Justice Bond for his work in coordinating the work of the Rules Committee and to all the members and others who assist for their valuable contribution to its important work.

Benchbook Committee

The Supreme and District Courts Criminal Directions Benchbook is an invaluable resource, for both trial judges and legal practitioners. The work involved in ensuring the Benchbook is up to date, including in response to decisions of the Court of Appeal and legislative changes, is significant.

Up until April 2025, the Benchbook Committee comprised Justice Henry (Chair), Justice Muir, Judge Byrne KC, Judge Cash KC and Judge Wooldridge KC. Justice Henry stepped down as a member and as Chair in April 2025, and Justice Muir also stepped down as a member (due to commitments as a Commercial List judge). Justice Henry had been a member of the Benchbook Committee since 2017, and the Chair since early 2024, and was the driving force behind the introduction of the administrative editor which has been of significant assistance. It is appropriate to record the Court’s gratitude for Justice Henry’s significant contribution in this regard. Justice Burns took over as Chair of the Committee, and Justice Copley joined as a member.

The Court is grateful to all these judges for their willingness to contribute their time and expertise to this important work.

A separate Sentencing Benchbook Committee has also been established, comprising Justice Crowley (Chair), Justice Copley, Judge Lynch KC and Judge Power KC.

Judges’ Policy on Workplace Conduct

A review of the policy was conducted during 2024. Some minor amendments were made to the Policy. An externally facilitated training session for judges in relation to workplace conduct was conducted by Ms Robyn Bradey in December 2024.

In May 2025, the judges of the Court recommitted to the Policy on Workplace Conduct, following the appointment of Justice Smith.

Associates' Conduct Policy

The Court adopted an Associates' Conduct Policy, effective from 1 January 2025. In addition, the Court implemented proactive wellbeing support for associates commencing at the beginning of 2025, with the assistance of an organisational psychologist, Ms Deborah Johnstone.

Chief Justice's Calendar

Over the reporting year, I sat in Brisbane in the Court of Appeal (seven weeks), the criminal jurisdiction (eight weeks), civil sittings (six weeks) and Applications (four weeks).

I travelled to Cairns on circuit for a week in July 2024 sitting in the Court of Appeal, and again in March 2025 for two days, presiding over civil applications (this circuit was shortened, due to the exigencies of Tropical Cyclone Alfred in southeast Queensland). I circuited to Rockhampton during the week of 19 August 2024, and travelled again to Rockhampton for a week in June 2025, on each occasion presiding over sentences and other criminal matters. In the week of 21 October 2024, I sat in Townsville on circuit, hearing criminal matters. Travelling to, and hearing matters in Court in, the Central, Northern and Far Northern regions of the Court is an important element of the work of the Chief Justice of Queensland. It provides an opportunity for valuable engagement with the regional judiciary, legal profession and community.

There were 10 admissions ceremonies held in the Banco Court in Brisbane. I presided over 5 of the admissions ceremonies and the balance of ceremonies were presided over by Justice Mullins AO, President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Dalton, Justice Boddice and Justice Bond, sitting with various judges of appeal and of the Trial Division.

In the course of engagement with the judiciary, legal profession and the public, I attended conferences, functions and other events organised by the National Judicial College of Australia, courts and tribunals, professional associations, universities, community legal services, other community organisations, volunteer groups and others, giving many speeches and presentations in Brisbane, in regional centres and online. Amongst a number of other presentations, I also attended a number of educational or professional development programs as a participant, including the NJCA's Heads of Jurisdiction Leadership Program in October 2024.

I attended the 62nd Meeting of the Council of Chief Justices of Australia and New Zealand in Adelaide on 18 October 2024 and, on 31 March 2025, I attended the 63rd Meeting of the Council of Chief Justices of Australia and New Zealand held in Melbourne.

I continued my role as the Chair of the National Judicial Council on Diversity and Inclusion (JCDI), attending its meetings in Hobart, Tasmania on 28 November 2024 and in Darwin on 24 May 2025. As already mentioned, I took on the role of Co-Chair of the Program Advisory Committee of the National Judicial College of Australia.

I took the role of Acting Governor for a period aggregating 32 days and Deputy Governor for a period of 11 days over the reporting year. The following judges took on this role for a further 12 days, at times when I was either unavailable, or sitting in the Criminal jurisdiction (at which time, by convention, it is considered inappropriate for a judge to act as Governor or Deputy Governor):

- 18 to 19 July 2024 - Justice Bond was Acting Governor.
- 23 to 28 February 2025 - President Mullins AO was Acting Governor.
- 3 to 6 June 2025 - Justice Flanagan was Acting Governor.

International Aspects

During a week in London from 24 June 2024, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of senior judges, including Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, Dame Sue Carr; Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls and Head of Civil Justice in England and Wales and Lord Justice Colin Birss, Court of Appeal Judge and Deputy Head of Civil Justice, with whom I discussed technology in and available to Courts, artificial intelligence and digitisation; Lady Justice Philippa Whipple, Court of Appeal Judge, and Lead Judge for Diversity and Inclusion, Leadership Development and Wellbeing; and Judge Lucraft KC, Recorder of London, at the Old Bailey, with whom I discussed procedures adopted in the conduct of criminal (jury) trials. These meetings were a valuable opportunity to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

I met with Sir Albert R Parker CBE, Chief Justice of the Solomon Islands together with Ms Nichole Smith, Counsellor, Australian High Commission, Solomon Islands on 20 February 2025. The objective of the meeting was to discuss options for Queensland Supreme Court justices (sitting or retired) to sit on the Solomon Islands Court of Appeal. The Honourable Philip Morrison KC, who retired as a judge of appeal in June 2024, was appointed a judge of the Solomon Islands Court of Appeal on 20 June 2025. It is proposed to continue discussions about how Queensland judges may be able to assist.

In April 2025 Justice Mullins, President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Brown and I attended the 17th International Association of Women Judges Biennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

On 20 May 2025 I met with the Ambassador of the Philippines His Excellency Mr Antonio Albero Morales.

On 17 June 2025 I met with Her Excellency Ms Ingrid Dahl-Dadsen, Head of Mission Ambassador of Denmark.

The Chief Justice and Justice Bond participated in a Meeting of Chief Justices and Judges in Charge of Technology on 28 March 2025, together with members of the judiciary from Singapore, Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Dubai, Delhi and New Zealand, as well as the Chief Justice of South Australia, judges from the Supreme Court of New South Wales and representatives from the Federal Court of Australia. The focus of the discussion at this meeting was on the use of generative AI in Courts.

Judicial Retirements

On 11 October 2024 Justice Peter Applegarth AM retired as a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland following 16 years' service as a judge of the Trial Division, following his appointment on 29 August 2008. Justice Applegarth also regularly sat as an additional judge of appeal. His Honour made a significant contribution to the administration of the Court, serving as both a Supervised Case List judge – for both the management of complex and lengthy civil cases as well as cases involving self-represented litigants – and as a Commercial List judge. For the period from 31 July 2020 to 31 March 2023 Justice Applegarth was the Chair of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. Justice Applegarth was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2020 for his significant service to the law, judiciary and social justice.

On 28 February 2025 Justice Jean Dalton retired as a judge of appeal. Justice Dalton was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland on 25 February 2011, and then a judge of appeal on 21 May 2022. Whilst a judge of the Trial Division, Justice Dalton served on the Mental Health Court for six years, three of them as President, and ran the Commercial List from November 2020 to May 2022. Following her retirement, Justice Dalton's significant contribution to all aspects of the work of the Court was acknowledged.

Retirement of the Principal Registrar, Ms Julie Steel PSM

In early 2025, Ms Julie Steel PSM retired. Ms Steel served as the Principal Registrar of the Supreme and District Courts and the Executive Director (later, Assistant Director General) of the Supreme, District and

Land Courts Service for 14 years, from 2010, and served in various other capacities within the justice and corrective services departments prior to that. Ms Steel was also an active contributor for many years as a member of the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board, the Incorporated Council for Law Reporting, the Supreme Court Library Committee, the Rules Committee and the Public Records Review Committee. Ms Steel's outstanding contribution as the CEO of the Courts was appropriately recognised when she was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2022. Ms Steel's leadership and expertise in system organisation and innovation paved the way for great improvements in registry services, for the benefit of the judiciary, the legal profession and the public. The Court thanks Ms Steel for her outstanding commitment and dedication to the administration of justice.

Judicial Appointments

Justice Thomas Bradley was appointed as a judge of appeal on 31 March 2025.

Justice Paul Smith AM was appointed a judge of the Trial Division on 31 March 2025.

In order to assist with additional sittings, the Honourable Philip Morrison KC, was appointed as an acting judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland and member of the Mental Health Court, for the period 15 July 2024 to 30 August 2024.

In September 2024, amendments were made to the *Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991* (Qld) to enable the appointment of reserve judges of the Supreme Court. This Act already provided for the appointment of an acting judge for a defined period. The reserve judge amendments reflected similar arrangements in other jurisdictions (notably, Victoria), under which a retired judge may be appointed a reserve judge for up to five years, but only sit as a judge if engaged to do so by the Chief Justice, for periods of up to six months. The benefit of this arrangement is that it provides greater flexibility for the Chief Justice to engage additional judge(s) as and when required, for short periods of time.

On 30 January 2025, the Honourable Robert Gotterson AO KC was appointed as a reserve judge up until 27 December 2027 and the Honourable Philip Morrison KC was appointed as a reserve judge for the period of five years until 30 January 2030. The reserve judges were engaged by the Chief Justice during the following periods:

Reserve Judge	Engagement
The Honourable Robert Gotterson AO KC	Engaged to undertake the duties of a judge on a full time basis for the period of six weeks commencing on 3 February 2025, and to act as an additional judge of appeal during this period.
The Honourable Robert Gotterson AO KC	Engaged to undertake the duties of a judge on a full time basis for the period of three weeks commencing on 17 March 2025, and to act as an additional judge of appeal during this period.
The Honourable Philip Morrison KC	Engaged to undertake the duties of a judge on a full time basis for the period of one week from 28 April to 2 May 2025 and for six weeks from 12 May to 20 June 2025 (a total of seven weeks). Justice Morrison was also appointed as a member of the Mental Health Court during this time.

Recognition

On 28 January 2025, the Honourable Alan George Demack AO, died, aged 90. Mr Demack served with distinction as a judge of this Court for 22 years, from 16 January 1978 to 19 May 2000. He was the Central Judge, based in Rockhampton. Prior to his appointment to this Court, Justice Demack served as a judge of the Family Court of Australia from 21 January 1976 to 1978 and as judge of the District Court of Queensland from 19 May 1972 to 21 January 1976. In total, Justice Demack served as a judge for 28 years, making him one of the longest-serving judges in Queensland. Mr Demack's exemplary service to the community and to the law was recognised when he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours' List in 2000.

The Honourable Alan Blow AM AO retired as Chief Justice of Tasmania on 2 December 2024.

The Honourable Christopher Shanahan was appointed as Chief Justice of Tasmania and Lieutenant Governor on 20 January 2025.

The Honourable Anne Ferguson retired as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria on 2 February 2025.

The Honourable Richard Niall was appointed as Chief Justice of Victoria on 3 February 2025.

On 23 September 2024, Mr John McKenna KC stood down as Chair of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting, after serving as a member of the Council for 16 years since 2008 (and as its Chair since 2012), and as a member of the Supreme Court Library Committee, after serving for 19 years since 2005. Mr McKenna KC made an outstanding contribution during his term as Chair of the Council, being the driving force behind the digitisation of the complete collection of the Queensland Reports, and the development and establishment of the Queensland Judgments website. The Court records its sincere appreciation for Mr McKenna's generous contribution of time, effort, commitment and expertise, for the benefit of the legal profession and the community.

Acknowledgements

I thank all the judges for their ongoing dedication and commitment to the work of the Court and the administration of justice and for their unerring support in our collective endeavours in this regard. I thank all the judges' associates and executive assistants and secretaries, officers and staff of the Registry, the Court's security staff, and all other Court staff who quietly go about keeping the Courts across the State running in an orderly manner.

I acknowledge the former Attorney-General, The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP, who served until 27 October 2024, and the current Attorney-General, the Honourable Deborah Frecklington MP, for their support for the Court, including a timely approach to judicial appointments.

I also thank Ms Jasmina Joldić PSM, Director-General until 1 November 2024, Ms Brigita Cunnington, the Deputy Director-General and Acting Director-General at times, as well as Ms Sarah Cruickshank, who commenced as Director-General on 28 April 2025, and their staff, for their cooperation and support over the year.

I particularly thank Ms Amanda O'Brien, Principal Registrar of the Supreme and District Courts, and Assistant Director-General of the Supreme District and Land Courts Service, who has most ably taken on these roles, following the retirement of Ms Julie Steel PSM. The Court is extremely well served by the dedicated staff within the Registry, who provide expert and professional administrative and organisational services, led by Ms O'Brien.

I also express my gratitude to the leaders and other representatives of the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society, Legal Aid Queensland, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, Youth Advocacy, the State and Commonwealth Directors of Public Prosecutions' Offices, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Queensland Corrective Services, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Youth Justice, the Parole Board, the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board and the

Councillors of the Incorporated Council for Law Reporting in Queensland for their work over the course of the year.

Lastly, I express the Court's grateful thanks to the Supreme Court Librarian, Ms Marian Morgan-Bindon, and all the staff of the Supreme Court Library, for their dedicated and professional assistance and support; to the Chair of the Supreme Court Library Committee, Justice Peter Flanagan up to and including 30 April 2025 and to Justice Boddice who took over as Chair from 1 May 2025, and all the members of that Committee, and its Sub-Committees, for their generosity of time, effort and expertise. Detailed information about the operations and initiatives of the Supreme Court Library can be found in its Annual Report.

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



PROFILE OF THE SUPREME COURT

PROFILE OF THE SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court comprises the Office of the Chief Justice and two divisions: the Court of Appeal Division and the Trial Division.

Judges of the Supreme Court

(listed in order of seniority)

Office of the Chief Justice

Chief Justice

The Honourable Helen Bowskill

Court of Appeal Division

President

The Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO

Judges of Appeal

The Honourable Justice John Bond

The Honourable Justice Peter Flanagan

The Honourable Justice Jean Dalton (retired 28 February 2025)

The Honourable Justice David Boddice

The Honourable Justice Susan Brown

The Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley (appointed 31 March 2025)

Trial Division

Senior Judge Administrator

The Honourable Justice Glenn Martin AM

Trial Division Judges

The Honourable Justice Peter Applegarth AM (retired 11 October 2024)

The Honourable Justice David North (Northern Judge)

The Honourable Justice James Henry (Far Northern Judge)

The Honourable Justice Martin Burns

The Honourable Justice Peter Davis

The Honourable Justice Graeme Crow (Central Judge)

The Honourable Justice Soraya Ryan

The Honourable Justice Elizabeth Wilson

The Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley (up to and including 30 March 2025)

The Honourable Justice Peter Callaghan

The Honourable Justice Frances Williams
The Honourable Justice Paul Freeburn
The Honourable Justice Declan Kelly
The Honourable Justice Kerri Mellifont
The Honourable Justice Sean Cooper
The Honourable Justice Melanie Hindman
The Honourable Justice Lincoln Crowley
The Honourable Justice Thomas Sullivan
The Honourable Justice Catherine Muir
The Honourable Justice Michael Copley
The Honourable Justice Rebecca Treston
The Honourable Justice Paul Smith AM (appointed 31 March 2025)

Other Appointments

Mental Health Court

The Honourable Justice Elizabeth Wilson
The Honourable Justice Soraya Ryan

Land Appeal Court

The Honourable Justice Sean Cooper (Southern District)
The Honourable Justice David North (Northern District)
The Honourable Justice James Henry (Far Northern District)
The Honourable Justice Graeme Crow (Central District)

Industrial Court

The Honourable Justice Peter Davis (President)

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The Honourable Justice Kerri Mellifont (President)

Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal

The Honourable Justice Lincoln Crowley

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



COURT OF APPEAL DIVISION

COURT OF APPEAL DIVISION

Governance

Organisational Structure

The work of the Court of Appeal is varied, both in its nature and complexity and has been and always will be substantial. Resources are applied to ensure the efficient disposal of the work without compromising the quality of the Court's judgments. The purpose of a permanent Court of Appeal is to maintain a group of judges of the highest ability to specialise in appellate work.

The Court of Appeal hears appeals¹ in civil and criminal matters from both the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Queensland and from the District Court of Queensland. The Court also hears appeals from the Planning and Environment Court, the Land Appeal Court, the Industrial Court and from other tribunals, principally the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

An appeal from the Court of Appeal to the High Court of Australia can proceed only by way of an application for special leave. For most cases, the Court of Appeal is Queensland's final appellate Court.

The Court of Appeal is comprised of the President and five judges of appeal. The President of the Court of Appeal is the Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO. During 2024-2025, the judges of appeal otherwise were:

- the Honourable Justice John Bond;
- the Honourable Justice Jean Dalton, who retired on 28 February 2025;
- the Honourable Justice Peter Flanagan;
- the Honourable Justice David Boddice;
- the Honourable Justice Susan Brown; and
- the Honourable Thomas Bradley, who commenced as a judge of appeal on 31 March 2025.

On 30 January 2025, the Attorney-General, at the request of the Chief Justice, recommended to Her Excellency the Governor that retired judges, the Honourable Robert Gotterson AO KC and the Honourable Philip Morrison KC, be appointed as reserve judges of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Due to retirement of the Honourable Justice Jean Dalton on 28 February 2025, the President of the Court of Appeal as Acting Chief Justice directed that the Honourable Robert Gotterson AO KC be engaged to undertake the duties of a judge for the period 3 February to 14 March 2025 and further that Acting Justice Gotterson act as an additional judge of appeal for the period of the engagement. The Chief Justice then directed a second period of engagement for Acting Justice Gotterson to act as an additional judge of appeal from 17 March to 4 April 2025. The second period of engagement was required to ensure the work of the Court of Appeal continued until the appointment of the Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley on 31 March 2025.

The President and the other judges of appeal were grateful for an additional judge which allowed all listed hearings to proceed in the period between Justice Dalton's retirement and the appointment of Justice Bradley.

The Court sat as a bench of three judges for 35 weeks this year which was two more weeks than the previous year.

The President and the judges of appeal together sat 136 individual judge weeks this year;² compared to 140 weeks for the previous year. All judges of appeal used long leave entitlements during this year. Three weeks before the Court's summer break, two weeks before the Court's winter break, and every fourth week during the Court year were allocated as judgment writing weeks.

¹ Including applications and references.

² This expression refers to every week an individual judge sits in the Court of Appeal.

The Chief Justice sat in the Court of Appeal, apart from admissions and welcome ceremonies, for eight weeks this year. In the 2024-2025 reporting period, Trial Division judges sat in the Court of Appeal for 66 individual judge weeks.

The Chief Justice and Trial Division judges continue to bring vast experience to the consideration and determination of appeals. The President and judges of appeal are grateful for their continued support which assists the Court of Appeal in disposing of its caseload.

A total of 425 matters were heard this year, an increase over the previous reporting period's 346 matters, with judgments delivered in 397 matters which was a decrease over the previous period's 379 judgments (see appendix 1, tables 1, 2 and 3).³

The President and Court of Appeal Registry staff case managed matters of a complex nature or matters at risk of undue delay in being heard. Regular criminal call overs and the following up by the Deputy Registrar (Civil) of civil matters where parties did not accept the offer of hearing dates ensured the timely progress of such matters. The President also continued quarterly call overs of criminal matters pending for more than 24 months and in 2024-2025 there were 18 at year end which was a slight increase from 16 over the previous year.

The following categories of matters were monitored to ensure the determination of urgent appeals in a timely fashion:

- appeals concerning short custodial sentences;
- appeals by the Attorney-General of Queensland or the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions against sentences where respondents have been released into the community;
- matters involving youth offenders;
- appeals against interlocutory decisions so that the determination of the principal action is not unnecessarily delayed pending appeal;
- pressing commercial disputes which have been dealt with expeditiously in the Trial Division's commercial list; and
- other matters where urgency is demonstrated.

The President and the judges of appeal thank the Senior Deputy Registrar, the Registrar, Deputy Registrars, Court of Appeal Registry staff, judges' associates and Executive Secretaries who all provide a high standard of support and continue to diligently serve the public, the profession and the judges.

The judges also express their appreciation for the commitment and support of the Assistant Director-General, Supreme District and Land Courts Service, Ms Amanda O'Brien, and her staff.

The Court also thanks Mr Andrew Nichols, Court Security Manager, together with the QEII Building security team for their assistance.

Court of Appeal Registry

The Court of Appeal Registry's staffing structure and operational approach during the 2024-2025 reporting period reflect a proactive strategy to manage workforce mobility and maintain service standards.

The Registry comprises 9.5 full-time equivalent positions, which experienced significant staff movement due to: long-term leave absences; rotational staff development initiatives; and relieving opportunities taken by team members. To address these changes and ensure uninterrupted service, the Registry implemented a cross skilling program. This initiative equipped staff with the ability to perform alternative roles, enhanced operational flexibility and resilience and ensured continuity of service delivery to the Court.

³ These figures are non-RoGS (Report on Government Services).

The Registry remains committed to building staff capability through ongoing training and development and maintaining a consistent standard of service to the Court, despite staff mobility.

Performance

Disposal of Work

A total of 447 matters were commenced in the Court of Appeal (294 criminal matters and 153 civil matters). This was an increase from 431 matters commenced last year (303 criminal matters and 128 civil matters). Active matters decreased slightly from 387 last year to 368 this year. The Court finalised 468 matters, a marked increase from 413 matters finalised in the previous year (see appendix 1, table 3).

The Court's clearance rate for criminal matters increased from 90.4% in the previous year to 104.8% for this reporting year. In civil matters, the clearance rate, however, decreased from 108.6% last year to 104.6% this year. Overall, 73.7% of Court of Appeal matters were finalised within 12 months of lodgement (see appendix 1, table 4). Some civil matters which were not finalised within 12 months of lodgement experienced delays occasioned by the request of one or both parties. Some delay in criminal matters was occasioned by self-represented appellants seeking adjournments to be referred to the pro bono scheme or to find legal representation.

The median time for the delivery of reserved judgments in criminal matters was 56 days, which is an increase from 42 days in 2023-2024. For civil matters, the median time of the delivery of judgments was 58 days, a decrease from 80 days in 2023-2024. The overall median time between hearing and delivery of reserved judgments was 57 days, an increase of 3% over the previous year (see appendix 1, table 5).

During the reporting period, there were five civil matters heard on the papers.

Applications for criminal extensions of time applications and merit assessment

The process for facilitating the timely disposal on the papers of an application for extension of time in a criminal appeal by an unrepresented litigant has continued during the reporting year with good results.

Because legal aid is not available for an application for an extension of time within which to appeal or to seek leave to appeal in a criminal matter, the unrepresented litigants must make their own extension application.

The extension of time application and associated notice of appeal is sent to the DPP or CDPP, as required, upon receipt by the Registry. If the relevant prosecuting authority consents to the extension, the order granting the extension is made on the papers and the matter proceeds to a full appeal for which appeal record books are prepared and the unrepresented litigant can then apply for legal aid for the appeal, as the extension has been obtained.

During the reporting year 28 applications for extension of time were filed in criminal appeal matters of which 14 were granted on the papers after there was no objection to those orders by the DPP. The process for dealing with the other 14 extension applications is as a contested hearing.

The granting of an extension of time application on the papers with the consent of the respondent will usually facilitate an earlier hearing of the appeal.

Origin of Appeals

Filings from the Trial Division in civil matters increased this year from 92 to 121 and also increased in criminal matters from 88 to 101. Filings from the District Court in civil matters decreased slightly from 47 to 43 and also decreased in criminal matters from 291 to 243. Planning and Environment Court filings decreased from 10 to four. There were 26 appeals commenced from QCAT this reporting year. There were six civil matters filed from the Industrial Court. There were two matters filed this reporting year from the Land Appeal Court (see appendix 1, table 6).

Types of Appeals or Applications Filed

There were 134 general civil appeals (including personal injury) filed this reporting year compared to 126 last year. There was an increase in civil applications from 46 last year to 67 this year (see appendix 1, table 7).

In the criminal jurisdiction, there was a decrease in filings of sentence applications from 145 to 132 and filings of conviction only appeals increased from 87 to 91. A total of 38 combined conviction and sentence appeals were filed this year, an increase from 29 the previous year. Extension applications (sentence) remained the same as last year at 11 and extensions (conviction) decreased from 12 last year to 11 this year. Extensions for conviction and sentence decreased significantly from 17 last year to five this year. There was an increase from two last year to nine in this reporting period of sentence appeals brought by the Queensland Attorney-General or the CDPP (see appendix 1, table 7).

Appeals to the High Court of Australia

Of 18 applications for special leave to the High Court of Australia in civil matters, one was granted. In criminal matters, 14 applications for special leave were sought, with none being granted. Overall, there were 32 special leave applications to the High Court of Australia from the Queensland jurisdiction, with one application granted. (see appendix 1, table 8).

The High Court of Australia delivered four judgments from the Queensland Court of Appeal during the period of 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. Two appeals were allowed,⁴ with two appeals being dismissed (see appendix 1, table 9).⁵

As at 30 June 2024, the High Court of Australia has heard one matter from the Queensland jurisdiction, with this being reserved at the time of this Report.⁶

Reasons of the Court

In the period 2024-2025 there were 283 total outcomes for the Court of Appeal, 252 QCA numbers were allocated for Court of Appeal decisions, this is seven less than last year.⁷ In 52 of these outcomes, reasons were delivered as a judgment of the Court, a decrease from 57 last year. There were 201 outcomes delivered with three separate judgments concurring with the orders made, an increase of eight over last year. Eight outcomes were delivered with two joint concurring reasons and one separate reasons, four less than last year.⁸

Out of the total 283 outcomes, 10 involved dissents, a decrease from 18 from last year. There were 12 outcomes where reasons were delivered by a single judge, six less than last year (see appendix 1, table 10).⁹

Northern Sitting

In 2024-2025, two Northern Sittings were held.

From Monday 15 to Thursday 18 July 2024 the Northern Sittings was held in Cairns. The Court comprised combinations of the Chief Justice, Mullins P, Boddice JA and North and Henry JJ and heard one appeal

4 *Willmot v The State of Queensland* (2024) 98 ALJR 1407; [2024] HCA 42 - Held: Appeal allowed in part, respondent to pay appellant's costs - Appealed from: [2023] QCA 102; and *MDP v The King* [2025] HCA 24 - Held: Appeal allowed, Set aside the order made by the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Queensland on 27 June 2023 and, in its place, the appellant's appeal to the Court of Appeal be allowed, his convictions set aside, and a new trial ordered - Appealed from: [2023] QCA 134.

5 *Mallonland Pty Ltd v Advanta Seeds Pty Ltd* (2024) 418 ALR 639; [2024] HCA 25 - Held: Appeal dismissed with costs - Appealed from: (2023) 13 QR 492; [2023] QCA 24; and *Fuller & Anor v Lawrence* (2024) 99 ALJR 103; [2024] HCA 45 - Held: Appeal dismissed with costs - Appealed from: [2023] QCA 257.

6 *Michael Stewart by his litigation guardian Carol Schwarzman v Metro North Hospital and Health Service (ABN 184 996 277 942)* [2025] HCATrans 40 - Date heard: 11 June 2025 - Appealed from: [2024] QCA 225.

7 This figure represents judgments that are published and issued with a QCA number.

8 These figures are non-RoGS.

9 These figures are non-RoGS.

against conviction and sentence, three appeals against conviction, four sentence applications, one application for extension (conviction and sentence) and one general civil appeal.

The judges and their associates were welcomed by the North Queensland Bar Association and the Far North Queensland Law Association.

From Monday 2 to Thursday 5 June 2025, the Northern Sittings was held in Townsville. The Court comprised combinations of Mullins P, Brown and Bradley JJA and North and Henry JJ. The Court heard three appeals against conviction, two sentence applications and one subsequent appeal (appeal against conviction). As it was the last time before his retirement in March 2026 that North J sat on the Court of Appeal, the President acknowledged the contribution made by North J to the Court of Appeal sittings since 2011.

The judges and their associates were warmly welcomed by the North Queensland Bar Association, the Women Lawyers Association of Queensland, the Townsville District Law Association and North Queensland Law Association.

Advocacy in the Court of Appeal

The President and judges of appeal encourage those counsel who appear in the Court of Appeal with a junior counsel to give a speaking role to the junior when feasible to do so. It is important for junior counsel to have opportunities to develop their advocacy skills and appellate experience with the support of their senior counsel. It is in the public interest that junior counsel gain experience and confidence in appearing on appeals.

Self-Represented Litigants

Many matters involving a self-represented litigant were listed for review to ensure that timelines for the lodgement of materials were followed and that matters were heard without unnecessary delay.

There were 61 self-represented litigants in cases where judgment was delivered in the Court of Appeal this year compared to 89 last year. In 34 civil matters in which judgment was delivered this reporting year, at least one party was self-represented, compared to 40 last year. There were 27 criminal matters where at least one party was self-represented and in which judgment was delivered this reporting year, compared to 49 last year (see appendix 1, table 11).¹⁰

This reporting year there was no change in the number of matters involving self-represented litigants being finalised either before or after the hearing. A total of 162 matters (including matters that were abandoned, withdrawn, discontinued, struck out or stayed) were finalised, the same number as last year (see appendix 1, table 12).¹¹

Of the 283 outcomes in Court of Appeal matters (both criminal and civil) in 2024-2025, 21% involved a self-represented litigant compared to 30.4% last year.

A total of one or 3.7% of self-represented criminal litigants (compared to 10.2% last year) and three or 8.8% of self-represented civil litigants (compared to 10% last year) were successful in their appeals.¹²

LawRight

LawRight's and Tribunal Services (CTS) provided valuable assistance and ongoing advocacy to self-represented litigants who had appeals before the Court, or who were considering commencing proceedings in the Court of Appeal. CTS received 178 applications for assistance this reporting year, of which one concerned a potential appeal and five concerned existing appeals. After receiving advice from CTS, the potential appellant did not commence Court of Appeal proceedings. Of the existing appeals, three applicants were advised to discontinue their appeals

¹⁰ These figures are non-RoGS.

¹¹ These figures are non-RoGS.

¹² These figures are non-RoGS.

due to poor prospects, one of whom followed that advice and took steps to discontinue their appeal, and one applicant was given advice about conducting their appeal and narrowing their grounds of appeal.

As well as providing substantive advice to applicants with potential or current appeals, some general enquiries are also received from clients wanting to commence appeals to the Court of Appeal. CTS provide brief information about the appeal process and those matters often do not proceed any further. CTS assists not only self-represented litigants but also the Appeals Registry and court staff, the judges and, indirectly, the broader community. The Court extends its thanks to LawRight and its CEO, Ms Karen Dyhrberg; the Director of CTS, Mr Ben Tuckett; the Assistant Director of CTS, Ms Nikki Hancock; and the solicitors of the State Courts office, Ms Natalie Morris and Ms Melinda Willis.

Pro Bono Assistance

The Court of Appeal pro bono scheme is now in its 25th year. The Court requests the Registry to refer serious criminal matters where the appellant is not legally represented to the coordinator of the pro bono scheme who invites barristers and law firms who have volunteered to be on the pro bono register to consider accepting the referral. For the period 2024-2025, pro bono counsel appeared for applicants or appellants in 15 judgments that were published by the Court of Appeal.¹³ For this reporting period, in judgments where pro bono counsel appeared, five were successful. Importantly, however, the involvement of pro bono counsel enabled matters to progress through the Court in a timely and professional manner (see appendix 1, table 13).¹⁴

The President and the judges of appeal appreciate the generosity of the public-spirited barristers and law firms listed in appendix 2 who have indicated their willingness to appear pro bono. Particular thanks are extended to Mr Joshua Jones who coordinates the pro bono register and to the following barristers and law firms who acted pro bono in criminal applications and appeals in the Court of Appeal in 2024-2025:

Barristers

Abdalla, Nora	Jones, Joshua R
Bonasia, Michael	Kennedy, Jack
Cappellano, Anna	Lamb, Sean
Carlos, Tristan	Lewis, Simon
Carter, Scott	Marxson, James
Caruana, Daniel	Micairan, Roman
Coker, Edward (Eddie)	Nguyen, Dominic V
Cooper, Emily	O'Brien, Andrew
De Marco, Carmen	O'Brien, Emily
Drew, Kerala	O'Connor, Clare
Edridge, Nathan	O'Connor, Peter
Edwards, Holli	Perry, Gabriel
Farnden KC, Sarah	Pincus, Tom
Ferguson, Lucy	Rawlings, Mitchell
Freeman, April	Reeves, Jade-Ann
Goldie, Jessica	Taylor, Benjamin
Haddrick, Ryan	Thomas, Justin
Hew, Rachel	Thorsen, Emma
Hillard, Kylie	Varshney, Rachel
Hoare KC, Andrew	Wilson, Douglas
Horvath, Michal	Wilson, Pat

Law Firms

Ashkan Tai Lawyers
Bell Criminal Lawyers
Brighton Langley Law
Craven Lawyers
Fisher Dore Lawyers
Gilshenan & Luton Legal Practice
Guest Lawyers
Jasper Fogerty Lawyers
Mackenzie Mitchell
McGinness & Associates Lawyers
Potts Lawyers
Robertson O'Gorman
Wallace O'Hagan Lawyers

¹³ This figure is non-RoGS.

¹⁴ These figures are non-RoGS.

Technology and Infrastructure

Video Links

In this reporting period, 80 matters were heard by telephone or video link technology.

The quality of video links has been high. The main system used was Pexip with Webex being phased in as the preferred platform from around 3 June 2024. The upgrades to the Banco courtroom video technology have allowed a greater number of appeals requiring video link capabilities to be listed on days with dual corams. The previous video conferencing infrastructure in the Banco courtroom was unreliable and would be avoided if possible. However, there is now no discernible difference between holding a video link in the Appeal or the Banco courtrooms.

The Registry continued to maintain electronic files for each matter, where materials filed by parties are scanned and digitised (or copied, if electronically filed). The Registry will continue to work with the Court Service Centre in identifying ways to improve the provision of electronic material to the Court and parties.

QTranscripts (Court Recording and Transcription Services)

During the reporting year, QTranscripts were responsible for the recording and production of transcripts of Court of Appeal proceedings.

The Court of Appeal associates order transcripts of recordings from QTranscripts after matters are heard and the reasons are reserved or an *ex tempore* decision is given. The Registry also requests transcripts of recordings from lower courts for inclusion in the appeal record books.

Court of Appeal Management System (CAMS)

In mid-September 2020, the Court of Appeal Registry identified that the CAMS listings calendar did not extend past December 2020 and could potentially no longer operate past that date. The Information and Court Technology Branch (ICTB) were engaged to investigate the issue and identified a potential solution to extend the life of the two calendars within CAMS for a further 10 years to the end of 2030.

The question of an upgrade for CAMS was first raised in the Trial Division's 1995-1996 Annual Report and has been mentioned in the Court of Appeal Annual Report almost every year since then.

In June 2021, it was announced that, as part of the Courts and Tribunals Digitisation Program (CTDP), funding was allocated over five years, commencing with the 2022-2023 financial year, to several projects including a new Supreme District and Land Court Civil Case Management System to amalgamate functions performed across QCivil, CaseWorks (Land Court) and CAMS with expected completion in May 2026 which will include eLodgement capabilities for the Court of Appeal.

Judgment Delivery

All Court of Appeal judgments delivered during 2024-2025 were available free to the public on the internet through:

- AustLII; and
- the Supreme Court Library website (via a link on the Queensland Courts website) which included:
 - o links to judgments of the Full Court and the Criminal Court of Appeal, the predecessors of the Court of Appeal;
 - o links to the Summary Notes which provide a brief overview of relevant cases.

The Court's Research Officer, Mr Bruce Godfrey, continues to coordinate the publication of the Court's

judgments including the distribution of hard copies and electronic links to major Brisbane media outlets, interested Queensland judicial officers and selected Queensland government agencies. Mr Godfrey also prepared the judgments for publication on the Supreme Court Library website.

The President and judges of appeal are grateful for the work Mr Godfrey does, particularly in ensuring compliance with the many legislative naming prohibitions.

Judicial Exchanges

The following judicial exchanges were undertaken in this reporting year.

In a simultaneous exchange between Western Australia and Queensland, from 8 to 18 October 2024, Justice John Vaughan of the Western Australia Court of Appeal sat in Queensland and Justice Jean Dalton of the Queensland Court of Appeal sat in Western Australia.

Also, in a simultaneous exchange between South Australia and Queensland, from 11 to 15 November 2024, Justice Samuel Doyle of the South Australia Court of Appeal sat in Queensland and Justice John Bond of the Queensland Court of Appeal sat in South Australia.

The judicial exchanges are an important way for the Courts in different States to share information and experiences to improve the delivery of justice to the States involved in the exchanges.

Having an experienced interstate judge sit on the Queensland Court of Appeal has fostered valuable discussions about varying approaches to the management of appeals prior to hearing. These discussions aim to enhance the efficiency of appeal hearings and support the effective preparation of judgments. Discussions with interstate colleagues have reinforced some of the existing practices in managing appeals in Queensland and resulted in suggestions for refinements of existing practices. The same benefits can flow when the Queensland judge sits as a member of the interstate Court. The judicial exchanges also facilitate the continuing professional development of the judiciary of the Courts involved in the exchanges.

The President thanks the Attorneys-General of Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia for their support of the judicial exchange program.

Appendix 1

Table 1: Judgments, Criminal Matters

Judgments	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Outstanding at start of year	30	23	28
Reserved	141	161	187
<i>Ex tempore</i> judgments delivered	91	75	74
Reserved judgments delivered	162	159	170
Outstanding at end of year	25	28	39

Table 2: Judgments, Civil Matters

Judgments	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Outstanding at start of year	32	26	15
Reserved	110	90	119
<i>Ex tempore</i> judgments delivered	90	34	56
Reserved judgments delivered	128	111	97
Outstanding at end of year	26	15	33

Table 3: Annual Caseload – Number of Cases

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Change from Previous Year
Lodged	440	431	447	3.7
Heard	425	346	425	22.8
Finalised*	463	413	468	13.3
	Lodged 2024-2025	Heard 2024-2025	Finalised* 2024-2025	Active (including reserved judgments not yet delivered)
Criminal	294	255	308	275
Civil	153	170	160	93
TOTAL	447	425	468	368

* Includes matters abandoned, withdrawn, discontinued, struck out or stayed.

Table 4: Performance Indicators

	Clearance Rate %	% Finalised within 12mths	% Finalised > 12mths old	% Finalised > 24mths old	% Active > 12mths old	% Active > 24mths old
Criminal	104.8	70.1	29.9	11.0	25.8	6.5
Civil	104.6	80.6	19.4	4.4	10.8	1.1
ALL CASES	104.7	73.7	26.3	8.8	22.0	5.2

* RoGS reports on cases based on the initiating application. Multiple applications may be lodged on a case.

Table 5: Time between Hearing and Delivery of Reserved Judgments

Type of cases	Median number of days		
	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Criminal cases	42	42	56
Civil cases	84	80	58
ALL CASES	50	55.5	57

Table 6: Court from which Matters came to the Court of Appeal

Court	Number of matters filed		
	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Trial division – civil*	160	92	121
Trial division – criminal*	69	88	101
District court – civil	53	47	43
District court – criminal	253	291	243
Planning and Environment Court	7	10	4
Land Appeal Court	-	-	2
QCAT	24	20	26
Other Court	-	-	3
Industrial Court – civil	6	6	6
Industrial Court – criminal	7	-	-
Other – criminal	-	-	6

* Source: Court of Appeal Management System (CAMS).

Note: These statistics include Circuit Court matters.

Table 7: Types of Appeals Filed

Appeal type	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Civil			
General (including personal injury)	134	126	134
Applications	122	46	67
Leave applications	7	0	1
Planning and environment	1	2	1
Other	0	1	1
Criminal			
Sentence applications	122	145	132
Conviction appeals	77	87	91
Conviction and sentence appeals	41	29	38
Extensions (sentence applications)	19	11	11
Extensions (conviction appeals)	15	12	11
Extensions (conviction and sentence)	11	17	5
Sentence appeals (A-G/Cth DPP)	1	2	9
Other	36	78	54

Table 8: Applications for Special Leave to Appeal to the High Court of Australia

Applications 2024-2025	Criminal	Civil
Granted	0	1
Refused	14	17

Table 9: Appeals from the Court of Appeal to the High Court of Australia

Appeals 2024-2025	Criminal	Civil
Allowed	1	1
Dismissed	0	2

Table 10: Reasons of the Court*

Judgment of the Court or all concurring without separate reasons	Three separate concurring reasons	Two joint concurring reasons and one separate reason	Two joint concurring reasons, one dissent	Separate concurring reasons, one dissent	Single judge	Total outcomes for the Court of Appeal
52	201	8	2	8	12	283

* These figures represent only judgments that have been given a QCA number and published.

Table 11: Matters Determined where One or Both Parties Self-Represented*

Number of cases**	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Criminal	33	49	27
Civil	38	40	34
TOTAL	71	89	61

* The above table represents final outcomes from the Court of Appeal, i.e. judgments delivered. In some matters there are more than one outcome. For example, when there are multiple parties in criminal matters, each party has a separate outcome, despite only one QCA number being allocated to the overall decision.

** non-RoGs figures.

Table 12: Matters Finalised where One or Both Parties Self-Represented*

Number of cases	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Criminal	104	108	97
Civil	78	54	65
TOTAL	182	162	162

* Includes matters abandoned, withdrawn, discontinued, struck out or stayed.

Table 13: Success Rates of Pro Bono Counsel in the Court of Appeal*

Success Rates	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Appeal/Application allowed	5	0	5
Appeal/Application dismissed	11	17	10

* non-RoGS figures.

Appendix 2

Court of Appeal Pro Bono List for 2024-2025

Below are the barristers registered on the Pro Bono Scheme list:

Abdalla, Nora	Freeman, April	Moxon, Jules
Bain, Samuel	Goldie, Jessica	Munsie, Isaac
Bampton, Dale	Haddrick, Ryan	Murray, Michael
Beard, Axel	Hall, William	Nguyen, Dominic V
Berry, Renee	Hamlyn-Harris, Simon	O'Brien, Andrew
Bloom, Suki	Hancock, Tom	O'Brien, Emily
Bolovan, Claude	Harburg, Sophie	O'Connor, Clare
Bonasia, Michael	Hedge, Susan	O'Connor, Peter
Bryson, Kim	Hew, Rachel	O'Higgins KC, Philip
Cappellano, Anna	Hillard, Kylie	Parvez, Shereen
Carlos, Tristan	Hoare KC, Andrew	Perry, Gabriel

Carter, Scott	Horne, Jessica	Philp, Byron
Caruana, Daniel	Horvath, Michal	Pincus, Tom
Clarke, Morgan	Hynes, Matthew	Rawlings, Mitchell
Coker, Edward	Jones KC, David	Reeves, Jade-Ann
Cooper, Emily	Jones, Joshua	Ritchie, Tom
Daley, Marjorie	Kennedy, Jack	Robb, Sally
Davie, Allana	Kirk, Renae	Robson, Jacob
De Marco, Carmen	Kluss, Katrina	Sargent, Elise
de Waard, Michael	Lake, Robert	Taylor, Benjamin
Devereaux, Grace	Lamb, Sean	Taylor, Rachael
Dighton, Benjamin	Larsen, Michael	Thomas, Justin
Dollar, Liam	Lewis, Simon	Thorsen, Emma
Drew, Kerala	Logan, Rachelle	Varshney, Rachel
du Preez, Jenna	Marsh, Salwa	Wallace, James
Edridge, Nathan	Marxson, James	Walpole, Samuel
Edwards, Holli	Mason, Adam	Wang, Jason
Farnden KC, Sarah	McGree, Katherine	Whitmore, Daniel
Farr, Hamish	McMillan, Ben	Whitton, Edwin
Feely, Genevieve	Micairan, Roman	Wilson, Douglas
Ferguson, Lucy	Morris, Joshua	Wilson, Pat

Below are the solicitor firms registered on the Pro Bono Scheme list:

Ashkan Tai Lawyers	Jasper Fogarty Lawyers
Bell Criminal Lawyers	Mackenzie Mitchell
Brighton Langley Law	McGinness & Associates Lawyers
Craven Lawyers	Potts Lawyers
Fisher Dore Lawyers	Robertson O’Gorman
Gilshenan & Luton Legal Practice	Wallace O’Hagan Lawyers
Guest Lawyers	Wildermuth Legal

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



TRIAL DIVISION

TRIAL DIVISION

The Work of the Trial Division

The Trial Division resolves matters commenced by indictment (in criminal cases), claim or originating application (in civil proceedings) by trial, hearing or consensus.

The Senior Judge Administrator is responsible for the administration of the Trial Division.

Criminal trials are usually heard with a jury. Civil cases are almost always determined by a judge alone.

Criminal trials mainly concern murder, manslaughter and more serious drug offences including the importation of border-controlled drugs and drug trafficking.

In its civil jurisdiction, the Court deals with a wide range of cases, including contests about commercial matters, building and engineering contracts, civil wrongs, wills and estates, conveyancing, insurance, judicial review of administrative decisions, and class actions.

Trial Division judges also sit on the Court of Appeal and the Land Appeal Court. Two judges (and an acting judge) serve on the Mental Health Court and a number of judges devote extra time to manage the Criminal List, the Dangerous Prisoner Sexual Offenders List, the Commercial List, the Case Flow List, the Building Engineering and Construction List, the Wills and Estates List and the Supervised Case List which includes the Self-Represented Litigant Supervised Case List. That additional management has assisted in the expeditious determination of many of those matters. A judge is President of the Industrial Court of Queensland the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and another is President of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Many judges are involved with groups that have a responsibility for implementing procedures to improve the administration of justice, including the Rules Committee and the Streamlining Criminal Justice Committee. A number of judges also assist in training newly appointed judges from all around Australia in the National Judicial Orientation Program which is conducted over a week and usually held twice a year. Assistance is also regularly provided by Trial Division judges to the Bar Practice Course and other professional education programs.

The Structure of the Trial Division

The Court is divided into far northern, northern, central and southern regions, reflecting the decentralised nature of the State and its large area.

Most of the Trial Division judges are based in Brisbane in the southern region. That region includes Toowoomba and Roma. Sittings are also held in Maryborough.

The Central Judge resides in Rockhampton, where he presides at civil and criminal sittings. He also conducts sittings in Bundaberg, Longreach, Mackay and assists in Townsville as required. The Northern Judge resides in Townsville and he circuits to Mackay.

The Far Northern Judge resides in Cairns.

In Townsville, Rockhampton and Cairns, a registrar and support staff assist the judges.

More than 80% of the workload arises in and around, and is dealt with in, Brisbane.

Information about the organisation and practices of the Trial Division, including its law lists, fact sheets, Practice Directions, and reasons for judgment, are published on the Queensland Courts website:

www.courts.qld.gov.au.

Developments

The composition of the Trial Division was affected by the following developments:

Justice Thomas Bradley – appointed to the Court of Appeal 31 March 2025.

Justice Paul Smith AM – appointed 31 March 2025.

Criminal jurisdiction

The number of defendants finalised by trial state-wide was 63 while in 2023-2024 it was 37.

The average length of a trial increased from 5.2 days to 7.4 days.

The number of criminal lodgements state-wide increased from 1,604 to 1,626.

Finalisation by guilty plea only increased by one matter from 1,255 last reporting year to 1,256 this reporting year.

Overall, the number of defendants finalised increased by 2.6% from 1,585 to 1,627. The clearance rate increased by 1.2% to 100.1% compared to 98.8% in 2023-2024. The number of defendants pending decreased from 659 to 651.

Brisbane's clearance rate decreased from 98.5% to 96.5%, with a decrease in active pending defendants of 2.3% from 518 to 506.

The number of outstanding defendants awaiting trial after 12 months has increased by 7.8% state-wide, from 115 defendants (17.5%) to 124 defendants (19.0%). In Brisbane, the increase was 8.1%, from 99 defendants (19.1%) to 107 defendants (21.1%).

This was the first full year in which the Court has operated under Practice Direction 5 of 2024. Some aspects of the listing procedures continue as before - there will always, for example, be a requirement for a Court appearance at which an indictment can be presented. However, once that has occurred most matters can now be listed administratively through the agency of the Criminal Resolutions Registrar.

The new procedures confer many benefits upon all stakeholders, and in particular solicitors' firms who are now relieved of the need to have a staff member present throughout the lengthy review processes that used to occupy so much of the Court's time. There is a high rate of compliance with the requirements of the Direction, and the profession is thanked for that.

The DPPs [State and Commonwealth] and the profession are taking advantage of the opportunity to consult and cooperate with the Criminal Resolutions Registrar with the result that matters, which once may have remained on the list for a lengthy period can be resolved at an early stage.

The Court has continued to consult with all involved and received constructive feedback about the operation of the Practice Direction. In broad terms, the response was overwhelmingly positive and the advantages of the new systems were acknowledged.

Implementation of the new arrangements represents significant efforts made by many. The Court is grateful for the assistance provided by everyone in the Registry, and in particular for the energy of Ms Currie, who as inaugural Criminal Resolutions Registrar has done so much to shape the role in a way that is calculated to serve the Court well for years to come. Thanks go to her and to the Senior Registrar, Registrar (listing), Deputy Registrar (criminal) and the Supreme Court Criminal List Manager.

Summary of Activity on Criminal List – by location

Centre	Number of defendants ^{(1) (2) (3)}			Clearance Rate ⁽⁴⁾	Backlog Indicator ⁽⁵⁾	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		% > 12mths	% > 24mths
Main centres						
Brisbane	1,185	1,143	506	96.5%	21.1%	5.9%
Cairns	95	97	32	102.1%	9.4%	-
Rockhampton	127	123	15	96.9%	-	-
Townsville	110	123	40	111.8%	22.5%	2.5%
Main centre Totals	1,517	1,486	593	98.0%	20.1%	5.2%
Regional centres						
Bundaberg	8	15	4	187.5%	-	-
Longreach	-	1	-	-	-	-
Mackay	33	37	7	112.1%	14.3%	-
Maryborough	14	13	5	92.9%	20.0%	-
Mount Isa	5	6	9	120.0%	-	-
Roma	-	-	-	-	-	-
Toowoomba	49	69	33	140.8%	9.1%	-
Regional centre Totals	109	141	58	129.4%	8.6%	-
State Total	1,626	1,627	651	100.1%	19.0%	4.8%

Notes:

(1) Defendant: As defined by the RoGS rule: A “defendant” is defined as ‘one defendant; with one or more charges; and with all charges having the same date of registration’. 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 Supreme Court and are awaiting presentation of indictment.

(2) 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.

(3) The above figures are not comparable to years prior to 2018-19 due to the change in counting rule as outlined in (2) and since 2018-19. In years prior to 2018-19 a defendant who had two cases lodged on the same day was counted once whereas it is now counted twice.

(4) Clearance Rate: Finalisations/Lodgements.

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

Civil jurisdiction

Lodgements increased this year by 5.5% (194 cases) from 3,526 in 2023-2024 to 3,720 in 2024-2025.

Finalisations increased by 10.4% (320 cases) from 3,074 in 2023-2024 to 3,394.

The clearance rate increased by 4.1% from 87.2% in 2023-2024 to 91.2% in 2024-2025.

There was an increase of 9.7% (357 cases) in active pending matters (4,048 as of 30 June 2025 up from 3,691 last year).

The number of pending cases older than 12 months and less than 24 months increased from 749 as of 30 June 2024 to 840 as of June 2025, representing 20.8% of the active pending caseload.

Cases more than 24 months old increased by 31 (8.5%) in 2024-2025 and stood at 395 cases on 30 June 2025.

Many claims are dealt with by registrars, which means a change in lodgements does not result in a corresponding change in judicial workloads.

Summary of Activity on Civil List - by location

Centre	RoGS civil files ^{(1) (2)}			Clearance Rate ⁽³⁾	Backlog Indicator ⁽⁴⁾	
	Lodged	Finalised	Active		% > 12mths	% > 24mths
Main centres						
Brisbane	3,179	2,879	3,453	90.6%	31.0%	10.2%
Cairns	115	95	111	82.6%	23.4%	11.7%
Rockhampton	296	288	337	97.3%	28.5%	5.9%
Townsville	57	51	62	89.5%	30.6%	4.8%
Main centre Totals	3,647	3,313	3,963	90.8%	29.9%	9.8%
Regional centres						
Bundaberg	10	15	15	150.0%	40.0%	13.3%
Mackay	48	45	44	93.8%	15.9%	4.5%
Maryborough	3	1	3	33.3%	-	-
Mount Isa	1	2	1	200.0%	-	-
Southport	-	2	-	-	-	-
Toowoomba	11	16	22	145.5%	54.5%	9.1%
Regional centre Totals	73	81	85	111.0%	29.4%	7.0%
State Total	3,720	3,394	4,048	91.2%	30.5%	9.8%

Notes:

- (1) The RoGS unit of measurement for the civil jurisdiction is a case. Secondary processes such as interlocutory applications are excluded.
- (2) The Trial Division also deals with matters which, for reporting purposes, have been grouped as non-RoGS civil, non-RoGS criminal and probate. RoGS files include claims in the majority of originating applications. Non-RoGS civil includes such proceedings as admission as a legal practitioner and appointment as a case appraiser.
- (3) Clearance Rate: Finalisations/Lodgements.
- (4) Backlog Indicator: the number active defendants with proceedings older than the specified time.

Civil Jurisdiction Brisbane

Caseflow Management List

The Case Flow Management List continues to minimise the cost and delay associated with civil litigation by directions designed to progress proceedings in an efficient, cost effective, and timely way. In addition, the Case Flow regime protects the Court's civil jurisdiction from being overburdened by a proliferation of long tail claims. In 84% of cases, the parties were successful in agreeing on appropriate orders for progression of the proceedings to resolution by trial, informal negotiation, or mediation, with over 500 orders issued on the papers or made at one of the 103 Case Flow conferences, reviews, and mentions conducted over the course of the year. The Case Flow process resulted in the finalisation of 189 active proceedings in the last reporting year. The bulk of the case management work in relation to matters on the Case Flow Management List is undertaken by the Resolution Registrar (Civil), Ms Julie Ruffin. The Case Flow judge is Justice Treston.

	Results	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Grand Total
Decision on Papers	Adjourned Before Commencement	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Delisted	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Discontinued	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Final Order	5	2	6	3	4	3	1	3	9	4	40
	No Order Made	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
	Order	410	317	210	112	244	409	601	623	327	500	3,753
	Vacated - Event Not Required	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Dismissed	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Refused	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Decision on Papers Total		415	319	216	115	249	415	604	627	336	505	3,801
Review	Adjourned After Commencement	1	4	2	5	14	12	6	9	13	8	74
	Adjourned Before Commencement	14	40	54	33	39	67	28	62	78	163	578
	Delisted	-	1	1	1	-	1	4	81	5	3	97
	Discontinued	7	-	15	18	10	28	23	7	-	8	116
	Final Order	-	2	4	1	1	4	-	1	-	-	13
	No Appearance	1	-	-	1	2	-	2	1	1	2	10
	No Appearance - Relist	-	-	3	-	3	-	5	2	2	-	15
	No Order Made	5	4	4	5	10	2	1	6	19	4	60
	Order	163	105	111	133	102	120	97	119	75	80	1,105
	Settled	3	-	-	1	29	64	19	102	37	61	316
	Vacated - Event Not Required	112	64	12	119	192	322	492	560	414	407	2,694
	Summary Judgement	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
	Judgement	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
	Order Reserved	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
	Listed for Trial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Review Total		306	220	206	317	403	623	678	952	645	736	5,086
Grand Total		721	539	422	432	652	1,038	1,282	1,579	981	1,241	8,887

Source: Queensland Higher Courts civil database (QCivil).

Date prepared: 5 August 2025.

(1) The QCivil systems are “live” operational systems in which records are updated as the status of court matters change (for example, a defendant being resentenced as a result of a Court of Appeal decision) and or input errors are detected and rectified. This constant updating and data verification may result in a slight variance of figures over time.

Prepared by: Courts Performance and Reporting Unit.

Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act Applications

The legislative purpose of the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* (Qld) is the protection of the community from the commission of serious sexual offences. An application may be made for a serving prisoner to be subject to its regime before the prisoner's release from custody.

During the reporting year, Justice Crowley managed the Dangerous Prisoners Sexual Offenders List. Applications for continuing detention or supervision orders, as well as the annual reviews of continuing detention orders and hearings for alleged contraventions of supervision orders are case managed by the List judge.

Management of relevant applications is achieved through weekly reviews. Sometimes, orders for the progress of a matter can be made on the papers, obviating the need for a review hearing. Matters requiring substantive hearing are generally listed for hearing on Mondays or Tuesdays by one of the two judges listed in the Applications jurisdiction in a given week, but form part of the Civil list for that week. Shorter matters (including mentions of matters where an offender who has been released subject to a supervision order is arrested for a breach, or suspected breach, of the order) are listed as part of the Applications list.

In 2024-2025, there were eight new applications lodged (the same number as the previous year). The ongoing workload for the Court in relation to matters under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act* nevertheless continues to be substantial. In the reporting year, there were 142 reviews, 120 orders made on the papers and 52 substantive hearings.

Number of court events held pursuant to *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* at Queensland Supreme Court for the period 2014-15 to 2024-25

Year	Total
2014-15	172
2015-16	245
2016-17	275
2017-18	325
2018-19	350
2019-20	423
2020-21	563
2021-22	504
2022-23	362
2023-24	435
2024-25	490
Grand Total	4,144

Source: Queensland Higher Courts civil database (QCivil).

Date prepared: 15 August 2025.

(1) The QCivil systems are "live" operational systems in which records are updated as the status of court matters change (for example, a defendant being resentenced as a result of a Court of Appeal decision) and or input errors are detected and rectified. This constant updating and data verification may result in a slight variance of figures over time.

Prepared by: Courts Performance and Reporting Unit (DJAG).

Commercial List

The Commercial List provides management and prompt hearing for proceedings of a commercial character.

Following the appointment of Justice Bradley to the Court of Appeal, the Commercial List judges as of 30 June 2025 were Justice Freeburn (Principal Judge) and Justices Kelly, Cooper, Hindman and Muir.

Proceedings can be placed on the Commercial List by request from the parties, or by direction of the Court. Parties may submit a request to place a matter on the Commercial List by submitting an online form or emailing the associate to the Principal Judge. Requests for placement typically inform the Commercial List judges about some basic information about the matter, its expected length at trial and whether the case is an urgent one that requires an expedited timetable.

The Principal Judge considers the request and allocates the matter to one of the Commercial List judges. The allocated Commercial List judge is responsible for supervising the proceeding, which includes making timetabling directions, hearing any interlocutory applications and hearing the trial. If the allocated Commercial List judge is unavailable to hear any part of the matter, generally another Commercial List judge is allocated to the hearing.

Court documents for commercial matters are filed electronically using the Objective Connect file sharing platform and are uploaded and accessible through the Court's electronic file web page at: <http://apps.courts.qld.gov.au/esearching/>

This process creates efficiencies for both the parties and the Courts.

On 1 July 2024, there were 83 cases on the List. On 30 June 2025 there were 127 matters on the List. During the year ended 30 June 2025, approximately 43 cases on the List were finally resolved.

Supervised Case List

The Supervised Case List (SCL) focuses on the management of large, complex cases which do not otherwise fit within the Commercial List or Building, Engineering and Construction List. Cases are placed on the SCL at the request of one or more of the parties, or by the direction of a judge or the Resolutions Registrar where a need is identified for the ongoing judicial management of a proceeding.

Historically, the list has attracted a diverse range of cases needing management. In 2025, the list has seen a particular growth in silicosis cases.

The SCL judge (presently Justice Freeburn) seeks to work with the parties to tailor directions so as to affect a just and timely resolution of matters in the most cost-effective way possible.

As of 30 June 2025 there were 26 cases on the SCL. Informally, 15 silicosis cases were also managed separately - with the cooperation of the lawyers involved in those cases.

Self-Represented Litigant Supervised Case List

Cases are placed on the Supervised Case List for cases involving self-represented litigants (SRL List) by direction of Supreme Court judges, who direct that a case in which a party is or becomes self-represented be entered on the SRL List, or by a party notifying the Supervised Case List Manager or the Resolution Registrar that a party is or has become self-represented. The list is currently managed by Justice Freeburn, the principal SRL List judge, Justice Muir and Justice Cooper. The matters placed on the SRL list are allocated to a specific judge who supervises these matters, with support from the Supervised Case List Manager and the Resolution Registrar.

Matters on the SRL List are supervised by way of regular reviews to ensure that they proceed efficiently through the Court. Case management focuses on assisting the parties to identify the issues in dispute and interlocutory steps. Resources, such as the pro-bono mediation scheme, are available to parties to proceedings on the SRL List.

Matters remain on the SRL List until they are resolved, stayed, or until all self-represented parties obtain legal representation. As of 30 June 2025 there were 99 matters on the SRL List. From 1 July 2025, there will be two judges managing the SRL List - Justice Cooper and Justice Muir.

Class Actions List

The Class Actions List was established in March 2023 by Practice Direction 8 of 2023 and commenced operation in the same month. The aim of the List is to facilitate the just and expeditious resolution of the real issues in representative proceedings at minimum expense consistent with the objectives of Rule 5 of the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules, and also to manage the specialist aspects of the representative proceedings in a consistent way.

Representative proceedings are assigned to a Class Actions List judge who manages the proceedings by case conferences and determines interlocutory applications. Justice Williams is the current Class Actions List judge and, as of 30 June 2025, manages eight ongoing representative proceedings.

Wills and Estates List

There has been a marked increase in the number of wills and estates disputes filed in the Supreme Court. Such disputes, commonly involving family members, may quickly become entrenched. Early intervention is therefore key to timely and cost-effective resolution. Wills and estates matters are identified on the filing of the first defence in the proceeding and referred to the Wills and Estates List (WEL) for ongoing management. Matters are also referred to the list by judicial direction. Parties are required to devise a plan to progress the proceeding, and execution and revision of that plan is monitored by regular review.

Scheduled reviews are regularly resolved by consent orders made in chambers before the review date. Short applications can sometimes be facilitated in the WEL review, but the majority of applications continue, and should continue, to be heard in Applications. Justice Treston assumed management of the WEL from Justice Williams in April 2025. In the 12 months to 30 June 2025, 47 matters were added to the List, an almost 60% increase on the preceding year. Eighteen of the matters on the WEL were resolved by the parties and four were determined by final order.

Building, Engineering and Construction List

The Building, Engineering and Construction List (BEC List) was established in January 2024 by Practice Direction 2 of 2024 and commenced operation in March 2024. The 2024-2025 financial year was the first full reporting period of the BEC List.

Consistently with the objectives of Rule 5 of the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules, the specialist list facilitates the just and expeditious resolution of the central issues in building, engineering and construction disputes. Matters are referred to the list judges by parties, the Resolution Registrar, or other judges (for example, in Civil or the Applications List or other specialist lists) when it is considered that the matter requires focused case management and includes relevant issues.

Justice Williams and Justice Sullivan manage the BEC List. At the end of the reporting year, there were 34 matters on the List demonstrating the increased number of complex disputes requiring specialised management.

Streamlining Criminal Justice Committee

The Streamlining Criminal Justice Committee (SCJC), an initiative of the Court established in April 2016, continued to meet regularly during 2024-2025.

The committee includes representation from the Supreme Court, District Court and Magistrates Court, as well as officers from relevant departments: the Director of Public Prosecutions (Qld), the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, the Queensland Police Service, the Australian Federal Police Service, Queensland Health, Legal Aid (Qld), Corrective Services, the Queensland Sentence Advisory Council, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society and the Parole Board of Queensland.

The committee's work again centred on its two working groups, forensics and remand. The focus in each of these working groups was shaped by developments over the year.

With respect to forensics, new "DNA Call overs" in the Magistrates Court and District Court has enabled

early identification of matters where DNA testing is an outstanding issue. The presence of counsel for both the prosecution and defence has ensured a collaborative approach to determining whether DNA testing is necessary for resolution of the issues in dispute at trial. This has significantly reduced unnecessary testing of samples.

With respect to remand, the proportion of persons on remand to the overall prisoner numbers, continues to provide challenges. Specialist Call overs for DNA-affected cases, sexual assaults and domestic violence matters were introduced in the Magistrates Court to expedite case progression. In the higher Courts, early case reviews, targeted sentencing sittings and increased regional sittings are being used to address delays. Challenges remain in relation to the timely hearing of bail applications, due to increased volumes. The availability of suitable bail accommodation addresses, particularly for First Nations women, also presents challenges.

Regions

Southern Region

Judges from Brisbane undertake circuits in Toowoomba, Roma, Mount Isa and Maryborough. In the reporting year a judge sat in Toowoomba for nine weeks. A judge sat in Maryborough for five weeks.

Central Region

The Central Judge is based in Rockhampton and is responsible for the work of the Court in Rockhampton, Longreach, and Bundaberg. He shares the work of the Mackay region with the Northern Judge.

This year, the Central Judge spent one week in Longreach. Ten weeks were allocated to sittings in Rockhampton for civil work, and 15 weeks for criminal work. Five weeks were allocated to sittings in Mackay and four weeks were allocated to Bundaberg. The Central Judge sat in the Court of Appeal in Brisbane for two weeks and also the Land Appeal Court for one week.

The trend of increasing criminal lodgements in Rockhampton has continued. For the period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025 there were 127 indictments lodged. These lodgements principally relate to offences against the *Drugs Misuse Act*. Similarly with civil lodgements – the number of lodgements has increased over the course of the year. The official clearance rates in Rockhampton are 97.3% (i.e. the rate at which the number of matters finalised matches the number of lodgements). As has been the practice for many years, parties are offered trial dates as soon as they indicate their readiness.

The work of the Court in Mackay, and Bundaberg has remained steady with regular sittings required.

Application days were held in Rockhampton on approximately a four-weekly basis. On these days, ceremonies were conducted, if needed, for those seeking admission to the profession and who have a connection to Central Queensland. There were 20 practitioners admitted in 2024-2025.

Northern Region

The Northern Judge is responsible for the work of the Court within the Northern District. In the year covered by this report he sat for 14 weeks in crime and 10 weeks in civil in Townsville. He also sat for two weeks in the Court of Appeal.

The Northern Judge presided at three circuits in Mackay (six weeks). Mackay remains a busy circuit for the Court, the responsibility for which falls to both the Central Judge, Justice Crow, and the Northern Judge.

The Northern Judge took long leave for five weeks in the year in question. During the periods of leave members of the Court from Brisbane circuited to Townsville thus enabling the timely throughput of matters to be maintained.

The criminal filings in the Supreme Court in Townsville dominated the statistics for the year with 110 lodgements. The clearance rate in the year in question was 111.8%.

The Northern Judge sits in applications in the morning of any Wednesday and Thursday of sitting weeks. Long civil application days are built into the calendar with a view to ensuring applications are disposed of promptly.

Justice North continues involvement with the profession in North Queensland including CPD seminars coordinated by the Townsville District Law Association and the North Queensland Bar Association. In addition Justice North attended and participated in sessions of the annual North Queensland Law Association Conference which was held on Hamilton Island in May.

During the year 30 new practitioners were admitted. Many took up positions in Townsville and North Queensland having completed their degrees at the Townsville campus of the James Cook University.

Far Northern Region

The Far Northern Judge, Justice Henry, sat at Cairns for 14 weeks in the civil jurisdiction and 19 weeks in the criminal jurisdiction.

His Honour circuted to Brisbane in September and November 2024 and February 2025 and circuted to Townsville in June 2025, sitting for a total of five weeks in the Court of Appeal. His Honour presided over one appeal to the Land Appeal Court in Cairns.

His Honour had four judgment writing weeks and three weeks leave.

In Cairns, applications mornings are typically conducted every Wednesday and Friday, and applications days conducted fortnightly, with a view to ensuring applications are disposed of promptly.

In the 2024-2025 year, the number of matters lodged in the criminal jurisdiction decreased to 95 compared to 110 in the previous year, a decrease of 13.6%. In the civil jurisdiction, lodgements increased by 33.7% to 115 compared to 86 the previous year, an increase of 33.7%.

During the year 25 new practitioners were admitted in Cairns: 14 women and 11 men. Many took up positions in the far north having completed law degrees at the Cairns campus of James Cook University.

With the support of the Bar Association of Queensland and Queensland Law Society, the Court coordinated the Cairns Judiciary 2024-2025 CPD Series – a series of professional development sessions delivered by Cairns' resident Supreme and District Court judges and local practitioners.

His Honour was a teacher at the National Judicial College of Australia's National Judicial Orientation Programmes held in November in Perth and in March in Hobart. His Honour taught in the NJCA's Writing Better Judgments 1 Programme held in Sydney in October and was appointed as Chair of that Programme's organising committee. His Honour also attended NJCA Program Advisory Committee & Council Meetings in Canberra in February and in Brisbane in June.

His Honour again taught the undergraduate subject *Advocacy and Criminal Sentencing* for James Cook University where he is an Adjunct Professor to its College of Law.

In August, his Honour was on the panel for Judgment Writing at the Supreme Court's Annual Conference at the Gold Coast. In November, his Honour addressed early career lawyers in Cairns on the subject '*Junior Lawyer Pivot points.*' In January, his Honour presented a hypothetical "*When should life support be turned off*" to the CPE Britain Pacific Conference in London.

His Honour chaired the Cairns Opening of the Law Year Organising Committee which convenes the annual Opening of the Law Year ceremony in the forecourt of Cairns Courthouse. The ceremony is inclusive of traditional owners, blending their contributions with the traditional component of annual reflection by judicial officers and lawyers in contemplation of the law year ahead.

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



LAND APPEAL COURT

LAND APPEAL COURT

The Land Appeal Court hears appeals from the Land Court and is constituted by a judge of the Supreme Court and two Members of the Land Court, other than the Member whose decision is under appeal.

The Land Appeal Court may sit at Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns. The Chief Justice nominates a Supreme Court judge to act as a Member of the Land Appeal Court for the Southern Region.

The Land Appeal Court judges are:

- Far Northern Region – the Honourable Justice James Henry
- Northern Region – the Honourable Justice David North
- Central Region – the Honourable Justice Graeme Crow
- Southern Region – the Honourable Justice Sean Cooper

With the cooperation of the Chief Judge, Clarke DCJ also sat as a Member of the Land Appeal Court in three matters this financial year.

Appeals to the Land Appeal Court are by way of rehearing, usually on the record of the Court below. The Land Appeal Court has power to admit new evidence, but only if the Court is satisfied that such evidence is necessary to avoid grave injustice and that adequate reason can be shown why the evidence was not previously given. By convention, the Supreme Court judge presides, but all Members of the Land Appeal Court sit as equals and the decision of the majority is the decision of the Land Appeal Court.

A party to a proceeding in the Land Appeal Court may appeal a decision of that Court to the Court of Appeal on the ground of error or mistake in law or jurisdiction. A further appeal could lie to the High Court of Australia, but only with special leave.

There were twelve (12) appeals lodged in the Land Appeal Court in this reporting year, compared with five (5) appeals filed in the previous reporting year. The appeals filed and their current status are:

Nature of Appeal	Region	LAC Panel	File number and name	Final/Awaiting Outcome/Notes
Categorisation	Southern region	Cooper J President Stilgoe Member Loos	LAC001-25 Genamson Holdings Pty Ltd v Moreton Bay Regional Council	Hearing occurred on 9 June 2025. Judgment reserved. To be handed down in the next reporting year.
Mining compensation	Central region	Crow J Acting Member Clarke DCJ Member Isdale	LAC002-25 Balanced Property Pty Ltd & Namrog Investments Pty Ltd v Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd LAC004-25 Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd v Balanced Property Pty Ltd & Namrog Investments Pty Ltd	Hearing occurred on 29 May 2025. Judgment reserved. To be handed down in the next reporting year.
Land Valuation	Southern region	Cooper J Member McNamara Member Loos	LAC003-25 Calardu Gympie Pty Ltd v Valuer-General LAC005-25 Valuer-General v Calardu Gympie Pty Ltd	LAC003-25 was discontinued on 17 April 2025. LAC005-25 was heard on 12 June 2025. Judgment reserved. To be handed down in the next reporting year.
Land Valuation	Central region	Crow J Member McNamara Member Loos	LAC006-25, LAC007-25, LAC008-25, LAC009-25 Cost Pty Ltd, Allen v Valuer-General	All appeals were heard on 26 May 2025. Judgment reserved. To be handed down in the next reporting year.

Resumption of land	Northern region	North J President Stilgoe Member McNamara	LAC010-25 Robke v Chief Executive, Department of Transport and Main Roads & Mackay Sugar Limited LAC011-25 Chief Executive, Department of Transport and Main Roads & Mackay Sugar Limited v Robke	Both appeals discontinued on 8 April 2025.
Mining compensation	Central region	Crow J President Stilgoe Member McNamara	LAC012-25 Comiskey v Fairhill Coking Coal Pty Ltd	Filed towards end of the reporting year. Awaiting finalisation of orders and hearing dates.

There were three (3) decisions handed down in the Land Appeal Court in this reporting year:

Nature of Appeal	Region	LAC Panel	File number and name	Final/Awaiting Outcome/Notes
Mining - Declaration	Central region	Crow J Acting Member Clarke DCJ Member Isdale	LAC003-23, LAC001-24 Namrog Investments Pty Ltd v Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd	LAC003-23 - Appeal allowed relating to dam interpretation. LAC001-24 - Appeal allowed relating to costs. [2024] QLAC 2
Land Valuation	Northern region	Henry J Member Isdale Member McNamara	LAC004-23, LAC005-23 Jensen & Anor v Valuer-General	LAC004-23 - Appeal allowed. Slight reduction in valuation amount. LAC005-23 - Appeal dismissed relating to costs. [2024] QLAC 3
Mining - PRCP decision	Central region	Crow J Acting Member Clarke DCJ Member Loos	LAC002-24 - DETSI v BHP Coal Pty Ltd & Ors	Appeal dismissed. [2025] QLAC 1

There were two (2) appeals from the Land Appeal Court filed in the Court of Appeal in this reporting year. Pembroke (Namrog appeals) sought leave to appeal but was refused on 30/5/2025. Jensen (substantive decision) went to hearing and was dismissed on 13/6/2025.

Nature of Appeal	File number and name	Final/Awaiting Outcome/Notes
Mining - Declaration	CA12172/24 Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd v Namrog Investments Pty Ltd	COA Order made on 30/5/2025. Leave to appeal is refused and applicant (Pembroke) pay respondents costs. [2025] QCA 87
Land Valuation	CA475/25 Jensen & Anor v Valuer-General	COA Judgment delivered 13/6/2025. Appeal dismissed. Appellant to pay Respondent costs. [2025] QCA 102

There was no Judicial Review application made in the Supreme Court.

There were no applications for special leave filed in the High Court during this reporting year.

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR'S OVERVIEW

PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR'S OVERVIEW

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

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 on 20 December 2024. 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 four central Supreme Court registries located 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 and grants of administration in relation to wills and estates.

Other regional centres throughout Queensland are visited on circuit, including Bundaberg, Mount Isa, Mackay and Toowoomba. Local Magistrates Courts registry staff perform the registry duties in those locations.

Registry Workloads

Throughout the State, there were 1,626 criminal lodgements during 2024-2025, an increase of 1.4% compared to 2023-2024 when 1,604 lodgements were received.

The registry managed a greater number of jury trials in 2024-2025. The number of defendants finalised by trial increased by 70% to 63 when compared to 2023-2024. The average length of those trials increased from 5.2 days to 7.4 days.

Report on Government Services (RoGS) civil lodgements increased by 5.5% from 3,526 during 2023-2024 to 3,720 in 2024-2025.

Probate applications across Queensland increased by 4% to 15,355 in 2024-2025.

Technology updates

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 Supreme Court, in response to the Court Services Queensland Workforce Review.

Recruitment for three Registrar positions concluded in September 2024 and the JMCS team members are 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, online support, training in the Juror Management System (JMS) and regular updates to staff in Brisbane and in the regions.

Day-to-day jury management tasks remain the responsibility of local registry staff however, the JMCS team undertakes some 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.

Criminal Resolution Registrar

During 2024-2025 the Criminal Resolution Registrar (CRR) for the Supreme Court completed 12 months of operation following the commencement of Supreme Court Practice Direction 5 of 2024 the previous year. The CRR role introduced administrative case management and case conferencing for all criminal matters in the Supreme Court.

The pilot has delivered on key objectives relating to reduced judicial time managing the criminal list, with a 21% reduction in the average number of Court events per matter and has enabled complex criminal matters (with more than 10 co-accused) to be heard more efficiently.

The CRR role has seen a significant reduction in the number of vacated trial listings (12 in total) during the first six months of 2025, dropping by 71% when compared with the six-month period pre pilot (42 vacated trials).

The CRR considered 7254 adjournment forms, 1436 sentence forms, 179 pre-trial request forms and 176 trial request forms and conducted case conferences for 83 defendants during 2024-2025.

The CRR pilot will continue in 2025-26 with a final evaluation to be completed after two years operation.

Civil Resolution Registrar

During the 2024-2025 financial year, the Resolution Registrar, Civil conducted 80 conferences in 72 proceedings. 114 orders for directions were issued. 57% of the proceedings resolved prior to trial. A total of approximately 268 Court days had been allocated for trials on the conferenced files.

The resolution of these cases, either before the trial or shortly after the trial commenced, saved approximately 178 judge days in Court, and auxiliary costs such as associate, registry and bailiff support, Court recording, and general Court facilities' costs.

The reduction in Court days allowed judges to devote their time elsewhere, in judgment writing, case management, and determination of interlocutory applications. The benefit to the parties, in terms of savings on legal costs, is also likely to have been significant.

eLodgement for Supreme Court Claims

The Queensland Courts and Tribunals Online Services Portal (OSP) was expanded on 30 June 2025 to allow legal practitioners to electronically lodge documents for civil claim matters in the Brisbane Supreme Court.

Facilitating electronic lodgements (eLodgements) in civil claims matters will provide benefits to solicitors and the registry, including:

- the ability to lodge a claim and supporting documents, and pay any applicable filing fee, 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- saving time and cost by reducing the need to attend the registry;
- providing a streamlined process with contact details pre-filled (matching your digital identity details that you will use to log into the OSP);
- the ability to view your lodged materials via the Supreme Court Claims dashboard on the OSP;
- receipt of sealed copies of documents via return email; and
- the ability for judicial and registry staff to access electronic versions of Court documents.

In addition, eLodgement through the OSP will provide valuable experience for both practitioners and registry staff ahead of the transition to the future civil case management system, which will extend eLodgement capability to all civil Supreme, District and Land Court matters across Queensland.

Wills and Estates Digitisation

From 25 November 2024, Queensland Courts introduced a new internal case management system and also a specific wills and estates service on the Queensland Courts and Tribunals Online Services Portal for online lodgements of applications for a grant of administration. Applications for a grant of administration can be filed in the four central registries of the Supreme Court of Queensland (Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns).

These changes have facilitated the ability for Court users to lodge their applications electronically and receive grants electronically and is a major step forward to providing a more contemporary service to Court users. Whilst lodgements, at this stage, are only open to legal practitioners and the Queensland Public Trustee, the OSP will expand to include self-represented applicants by December 2025.

Lodgements through the post and over the counter are still available to Court users but the uptake of the portal has been positive, with portal lodgements accounting for approximately 65% of all lodgements, as at September 2025.

In addition to the benefits mentioned in eLodgements for civil claims matters, the OSP also provides the ability to conduct a name search for a wills and estates matter and view details of the Court file and allows third parties (such as financial institutions) to verify the authenticity of the grant of administration by using a link and code to access the Court filed copy via the OSP.

Concurrently, the registry introduced a state-wide allocation process for the assessment of applications by Registrars, to ensure more consistent processing times, quality of service and a more equitable distribution of workload.

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 Courts Services Queensland Workforce Review and has proven highly effective in several key areas, including, Wills and Estates, Jury 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 further expanding the specialist Court services model to additional skill areas.

Acknowledgements

I am incredibly proud of the registry staff for their unwavering enthusiasm, dedication, and professionalism in performing 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.

Photo: Court of Appeal Townsville June 2025



SUPREME COURT JUDGES' ASSOCIATES

SUPREME COURT JUDGES' ASSOCIATES

	Judge	Associate
Chief Justice	The Honourable Helen Bowskill	Alicia George
	Court of Appeal	
President	The Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO	Molly Davis
	The Honourable Justice Bond	Georgia Perissinotto
	The Honourable Justice Jean Dalton (up to and including 28 February 2025)	Thomas Parnell
	The Honourable Justice Peter Flanagan	Ruby Ioannou
	The Honourable Justice David Boddice	Juliette Oliver
	The Honourable Justice Susan Brown	Molly Swanson
	The Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley (appointed 31 March 2025)	Sophie Derrick
	Trial Division	
Senior Judge Administrator	The Honourable Justice Glenn Martin AM	Sarah McDonald
	The Honourable Justice Martin Burns	Brydie Allardyce
	The Honourable Justice Peter Davis	Jacob Bennett
	The Honourable Justice Soraya Ryan	Austin Kelly
	The Honourable Justice Elizabeth Wilson	Grace Hancock
	The Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley (up to and including 30 March 2025)	Sophie Derrick
	The Honourable Justice Peter Callaghan	Rohan Moore
	The Honourable Justice Frances Williams	Genevieve Rule
	The Honourable Justice Paul Freeburn	Ahana Shetty
	The Honourable Justice Declan Kelly	Laura Elliott
	The Honourable Justice Kerri Mellifont	Charis Holt
	The Honourable Justice Sean Cooper	Joshua Fukushige
	The Honourable Justice Melanie Hindman	Jenny Wang
	The Honourable Justice Lincoln Crowley	Georgia Stone
	The Honourable Justice Thomas Sullivan	Claudia Philp
	The Honourable Justice Catherine Muir	Marnie Ball
	The Honourable Justice Michael Copley	Alexander Asher
	The Honourable Justice Rebecca Treston	Asha Varghese
	The Honourable Justice Paul Smith AM (on and from 31 March 2025)	Rachel Perry
	Regional	
Northern Judge	The Honourable Justice David North	Ellie Bracey
Far Northern Judge	The Honourable Justice James Henry	Maxwell Eberhardt
Central Judge	The Honourable Justice Graeme Crow	Darcy Walmsley

