

Magistrates Court of Tasmania

Annual Report 2023–24



MAGISTRATES COURT
TASMANIA

Magistrates Court of Tasmania Annual Report 2023–24

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Magistrates Chambers

GPO Box 345
HOBART TAS 7000



18 November 2024

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Level 10, 15 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Attorney-General

Magistrates Court and Coronial Division Annual Reports 2023–24

I enclose the Annual Report for 2023–24 for the Magistrates Court, as required by the *Magistrates Court Act 1987*, section 17C.

The report incorporates the Annual Report for the Coronial Division which is required by the *Coroners Act 1995*, section 69.

The reports are provided to you as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Catherine Geason".

Catherine Geason
Chief Magistrate

Acknowledgement

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples and traditional owners of this Country, and recognise Aboriginal people's continuing connection to Land, Sea, Waterways, Sky and Culture.

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this Island, we would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people; the traditional owners of the Land upon which the Court operates.

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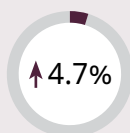
2023–24 year at a glance

Criminal Division

Adult Criminal

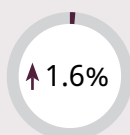
Lodged

15,109



Finalised

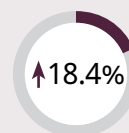
13,398



Youth Justice Criminal

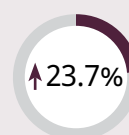
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1,832



Finalised

1,681

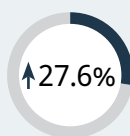


Coronial Division

Reported Deaths, Fires and Explosions

Lodged

1,142



Finalised

856



Civil Division

Civil Claims

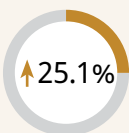
Lodged

2,711



Finalised

2,761



Family Violence (FVO) Applications

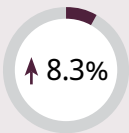
Lodged

1,921



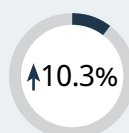
Finalised

1,822



Total Number of Listings

191,605



Message from the Chief Magistrate



Reflecting on 2023–2024 I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our magistrates and court staff who daily strive to maintain the values of our court, independence, integrity and respect.

As always, I am very grateful and thank everyone for their significant and invaluable contributions.

In April 2024 Deputy Chief Magistrate Daly commenced as the Associate Judge in the Supreme Court of Tasmania.

Associate Judge Daly was appointed as a temporary magistrate in November 2007 until his permanent appointment in October 2008. On 8 August 2011 he was appointed as the Deputy Chief Magistrate. During his time at the court Associate Judge Daly was instrumental in launching the pilot for a specialised youth justice list in Hobart which led to specialised youth justice lists statewide. He also led our projects developing the *Criminal & General Act 2019* and the Astria integrated IT system. I am grateful to and thank magistrate Ken Stanton who has taken on the leadership role for these projects.

I congratulate Associate Judge Daly on his appointment and thank him for his significant contributions to the Magistrates Court.

During the vacancy, the Attorney General appointed Magistrate McTaggart as acting Deputy Chief Magistrate. I am very grateful to and thank acting Deputy Chief Magistrate McTaggart for her willingness to embrace the role and her considered contributions whilst continuing her significant work as Chief Coroner.

In May and June 2024 retired magistrate Glenn Hay returned to the court as a temporary magistrate. The court is very grateful for his willingness to accept the appointment and his contributions to progressing the lists.

On 6 May 2024 the magistrates commenced wearing judicial robes in all divisions of the court. The decision to wear robes marked the culmination of discussions over an extended period as to the appropriateness of robes in a modern judicial setting. As the jurisdiction of the court continues to expand, the magistrates considered the adoption of robes would promote respect for the court and signify the impartiality of magistrates as a collective group who are responsible for interpreting and applying the law. This change marks an important stage in the history of the Magistrates Court.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank my fellow magistrates for their collegiality, support and dedication which is greatly appreciated.

Message from the Administrator



The 2023–24 year has presented ongoing challenges for staff across all registries of the Magistrates Court. With a steady increase in case lodgements across all jurisdictions and staffing levels remaining relatively stable over the past 2–3 years, the pressures on our staff have been considerable. The court administration continues to work with the Department of Justice to progress the recommendations in the Cornell-McGleenon review. Despite these challenges, I want to take this opportunity to commend the staff for their unwavering dedication to their work, their compassion for the community, and the resilience they demonstrate every day, often in demanding circumstances.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to the Managers in each court registry across the State. Their leadership, guidance, and support for the staff are invaluable in ensuring that our work health and safety obligations are met. These efforts are especially important given the limited opportunities for ongoing training and professional development given the busy nature of our work. The commitment of the Managers and Deputy Administrators, Jane Cook and Anna Watson, to ensuring that training opportunities still occur, despite these challenges, is both admirable and greatly appreciated.

A significant development occurred in May and June 2024, with the appointment of Sean Corrigan as Security Manager for the Magistrates Court, starting on 6 May 2024. Sean's role is critical to maintaining a safe and secure environment for both court staff and visitors. Additionally, on 1 June 2024, following a comprehensive tender process, MSS Security was selected as the new security contractor for the Magistrates Court. I extend my sincere thanks to Sean Corrigan and Katrina Warburton, Manager Finance and Facilities, for their efforts in ensuring that the new security team was well-trained and prepared for their roles. The commitment of Sean and Katrina and the MSS Security Staff to maintaining professional, reliable security services is greatly valued.

On the systems development front, we have made significant progress during the reporting period. Critical upgrades were made to both the live audio recording system and the audiovisual capabilities in courts across the State. Work continues to ensure that every court location has the most up-to-date, reliable technology. In addition, the Justice Connect/Astria Project and the eCourt module are progressing well. Special thanks to Jenna Mays, Project and Policy Manager, for her ongoing dedication and hard work on the eCourt project.

I also wish to acknowledge the continued collaboration and dedication of the Burnie Courts Complex Team. The development of the new Burnie Court is an exciting initiative, and I commend all those involved in the regular working groups for their tireless efforts in bringing this project to life.

Despite the ongoing challenges, the Magistrates Court remains a rewarding place to work, thanks to the passion and commitment of its staff. I am proud of the work we do, and I am confident that together, we will continue to meet the challenges ahead with resilience and dedication.

About the Magistrates Court

Aim and purpose of the Court

The aim of the Magistrates Court of Tasmania is to inspire confidence in justice. The Court serves the community by providing access to an accountable, independent and impartial system of justice which is administered according to law.

The purpose of the Magistrates Court of Tasmania is to protect rights and to uphold the law fairly and impartially.

Our values are

- Independence
- Integrity
- Respect for all
- Timeliness
- Transparency

Overview of the Court

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania is a statutory body created as a court of record by section 3A of the *Magistrates Court Act 1987*. It is made up of the Chief Magistrate, the Deputy Chief Magistrate, and the Magistrates.

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania is the busiest court in Tasmania, handling over 33,000 new cases in 2023–24 and listing over 191,000 matters. The Magistrates Court is part of the third – or judicial arm – of government, has 17 Magistrates and more than 80 staff working across registries in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie. Magistrates have jurisdiction to hear and determine a broad range of legal matters. Magistrates sitting in the Courts of Petty Sessions hear and determine:

- simple offences
- crimes triable summarily under State and Commonwealth legislation
- breaches of duty
- applications under various State and Commonwealth statutes.

They also exercise a wide range of appellate and review functions.

Magistrates hear simple and indictable offences in the Youth Justice Division, as well as exercising child safety responsibilities in the Children's Division under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*.

Magistrates in the Civil Division hear and determine civil matters up to a value of \$50,000, or an unlimited amount with the consent of the parties. Disputes up to a value of \$15,000 are dealt with as minor civil claims and undergo simplified procedures prior to and at hearing.

The Court sits as the Court of Petty Sessions, a court of summary jurisdiction provided for in the *Justices Act 1959*. Other divisions of the Court are provided for in legislation. These divisions are:

- Civil Division
- Youth Justice Division
- Coronial Division
- Children's Division
- Administrative Appeal Division
- Mining Division.

The court relies on volunteer bench justices to run night courts and weekend courts, as the Court sits 365 days per year.

Information about the Court's day-to-day operations, including services, locations, decisions and court lists, is available on the Magistrates Court website at magistratescourt.tas.gov.au

Court locations

During the reporting year magistrates constituted Courts of Petty Sessions under the *Justices Act 1959*, and sat in the various divisions of the Magistrates Court, at the following locations around the State:



Organisational structure

Magistrates

As at 30 June 2024, the end of the current reporting period, the Magistrates Court was constituted by the following Magistrates:

Hobart	Launceston
Chief Magistrate C J Geason	Magistrate S J Brown
Deputy Chief Magistrate M F Daly (appointed to Supreme Court of Tasmania as of 29 April 2024)	Magistrate S E Cure
Magistrate O M McTaggart	Magistrate K J Stanton
Magistrate C P Webster	Magistrate E Hughes
Magistrate R J Marron	
Magistrate S J Cooper	Devonport and Burnie
Magistrate A R McKee	Magistrate D R Fairley
Magistrate R B Webster	Magistrate L S Topfer
Magistrate J G Hartnett	Magistrate K Edwards
Magistrate M Duvnjak	Magistrate E Hughes

Temporary Magistrates

The Court welcomed back retired Magistrate Glenn Hay from 13 May to cover the vacancy left by the appointment of Deputy Chief Magistrate Daly to the Supreme Court of Tasmania as the Associate Justice.

Court staff

During the reporting period, as in previous years, the Court continued to experience challenges in recruitment and retention of staff across all registries. As reported in the 2022–23 Magistrates Court Annual Report, the Magistrates Court Review by Chris Cornell-McGleenan was finalised and provided to Court administration in September 2023, making 13 recommendations. Court administration has implemented some of the recommendations and in consultation with the Department of Justice, continues to work towards resolving the remaining recommendations, some of which will be subject to the availability of adequate resourcing.

Bench Justices

Bench Justices normally preside over after-hours courts in each registry of the Magistrates Court. Subject to need, after-hours courts are held each weekday evening and each morning and evening on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Court expresses its gratitude for the voluntary contributions of the Bench Justices and their service to the administration of justice. A large part of bench justices' work ensures that people who are arrested are brought before the Court as soon as practicable, at which time they have an opportunity to make an application for bail.

The Bench Justices have continued to be an invaluable support to the Court and the criminal justice system in this state.

To give an indication of the level of service provided by the Bench Justices during the reporting period, Bench Justices:

- dealt with 1155 adult defendants, an increase of 12.1%
- dealt with 104 youths, an increase of 5%
- convened 483 mid-week courts (usually sitting at 7pm) , an increase of 7.1%
- convened 779 weekend courts (held each weekend day at 11am and 7pm), an increase of 14.7%
- dealt with 504 family violence matters, an increase of 4.34%.

	Hobart	Launceston	Devonport	Burnie	Total
Adult Defendants	739	146	179	91	1155
Youth Defendants	78	15	7	4	104
Mid-week Courts	300	54	86	43	483
Weekend Courts	520	108	101	50	779
Family Violence Matters	310	65	76	53	504

As well as presiding over after-hours courts, Bench Justices conduct preliminary proceedings hearings for indictable offences within the usual business hours of the Court, with 27 hearings listed state-wide in the reporting period. More details on preliminary proceedings are provided later in this report.

To ensure that Bench Justices are well informed in the exercise of all their powers, the Chief Magistrate or her delegate holds regular meetings with Bench Justices. Bench Justices are also provided with relevant training before being placed on the roster of Justices who may preside over their own court. They are able to contact a Magistrate at any time if they require assistance.

Education, training and professional development

Staff – Professional development and training

The Magistrates Court continues to place a strong focus on training and professional development of staff. In the 2023–24 year staff undertook a range of training opportunities:

- New induction training
- Manager Essentials Program
- Ready to Lead Program
- Working with difficult people
- Respect at Justice
- Family Violence – Violence Against Women
- Mental Health and wellbeing
- Ethics and behaviour
- Mental Health First Aid
- Vicarious Trauma
- Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Fire Warden training
- Emergency management response
- Resilience Training



The Court also worked with the Department of Justices' Wellbeing Support team, and trained counsellors attended the court each fortnight for a number of months over the course of the reporting period. These counsellors were also made available at the court on a regular basis for individual sessions with staff.

Legal education and community involvement

As part of an ongoing commitment to continuing judicial education and professional development in the legal profession, and for others who regularly deal with the Court, Magistrates attend and present at seminars and conferences.

Meeting/Conference	Magistrate	Location	Date(s)
National Judicial College of Australia – National Magistrates Orientation Program	C. J. Geason	Brisbane	3–8 September, 2023
Australian Officers Association Annual Colloquium	M.F. Daly	New Zealand	5–8 October 2023
Statewide Magistrates Conference	Magistrates	Hobart	19–20 October 2023
Law Society Litigation Conference – co-convenor of the Early Career Lawyer stream	D.R.Fairley	Orford	5 November 2023
Coroners Conference	O. McTaggart S. Cooper	Sydney	13–15 November 2023
Youth Justice – Heads of Jurisdiction	M.F.Daly	Sydney	1 December 2023
Australian Judicial Officers Association Meeting	M.F.Daly	Sydney	15–16 March 2024
Law Society of Tasmania Criminal Law Conference	M. Duvnjak	Hobart	1 March 2024
Statewide Magistrates Conference	Magistrates	Campbell Town	12 April 2024

Note: Education sessions provided by Coroners, and Associates, are reported under Coronial Education, in the Coronial Division's Annual report, later in this publication.

Legal practice course

Since 1997 the Hobart Magistrates have been delivering lectures and supervising practical courtroom exercises for university law graduates who are enrolled in the six month long Legal Practice Course. This is conducted between February and August each year.

Magistrates convene mock courts every week after court adjourns in the afternoon to introduce law graduates to the courtroom environment in preparation for their entry into legal practice.

The trainees prepare and deliver applications, make submissions, deliver pleas in mitigation, and conduct minor contested hearings. The Magistrates provide feedback to the trainees on their delivery, content, and advocacy skills. They are also assisted by members of the legal profession, and these exercises form part of the assessment for the unit.

The Criminal Law Practice and Advocacy unit provides invaluable experience for students to appear before real Magistrates in a court setting. This aspect of the course is the envy of many interstate jurisdictions.

Courtwatch

As part of the Legal Practice Course the Magistrates Court hosts each trainee for a day to provide them with the opportunity to sit in court with a Magistrate and to gain an understanding of the processes of the Court.

In the 2023–24 financial year, we had two trainees sit for a day each in Launceston, 38 in Hobart and two in Burnie.

Court user groups

Court User Group meetings are held regularly to provide court users with an opportunity to provide feedback to the Court and to receive information relevant to their work at the Court.

The groups consist of representatives from a range of stakeholders such as the Law Society of Tasmania, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Tasmania Police, Tasmania Legal Aid, the Department for Education, Children and Young People, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Independent Bar.

Topics discussed have included general staffing updates, access to clients in custody, security matters, procedural and administrative processes, the new Burnie Court updates, court technology upgrades and after-hours court arrangements.



Improving access to justice – future proofing the Courts

Infrastructure

During the reporting period, the Court continued to work to upgrade and improve facilities and infrastructure across all four permanent registries. It is of critical importance that court facilities support the justice needs of the Tasmanian community, and prioritise user experience, safety and sustainability, and the court continues to work to upgrade buildings and systems to ensure they are fit for purpose. During the reporting period there have been several improvements made to court facilities across the state including:

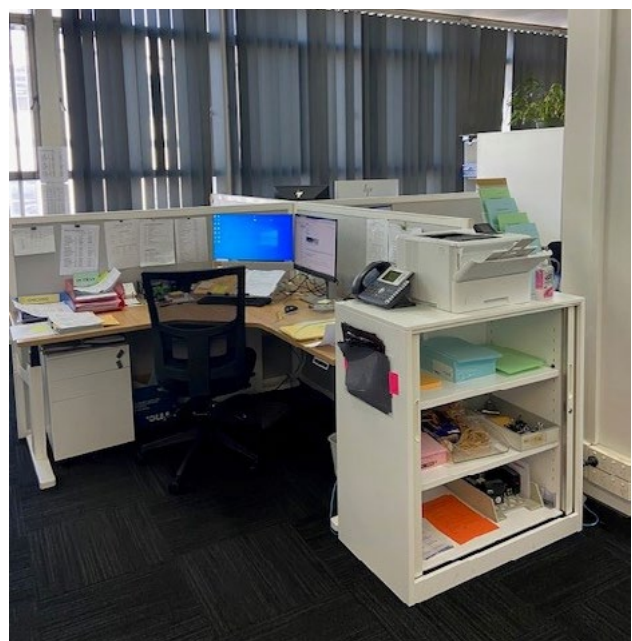
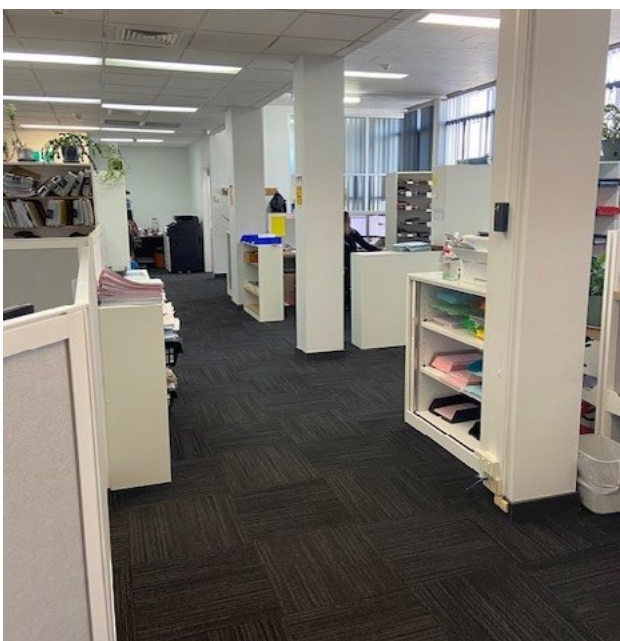
- Devonport Magistrates Court garage door replaced
- Hobart Magistrates Court garage exit hydraulics and sensors replaced
- Hobart Magistrates Court improved signage for lift and foyer area
- Devonport Magistrates Court Fire indicator panel replaced
- Hobart Magistrates Court public bins replaced
- Hobart Magistrates Court lift and waterproofing repairs.

Other notable infrastructure improvements include the Launceston Registry refurbishment and planning for the Burnie Court redevelopment.

Launceston Registry refurbishment

During the reporting period, Launceston Magistrates Court Registry underwent an internal refurbishment project to improve the workstation layouts and address workplace health and safety requirements for staff working in the building through the removal of old asbestos tiles underneath the carpet, installation of ergonomic desks and chairs and updated workstations and cabinetry.

Future capital improvements planned for Launceston Court include the replacement of the Public and Prisoner lifts due to the asset's end of life condition and functionality.



Figures 1 and 2: The refurbished registry in the Launceston Magistrates Court

Burnie Court redevelopment

The current Burnie Court complex, shared by the Supreme Court and the Magistrates Court and located in Alexander Street, Burnie, is old and no longer fit for purpose. As refurbishment of the current site is unviable, a decision was made by the Tasmanian Government to relocate the complex, originally committing \$40 million to develop a contemporary court complex.

Initial plans were to redevelop a site on Mooreville Road, previously occupied by the University of Tasmania, however, following community feedback the Government decided to further explore options in the Burnie Central Business District. An Expression of Interest was completed in May 2022 and in March 2023 it was announced that the courthouse will be built at 100–106 Wilson Street, Burnie. In light of the decision to locate the Burnie Courts Complex at 100–106 Wilson Street, the 2023–24 State Budget provided an additional \$46.5 million for the Burnie Court Complex, taking the total commitment to \$86.5 million.

The Magistrates Court continues to work with the Department of Justice on planning for the new site and to maintain the current building for continued use prior to relocation. In June 2023 it was announced that Xsquared Architects had been appointed as the lead Design and Contract Administration consultants for the project, and will be working alongside Guymer Bailey Architects, courts expert Mark Wilde and other experienced consultants to deliver this project.

The land at 100–106 Wilson Street has been purchased, and concept design completed, with a view to the project being complete in March 2027. The court continues to work closely with the Project Team to ensure successful delivery of this important project.

Country Courts

Country courts, as listed earlier in this report, are held in a number of regional towns at intervals during the year. Country courts allow people in regional communities greater access to justice by reducing the need for and cost of travel to major centres for matters.

The Court leases rooms in suitable buildings for this purpose.

In certain circumstances these courts are conducted using video conferencing facilities, where the defendants appear in the country courtroom and the magistrate sits in a permanent registry.

The table below shows the number of courts run in each location and whether they were in person or by video link.

There has not been a suitable premises located in Smithton for a court to be convened in the reporting period, and the Smithton list continues to be held in Burnie in person.

Location	Frequency	Attendance	Total Sittings in 2023–24
Scottsdale	Every 6 weeks on Tuesday	In person	5
St Helens	First Wednesday of the month	In person	6
Whitemark, Flinders Island	Quarterly	Video link or in person as required	4 ¹
King Island	Every 8 weeks	Video link or in person as required	6
Queenstown	Every 8 weeks two to three day visits	In person	5
Smithton	Every 4 weeks	In person ²	12

¹ Includes one in person sitting

² Currently held in Burnie in person as no building is available in Smithton to hold a court.

Systems and technology

Justice Connect – Astria

The Magistrates Court continues to progress towards the implementation of an integrated IT system under the Justice Connect program. This program is managed by the Department of Justice and aims to replace several legacy justice IT systems with a modern, unified platform.

In 2023, following a comprehensive evaluation of South Australia’s Electronic Court Management System (eCMS), which has been successfully operational since August 2022, the decision was made to adopt and adapt the eCMS for Tasmania. This decision followed a series of workshops facilitated by the system vendor in August and December 2023, involving key representatives from the Magistrates Court, Supreme Court, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM), Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), and the Program Team. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, prompting the Steering Committee to approve the adoption of the eCMS as a foundational solution for Tasmania.

The first stage of the project, currently underway, involves a 12-month scoping phase. This phase will assess the legislative and functional requirements necessary to tailor the South Australian system to the Tasmanian context. The output of this stage will be an implementation proposal, which will be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval in 2025.

Astria’s eCourt module will streamline digital integration with systems used by the Tasmanian Prison Service and Tasmania Police (for prosecutions), enabling efficient information transfer across agencies. The adoption of Astria will also support changes to court processes under the new *Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Act 2019*, marking a significant advancement for the Tasmanian justice system.

Audio-Visual upgrades and videoconferencing

Video-conferencing is an important element of the court’s goal to increase access to justice. Defendants in custody may be permitted to attend court by video link from any location in Tasmania, and witnesses may attend from Tasmania, interstate or overseas.

Video-conferencing substantially reduces court costs for witnesses who would otherwise have to travel to attend a hearing. It can also reduce the number of trips a person in custody is required to make from Hobart or Launceston to appear in a court in another location, significantly reducing the cost, inconvenience and risk associated with such transports. The technology also allows vulnerable witnesses to give evidence remotely from a protected witness room in a court building or elsewhere.

Funding of \$1.3 million was received in the 2024–25 State Budget, for continued AV work required across the Magistrates and Supreme Courts in response to the Commission of Inquiry recommendations. The Courts are working with the Department to continue upgrades to videoconferencing facilities for the Magistrates Court as required including the replacement the current ageing digital recording system. This work also includes a strategy to improve the current audio recording equipment in the country courts in remote regions across the state.

Security

The safety and security of everyone in the Magistrates Court of Tasmania is paramount given the nature of the services it provides.

In May 2024, the Courts appointed a Security Manager funded by the Courts for an initial fixed term period of 2 years to assist the Administrator to oversee the security and safety management of the Courts statewide. It is anticipated that this position will be required on an ongoing basis and the Court will seek to make this a permanently funded position within the Court's staffing establishment.

The Security services for the Magistrates Court statewide has been a contracted service since 2002. On 1 June 2024, this service changed contractors from Wilson Security Pty Ltd to MSS Security Pty Ltd following a tender process.

Despite the challenges that comes with changing providers the Security services have continued to be provided to the Courts by MSS Security who are committed to working with the Courts to make safety improvements and reduce incidents where possible.

Court security is a priority for the Courts and it will invest, where possible, in making improvements to its facilities and security practices to ensure the safety and security of Magistrates, court staff and court users.

During the reporting period 2023-24, the Court's expenditure for Court Security totalled \$2.2 million. This expenditure will increase with the new contract due to various changes to the contract arrangements.

During the financial year there have been a number of security improvements undertaken across the Courts including:

- lockdown buttons installed for Hobart Court – to be implemented in each of the Courts
- review and Tender development of Security Equipment for all Courts excluding Burnie Court Complex
- review of Burnie Court Exit Paths/Court rooms to Chambers
- review and Tender development of Hobart Security CCTV equipment
- additional AV upgrades to Polycom units in Hobart Courtrooms (Additional to Courts AV Upgrade Project)
- purchase of a new Walk-Through-Metal Detector in Devonport
- additional work-based training provided to all security guards
- implementation of standardised operating procedures state-wide.

The number of security related incidents has increased during the reporting period. These incidents are reported through the Department's WHS portal for tracking, investigation and actioning by the Security Manager and/or relevant site Security Supervisor/Manager.

The increase in incidents may be due to various factors including Security Officers reporting more than they had previously, and the heightened behaviour of people appearing in court.

Court support services

Every day, court support services are provided to assist clients who are having difficulty in understanding the Court process or accessing legal advice or representation. While some services are provided through the Magistrates Court and the Department of Justice, many services are provided by external organisations, often on a voluntary basis.

In this section we provide a snapshot of the services and activities that have improved access to justice for people attending court.

Disability Access

The Magistrates Court continued to work towards achieving actions in the Tasmanian Government's *Accessible Island: Tasmania's Disability Framework for Action 2018-2021*, with a focus on improving physical access to court buildings, staff training, and better access to information and services. When a need arises, the Court makes adjustments to standard procedures in order to accommodate the needs of people with a disability.

Web site accessibility

During the reporting year accessibility improvements were implemented on the Court's web site, including a dyslexic font feature and the ability to apply the Google Translate function on our site. The Coroner's Court website also went a comprehensive refurbishment in the reporting period, with the new website making key information easier to access. The Court thanks the Department of Justice's LGBTIQ+ Reference Group, who were involved and took the time to provide valuable feedback as part of this process.

Interpreters

Interpreters provide an essential service to the Court and to the administration of justice. The interpreter's role is to remove the language barrier and to put the party in the same position in the proceedings as an english-speaking person. The interpreter is essential to the provision of a fair trial. Interpreters are supplied at the Court's expense and the Court always endeavours to provide the best-qualified, accredited interpreter available. The Court is working towards meeting the National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals.

During the reporting period, the Court spent \$75,760 for translation and interpretation services, an increase from \$54,174 in 2022-23. The increase in expenses is related to the increase in requests and the costs associated of providing such services when services are not readily available within the state. Interstate interpreters are often sought which increase the overall expense in providing much needed services for accessible justice practices. The increases were noticeable in the Devonport and Launceston Magistrates Courts and in the Coronial Division.

Witness Intermediary Scheme, Department of Justice

The Department of Justice's Witness Intermediary Scheme, which commenced in 2021 by way of an amendment to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001*, provides for an independent person (the intermediary) to assist the Court by assessing communication and other related needs of a witness, preparing an assessment report for the judicial officer, and making recommendations to the Court about the most effective means of communicating with the witness.

The scheme applies to children under 18 years and adults who have a communication need, where they are witnesses in sexual offence matters or homicide matters.

Information on matters where intermediaries have been involved during the reporting period is provided in the following table:

	Hobart	Launceston	Devonport	Burnie	Total
Requests for an assessment report <i>s71 Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses)</i> <i>Act 2001</i>	2	5	3	3	13
Ground rules hearings <i>s7K Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses)</i> <i>Act 2001</i>	3	5	3	7	18
Hearings with a witness intermediary <i>s7J Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses)</i> <i>Act 2001</i>	1	1	3	5	10



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Justice Facilities Dogs Program

Partnering with the Witness Intermediary Scheme, Department of Justice, and Guide Dogs Tasmania, in December 2023 the Magistrates Court was involved in trialling the Justice Facility Dogs program. The program utilises highly trained dogs who are specifically trained to provide comfort and emotional support to persons attending court. The program runs in a range of ways, firstly the program can accept referrals in relation to a specific matter where a vulnerable witness may require support, but also by having dogs socialise with groups of people and provide a calming influence in court waiting areas.

Since February 2023, the Hobart Court has welcomed Pixie, and on occasions Quincy, who attend court each Tuesday morning to support young people and others attending the Youth Justice Court as an initial trial. This builds on support already provided to the Court statewide, including Loui who supports the North West registries. The trial has been an outstanding success.

The court would like to thank the Witness Intermediary Unit and Guide Dogs Tasmania, for their support in implementing this program across the Court, it has made a very significant difference to court users generally, and greatly assisted those appearing in the Court's Youth Justice Division in particular.

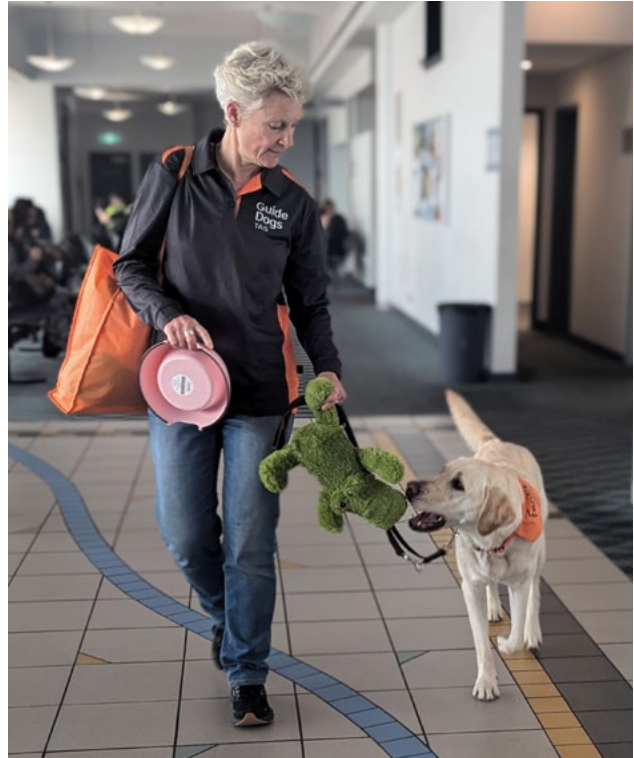


Figure 3: Guide Dogs Tasmania handler Sally Gill, with Pixie in the Hobart Court waiting area



Figure 4: Quincy waiting patiently



Figure 5: Pixie having some much-needed downtime with her crocodile amidst all the socialising

Community Legal Services

In each region of the state, the Court is assisted by the various Community Legal Services. State-wide services include the Women's Legal Service, the Environmental Defenders Office, and the Tenants Union of Tasmania.

In Launceston, the Launceston Community Legal Centre provides free legal advice and referrals to Tasmania Legal Aid and private practitioners. In Burnie and Devonport, the North West Community Legal Centre provides a similar service.

The Hobart Community Legal Service (HCLS) has offices in Hobart and Bridgewater. Along with the provision of free legal advice, the HCLS provides legal representation for some after-hours and weekend courts and the on-call roster for holiday periods. Their after-hours services have been used in both Hobart and Launceston during the reporting period.

Duty Lawyer Scheme

The Court acknowledges the work of the Law Society of Tasmania, the Centre for Legal Studies, and the Hobart Community Legal Service for the continuation of the duty lawyer service in Hobart, which is staffed by newly qualified lawyers on a roster system.

Their services provide assistance to applicants, defendants and respondents who are appearing in the Magistrates Court. They contribute significantly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Court by providing legal assistance to those who would otherwise have been unrepresented.

Witness Assistance Service

The Witness Assistance Service is a unit within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The service, which began operating in the Magistrates Court in 2017, is available to provide assistance for a range of serious matters with a particular focus on sexual abuse matters and matters that fall outside the legislative definition of family violence. The service also assists witnesses in the preparation of victim impact statements. The Court has benefited from the provision of services for court matters, including coronial inquests. The work of the Witness Assistance Service helps meet a gap in services and has resulted in good outcomes for both witnesses and the Court process.

Court Chaplaincy

In 2021, a participant in a Tasmanian Clinical Pastoral Education Program completed her placement at the Launceston Magistrates Court, providing support to people attending the Court as a part-time volunteer. After successfully completing her placement, she has continued to provide support in Launceston under the auspices of Prison Fellowship Australia.

54 Reasons, formerly Save the Children

54 Reasons continues to provide state-wide support and assistance to some of the young people who are subject to bail, and young people who have transitioned from Ashley Youth Detention Centre. A 54 Reasons youth worker interviews the young person and helps them to identify pro-social goals and develop a plan as to how to achieve the identified goals. The 54 Reasons youth workers will also support the young person to seek legal advice, attend appointments and attend court. 54 Reasons will also support the young person to engage in some pro-social recreational activities which provide other options to offending behaviour.

The partnership between 54 Reasons and the Youth Court is an invaluable resource, as by collaborating it is possible to achieve better outcomes for some of our disadvantaged young people who are appearing in court.

Other support services

Other services that actively engage with the Youth Justice Court are Mission Australia, Life without Barriers, the Department for Education, Children and Young People and Baptcare. Each offers assistance and support to young people with a range of needs, such as homelessness, alcohol and drug problems, education and training, family breakdown, and mental ill health.

Open House Hobart

In November 2023, the Hobart Magistrates Court was once again open for public tours for Open House Hobart.

This event, hosted by the Tasmanian chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, provides members of the public with an opportunity to view buildings of architectural interest.

Participants in the Magistrates Court tours were provided with a behind-the-scenes tour of the building, which features parts of the original Blundstone Boot Factory retained along the Campbell Street facade.

Participants gained an understanding of the workings of the Court and its role in delivering justice for all Tasmanians.



Across the divisions

The Court's incoming caseload during the 2023–24 reporting year was as follows:

Case lodgement type	Number
Criminal – Adult	15,109
Criminal – Youth Justice	1,832
Family violence order applications	1,921
Restraint order applications	1,666
Child protection applications	583
Civil (minor civil, civil, residential tenancy)	2,711
Miscellaneous applications (adult and youth)	2,879
Breaches of orders (incl. bail, suspended sentence, community service orders)	5,983
Administrative Appeals, Mining Tribunal	51
Coronial	1,142

Criminal

The Criminal Division of the Magistrates Court is by far the busiest division of the court, and in 2023–24 saw 15,109 new adult criminal lodgements, an increase of 4.7% on 2022–23, and 13,398 finalisations, an increase of 1.6% on the previous financial year. These figures represent the second year in a row of rising criminal lodgements, following slight decreases between 2020–21 and 2021–22, and numbers are now approaching pre-COVID19 levels³.

The most common offence type in the adult criminal division related to traffic offences with 4,618 lodgements, followed by property and deception offences (3,189 lodgements), crimes against the person (3,021), public order and security offences (1,818) and justice procedure offences (1,606)⁴.

The adult criminal division also saw an unprecedented 5,684 applications for a breach of an order, an increase in 16.2% from 2022–23, the vast majority of these applications relating to a breach of bail⁵.

In relation to pending caseload, as at 30 June 2024, there were 8,767 matters lodged pending completion. Of these, 1,978 or 22.5% were between 6 and 12 months old, and 21% greater than 12 months old. This is an increase in total pending matters of 4.1% on the 2022–23 financial year⁶.

During the reporting period, of the total finalised matters in the adult criminal division, 48.2% of matters were finalised in 6 months or less, 26.3% finalised in under 12 months, and 25.5% finalised after 12 months⁷. There are a range of reasons why matters may take a number of months and appearances before being finalised, many of which are outside of the control of the court. These include delays with disclosure, availability of counsel and time taken for expert reports to be completed, to inform decision making and sentencing outcomes.

³ See Table 1: Summary figures by court 2023–24

⁴ See Table 9: Criminal matters by court level and selected offence types 2018–19 to 2023–24

⁵ See Table 1: Summary figures by court 2023–24

⁶ See Table 13: Criminal pending caseload at 30 June 2024 and backlog 2018–19 to 2023–24

⁷ See Table 15: Criminal disposals by court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

Civil

The Magistrates Court's civil division deals with disputes over money, up to and including a value of \$50,000, or sums over that amount with the consent of the parties. Established by way of the *Magistrates Court (Civil Division) Act 1992*, all Magistrates statewide (with the exception of dedicated Magistrates sitting as Coroners) hear civil disputes. Disputes to a value of \$15,000 are dealt with as minor civil matters, and disputes to a value of between \$15,001 and \$50,000 (or over this amount by consent) are dealt with as Civil matters.

Of note, in late 2023, the Magistrates Court (Civil Division) Rules 1998 were updated, and the minor civil threshold increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to bring Tasmania into line with other interstate jurisdictions.

In 2023–24, the civil division saw 2,711 new claims lodged, an increase of 6.6% on the previous financial year. Similar to the criminal division, this follows a drop in claims lodged between 2020–21 and 2021–22 and the division is again approaching pre-COVID19 levels⁸. The majority of the claims lodged were in relation to debt recovery, accounting for 64.2% of total lodgements in the reporting period.

In terms of civil pending caseload, as at 30 June 2024 there were 3,182 claims lodged pending completion, an increase of 10.3% from the previous reporting period. Of those, 32.5% were between 6 and 12 months old, and 10.3% over 12 months old.

In relation to finalisations, 2023–24 saw a total of 6,276 finalisations, an increase of 18.7% on the previous reporting period. Of the total cases finalised, 65% or 4,092 were less than 6 months old when they were finalised⁹.

Restraint orders

Lodgements of restraint orders, which are counted as civil lodgements in the Report on Government Services, increased significantly in the reporting period. In 2023–24 the court saw 1,666 restraint order applications, an increase of 27.5% on the previous financial year. Of those, 1,576 were new applications. There were 67 applications to extend or vary a restraint order, an increase of 15.5% and only 23 applications to revoke a restraint order¹⁰.

Specialist Courts and Lists

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice division hears and determines cases involving young people who are alleged to have committed offences under the age of 18. Dedicated Magistrates hear all youth justice matters.

A range of organisations support the Youth Justice Division of the court. Organisations such as Mission Australia, Life without Barriers, the Department for Education, Children and Young People, Baptcare and 54 Reasons, attend hearings in the Youth Justice Division, and provide invaluable support to defendants, their families and greatly assist the Court. They offer critical support for defendants dealing with a range of challenges including homelessness, alcohol and drug problems, education and training, family breakdown and mental illness. The Court wishes to thank these groups for the work they do to assist these vulnerable young people.

⁸ See Table 1: Summary figures by court 2023–24

⁹ See Table 16: Civil disposals by court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

¹⁰ See Table 8: Restraint order summary statistics 2018–19 to 2023–24

In the 2023–24 financial year, the court saw 1,832 youth justice lodgements, an increase of 18.4% from 2022–23. The Court has seen an increase in youth justice lodgements of 60.7% in the five years to 2023–24, from 1,140 in 2018–19 to 1,832 in 2023–24. As well as new lodgements, there were 299 applications for breaches of orders, an increase of 27.8%¹¹.

In terms of pending caseload, as at 30 June 2024 there were 780 matters pending completion, with 66.6% being less than 6 months old, 24.6% being between 6 and 12 months old and 8.7% older than 12 months.

In terms of finalisations, 1,698 matters were finalised during the financial year, an increase of 23.1% on 2022–23. Of those, 1,041 or 61.3% were less than 6 months old, 451 or 26.5% were between 6 and 12 months old, 12.1% older than 12 months¹².

Child Protection List

The Child Protection List determines child protection matters, including care and protection orders as well as assessment orders. In 2023–24 the division saw 583 care and protection applications, a decrease of 11.5%. The court has seen a steady drop in applications in this division over the past five years, with a decrease of 40.7% since 2018–19.

Family Violence List

Lodgements of Family Violence orders, which as per the Report on Government Services are calculated as civil matters, increased in the reporting period. Statewide, the Magistrates Court runs dedicated Family Violence Lists, presided over by dedicated Magistrates. This is a rapidly growing division of the Magistrates Court, and in 2023–24 the Court saw 1,921 applications for family violence order an increase of 11.1% on the 2022–23 financial year. Between 2018–19 and 2023–24 there has been a 41.1% increase in family violence order applications.

Of the 1,921 applications, 1,001 were new applications, 399 were applications to extend or vary a family violence order, and 259 were applications to extend or vary a police family violence order. Notably, the court saw 1,040 applications for a breach of a family violence order or a police family violence order, an increase in 9.8%.

Mental Health Diversion List

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania operate a Mental Health Diversion lists, for defendants with a mental illness and/or a cognitive impairment. Dedicated Magistrates work with health and legal professionals to help eligible people treat their mental health needs related to their offending behaviour.

The usual court system may not consider the reasons behind their behaviour (which is usually minor offences or disorderly conduct, and can be repeat offences). Sentencing can be a problem, as they generally have little income or funds to pay a fine, and their offences are not serious enough for imprisonment.

By focussing on treatment and support, the Diversion List aims to:

1. assist people to address the mental health or cognitive disability needs related to their breaking of the law
2. improve community safety and reduce re-offending by people on the List
3. improve the psychological and general well being of people on the List
4. reduce the use of criminal justice punishments for health-related behaviours.

¹¹ See Table 5: Summary statistics by court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

¹² See Table 13: Criminal pending caseload at 30 June 2024 and backlog 2018–19 to 2023–24

Persons are eligible to take part in the program if they've been charged with a minor offence, and have a mental illness, intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or other disorder affecting cognitive functioning. Defendants can refer themselves, or be referred by family members, other Magistrates, health providers or their lawyers. Participation is voluntary and involves regular court reviews of progress. It is just one of the ways the Court is ensuring all Tasmanians are supported through the justice system.

Court Mandated Diversion Program

The Court Mandated Diversion Program is for defendants who have pled or been found guilty of offences which are linked to their drug use, have a history of drug use, are an adult and willing to address their drug use and change their behaviour. Defendants are sentenced to a term of imprisonment but do not have to serve the sentence if they comply with the conditions of the drug treatment order. Participants are case managed by Community Corrections, must abstain from illicit drug use, submit to regular drug testing and attend court for reviews before a Magistrate. The program is also supported by a range of agencies, including Just Desserts Incentive Group.



Coronial Division

Message from the Chief Coroner

This Annual Report marks 10 years of the specialisation of the Coronal Division. Prior to 2014, coronial functions were undertaken by up to 9 magistrates across the state alongside their other duties. Staff and police officers of the Division were located in various premises, including in a northern office.

In 2013, an independent review of the Coronal Division recommended that dedicated coroners be allocated to perform coronial work. Following that review, I commenced full-time coronial duties and was formally delegated the Chief Magistrate's responsibilities under the *Coroners Act 1995*. Since that time, the plan for specialisation and centralisation of the Coronal Division has been implemented with the support of successive Chief Magistrates.

There is now an establishment of three magistrates working as full-time coroners. All staff and police officers (coroner's associates) now work within separate premises within the Hobart Magistrates Court. Other positions critical to the functioning of the Division have been introduced over this period, including a family liaison officer and Tasmanian Suicide Register research officer. Additional coroner's associates and administration officers have also been recruited to assist in managing the increasing caseload. The Coronal Division has also been instrumental in having three fully qualified forensic pathologists operating from the centralised Hobart Mortuary.

Since specialisation and centralisation of the Coronal Division, many efficiencies have been created in processes and procedures. Documentation, manuals and guides have been produced for both the public and those working within the Division. Coroners have presided over critical projects within the Division. Coroners and associates have been involved in educating the police, legal, and medical communities, and the public at large by regular presentations.

In the 10 years over which the Division has undertaken its plan for specialisation, the numbers of deaths reported and which require investigation by coroners has increased from 541 in 2013–14 to 1,142 in 2023–24. This represents an increase of more than 111% in ten years. Such an increase is generally in accordance with the experience of other Australian jurisdictions.

It is fortunate that the Coronal Division has developed procedures to investigate deaths as efficiently as possible in the face of such large numbers. However, with only three coroners dealing with the total workload, there are inevitable delays in case finalisations. Additionally, the complexity of inquests and inquest findings create a significant burden upon the three coroners and staff. Further, many additional public inquests will be required to be held upon the proclamation of the amendment to the Act known as 'Jari's Law'. I recognise the impact of delay upon the loved ones of the deceased and those affected by coronial investigations. The delay is unable to be alleviated without at least one additional full-time coroner.

In January 2024 a strategic plan approved by the Chief Magistrate was finalised and forwarded through the Secretary of the Department of Justice to the Attorney-General. The recommendations contained in the plan include:

- that a fourth permanent coroner (magistrate) be appointed
- that the Coronal Division be located in separate premises away from the main Magistrates Court building, but still within the Magistrates Court framework; and that the Coroners Court be designed in a way that reflects the needs of the community



- that there be a full-time Registrar/manager of the Division
- that counsel assisting be employed within the Coronial Division.

Additionally, Tasmania is the only State without a Domestic Violence Review function. Resourcing is required to enable this to be established within the Coronial Division.

I look forward to the Attorney-General considering the Coronial Plan and providing his support.

The function of a coroner as a judicial officer in undertaking independent investigations into reportable deaths in accordance with the Act, is a critical one. The coronial functions should be conducted efficiently and thoroughly with the loved ones of the deceased being accommodated in a supportive and trauma informed environment. Every effort is made by the coroners and the dedicated team within the Coroner's Office to support affected persons through the process. Ultimately, however, limitations in resourcing will impact upon such efforts.

Coronial Division – Year at a glance

The jurisdiction and operation of the Coronial Division is set out in the *Coroners Act 1995* and the *Coroners Rules 2006*. This report is submitted pursuant to section 69 of the *Coroners Act 1995* (the Act).

A coroner's role is to investigate reportable deaths, fires, and explosions. Reportable deaths are primarily those that are sudden, unnatural, unexpected, or suspicious. Coroners are required to make recommendations where appropriate and comment on matters related to public health or safety or the administration of justice, and for the purpose of prevention of future deaths.

During the reporting period, Magistrate Olivia McTaggart continued her role as Chief Coroner (being the Chief Magistrate's delegate) and full-time coroner, Magistrates Simon Cooper and Magistrate Robert Webster undertook full-time duties as Coroners. The Coronial Division was also supported in this period by Magistrate Jackie Hartnett who also undertook coronial investigations.

The Court is grateful to the many organisations involved in assisting the work of the Coronial Division. In particular, the Court acknowledges the crucial role of the State Forensic Pathologist, Dr Andrew Reid. Dr Donald Ritchey and Dr Christopher Lawrence continued with their roles as forensic pathologists. Dr Christopher Lawrence resigned in June 2023, and we would like to thank Dr Lawrence for his many years of dedicated service to the Coronial Division.

All levels of Tasmania Police, including the many officers who assist the Coroners in their investigations, provide an important service to the Coronial Division. The assistance provided by coroners' associates has been invaluable. Up to 9 associates have integrated themselves at various times into the operations of the Division and they are central to its operation.

The Coronial Division is also reliant on the important roles undertaken in coronial investigations of Forensic Science Service Tasmania, Forensic Odontologists, the in-house medical advisor to the coroners, Dr Tony Bell, and the Clinical Nurse Specialist, Kevin Egan.

The Division held 31 inquests during the financial year with 21 finalised, some of those finalised were from inquests held in previous financial years.

Inquest Summary

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Damian Crump	Suicide	Included an examination into the circumstances surrounding the death of Damian Crump, including: - the circumstances of and the response of Ambulance Tasmania (AT) to the reported missing and/or unauthorised taking of morphine - any established systems and/or policies providing for the storage, security, access and accounting of drugs and associated paraphernalia of drugs held by AT - any misuse of drugs by Damian Crump, and other employees of AT - the investigation, internal management of and organisational response by AT to the suspected misuse and/or theft of drugs held by AT - any established mental health and welfare systems or policies relating to or providing for support to Mr Crump and other employees of AT - the capacity and ability of those occupying relevant supervisory positions in AT either substantively or occasionally, both in 2016 and at the time of inquest with respect to: - identifying and assisting employees with mental health issues - managing the risks, if any, that those issues posed to both patient and staff safety - the pathways available to managers to deal with those issues - assistance available to managers in dealing with employees with mental health issues - any management training provided by AT. Findings were handed down on 5 July 2023.
Paul Reynolds, Simon Darke, Robert Cooke and Paul Hunt	Suicide	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Paul Hunt, Paul Reynolds, Simon Darke and Robert Cooke, including. - the policies and procedures of Tasmania Police - the nature of any welfare program - Mr Cooke's worker's compensation claim. Findings were handed down on 1 September 2023.
Dayle Weldon	Fall	Included an examination into the death of Dayle Weldon including: - the sequence of events, including when, where and how Ms Weldon fell - the supervision of Ms Weldon on the evening of the fall - the actions of carers - the policies at Regis Tasmania about the level of supervision of the residents on the Allambi Suite - the options available to staff to manage agitated behaviour in residents - Ms Weldon's health in the week prior to her death, including any pain management. Findings were handed down on 6 September 2023.

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Valma Tweedie	Death in Care	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Ms Tweedie: - the care, supervision and treatment of Ms Tweedie whilst held in care at the Desmond Wood facility operated by St Michaels Association Inc. preceeding her fall on 14 July 2021 - the connection between any failure to apply appropriate guidelines or best practice in the Launceston General Hospital and Ms Tweedie's death. Findings were handed down on 23 October 2023.
John Tscherkaskyj	Motor Vehicle	Included an examination of the Mr Tscherkaskyj death including: - the identity of the deceased - how death occurred - the cause of death - when and where death occurred. Findings were handed down on 8 January 2024.
De-Identified KT	Suicide	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of KT including: - the treatment she received from a psychologist - the psychologist's lack of cooperation with the coronial investigation. Findings were handed down on 18 January 2024.
Robert Ryan	Poisoning	Included an examination of the circumstances leading to Mr Ryan's death and the cause of Mr Ryan's death. Findings were handed down on 30 January 2024.
Joshua Dingjan	Workplace	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Dingjan, including: - what caused the forklift to rollover - any training, instruction and supervision given - an assessment of adherence to safe work practices. Findings were handed down on 15 February 2024.
Aiden McHugh	Motor Vehicle Accident	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding Mr McHugh's death including: - observations made by persons - subsequent reports to police - a determination of the circumstances leading up to the accident - the identity of the driver involved. Findings were handed down on 28 February 2024.

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Dorothy Atkins	Death in Care (Home)	Included an examination into the cause of death of Dorothy Atkins, including: - the physical and mental condition of the deceased at the time of and prior to her death, including details of any medication and/or treatment provided or recommended regarding her care - the provision of services to assist in the assessment of the deceased's care needs and implementation of those care needs. (ie ACAT assessments, care providers, checks and balances etc) - the circumstances surrounding Mr Baldock's appointment as the deceased's carer and how he fulfilled that role during the period of his appointment, up until her death - the quality and adequacy of care provided to the deceased by Ms Smith and Mr Baldock up to and at the time of her death - the financial arrangements made regarding the deceased's care and upkeep. Findings were handed down on 7 March 2024.
Kane Leary	Motorcycle Accident	Included an examination into the death of Kane Leary, including: - the cause and circumstances of death - the collision including: - the sequence of events leading to the collision - the cause of the collision - whether the deceased was wearing a helmet at the time of the collision - the medical treatment received by the deceased including: - the effect of the failure to identify the occlusion of the terminal left internal carotid artery on 27 May 2021 - any changes in the management of patients with severe multi trauma in the Emergency Department since 21 May 2021. Findings were handed down on 27 March 2024.
Robert Gerard	Death in Custody	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding Mr Gerard's death including: - to enable findings to be made, if possible, under s 28 of the <i>Coroners Act 1995</i>; and - consider the implementation of any previous Coronial recommendations in respect of deaths in custody, particularly those concerning suicides by hanging. Findings were handed down on 18 April 2024.

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Geoffrey Mason	Death in Custody	Included an examination of the cause and circumstances surrounding Mr Mason's death including: - the deceased's background - information and support provide to attending Police - the response and planning of attending Police - the use of body cameras by attending Police - the tactical decisions of attending Police - the firearms training and validation of attending police - medical assistance rendered to the deceased by the attending Police. Findings were handed down on 30 April 2024.
Jari Wise	Motor Vehicle Accident	Included an examination into the circumstances of death of Jari Wise. Findings were handed down on 13 May 2024.
Vincent Down	Homicide	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the suspected death of Mr Down. Findings were handed down on 23 May 2024.
Patricia Iliev	Starvation	Including an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Patricia Iliev including: - whether starvation is an appropriate pathological cause of death for Ms Iliev - whether Ms Iliev was reliant on Phillip Adams for her basic needs, including food, water and healthcare - the adequacy of the care by Mr Adams in the 12 months prior to Ms Iliev's death. Inquest adjourned for submissions. Submissions have been received and the matter is adjourned for findings.
Robert Xu and Jarrod Davies	Drowning	Included an examination into the deaths of Robert Xu and Jarrod Davies including: - responsible serving of alcohol by alcohol serving establishments - duty of care of alcohol serving establishments - safety of the waterfront area (barriers, signage, equipment, surveillance). Findings were handed down on 13 June 2024.

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Roger Corbin	Helicopter Crash	Included an examination into the death of Roger Corbin including: - the cause of death of Roger Corbin - the experience of the PUI (Person Under Instruction), John Osborne - the experience of the CFI (Chief Flying Instructor), Roger Corbin - the condition of the aircraft at the time of the crash - the weather conditions at the time of the crash - the effect if any of wake turbulence - the findings of the ATBS (Australian Transport Bureau of Safety) - the circumstances of the crash - Hydraulic failure training: What supplement 7 recommended - what the PUI was taught on the day by Roger Corbin in relation to hydraulic failure training - whether a pre-flight debrief was conducted between PUI and CFI - effect of intermittent fault in hydraulic cut off switch - the suitability of conducting training at Area X-Ray - corporate knowledge of Rotorlift regarding the implementation of Supplement 7 - the practices of CFI's employed by Rotorlift regarding teaching hydraulic failure training to PUI and whether it complied with Supplement 7 at the time of the crash - changes to procedure at Rotorlift following the events. Findings were handed down on 27 June 2024.
David and Nelda Edwards		Included an examination of the circumstances of each death including: - the cause of death of Nelda Edwards - the role if any of Robert Edwards in the death of Nelda Edwards - the approach to dealing with the report of Dr Morris O'Dell. Findings were handed down on 26 July 2024.
Thomas Martin	Death under Mental Health Order	Included an examination into the death of Thomas Martin including: the care, supervision, and treatment of Mr Martin while subject to the treatment order under the Mental Health Act. Inquest adjourned for findings.
Michael Hawkes	Homicide	Included an examination into the death of Michael Hawkes. Inquest adjourned for findings.

Name of deceased	Cause of death	Inquest details
Silas Paul	Suicide	Included an examination of the circumstances of death of Silas Paul including: - the inter-agency response in relation to the procedures for mandatory reporting regarding sexual assaults and online bullying/harassment - the agencies involved include Tasmania Police and Strong Families Safe Kids: Advice and Referral Service - the delay (of one year) in Tasmania Police receiving the relevant referral. Inquest adjourned for findings.
Harry Lampkin	Suicide	Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Harry Lampkin including: - whether Harry intentionally ended his own life - the state of mind of Harry, including any knowledge by his family, friends, school staff and other adults - history of mental health concerns - what guidelines were in place at New Town High School. Inquest adjourned for findings.
Helen Bird		Included an examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Helen Bird including: - exploration of the issues of what information was available and what occurred during the days and weeks preceding Mrs Bird's death - whether Mrs Bird did take her own life or whether anyone else was involved - Mark Bird is a person of interest in this case; whether he is involved in Mrs Bird's death.

*Findings and recommendation responses are available on the Magistrates Court website. Some findings were handed down after the end of the reporting period.

Falls

During the reporting period 125 findings were handed down in relation to elderly falls, of which 66 were in relation to females and 59 in relation to males. These figures are very similar to the last financial year when 128 findings were handed down in the same period.

This data represents a list of coronial findings in respect of deaths of older persons occurring accidentally from falls or injuries in a nursing home, medical setting, hospital, or in their own home.

In each of these cases the coroner investigates the circumstances of the fall or injury sufficiently to enable a determination regarding whether there are any issues surrounding the care and treatment, connected to the death.

These investigations include a requirement that the aged care facility provide answers to questions regarding falls risks assessment and preventative measures implemented and an independent examination by Kevin Egan regarding any possible issues. On occasion the coroners may also seek a medical review of the treatment provided undertaken by the coronial medical consultant Dr Anthony J Bell.

To access a table detailing all coronial findings in respect of deaths of older persons occurring from falls or injuries in a nursing home, medical setting, hospital or in their own home please visit the Coronial website at: magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/coronerscourt/falls-statistics

Coronial education

A particular focus of coroners, coroners' associates, and key staff of the Division has been educating legal professionals, medical professionals, and the community at large about coronial matters. The following presentations were given by Coroners and Associates.

Coroners:

- education session provided to UTAS – Criminal Law 2023 Unit, by Olivia McTaggart on 21 August 2023
- education session provided to LGH medical staff (doctors and nurses), by Olivia McTaggart and Simon Cooper on 25 August 2023
- education session provided to members of the media (Channel 7, Southern Cross, ABC, The Mercury, WIN News) in the HMC, by Simon Cooper on 2 October 2023
- education session provided to hospital staff at the RHH Ground Round 2024 (doctors and nurses state-wide; attendance in-person (40) and online (150)), by Olivia McTaggart and Simon Cooper on 9 February 2024
- education session provided to Tasmanian Fire Service, by Simon Cooper on 6 June 2024
- education session provided to Legal Practice Course 2024, by Olivia McTaggart and Robert Webster.

Associates:

- education sessions provided to Police Academy Recruits (1.5–2 hour sessions conducted by 2 coroners associates) on the following dates:
 - 15 June 2023, 10 August 2023, 17 August 2023, 8 October 2023, 4 January 2024, 14 March 2024, 11 April 2024, 21 May 2024 and 13 June 2024
- education session provided to Hobart Uniform Shift, by Sgt Megan Williams on 18 October 2023
- education session (via Teams) provided to NWRH Clinical Manager, by Sgt Megan Williams and Forensic Nurse Kevin Egan
- education session (via Teams) provided to One Care Health, by Sgt Megan Williams and Forensic Nurse Kevin Egan.

Responses to coronial recommendations

Recommendations are an important part of the coronial jurisdiction and pursuant to section 28(2) of the Act a coroner is required, whenever appropriate, to make recommendations to prevent future deaths. Unlike most other Australian coronial jurisdictions, Tasmania lacks either a statutory or policy-based mandatory response regime to coronial recommendations. Consequently, the status of coronial recommendations in Tasmania is perceived as unclear and there is scope for improvement in this area. Nevertheless, over the course of the reporting period there were favourable responses from several government departments in response to some coronial recommendations. The Division has been working with government departments to put in place some voluntary guidelines about the provision of responses to coronial recommendations and has been pleased with the level of co-operation that has been forthcoming from many departments.

The Coronial Division also routinely publishes any coronial recommendations on the coronial website.

Coronial Liaison Officer

The Coronial Division has their own dedicated Coronial Liaison Officer (CLO) who has been appointed to assist senior next of kin and the families of deceased persons to understand the coronial process and come to terms with the grief and trauma being experienced by persons who die in unnatural or unexpected circumstances. This role is also important in providing court orientation and preparation to families of deceased during the inquest process.

In this financial year, the CLO has had contact with 161 individual people, assisted in 9 coronial inquests and provided support for 33 people in those inquests who were either family or witnesses (or both).

The CLO role requires a very high degree of sensitivity, empathy, and support. The invaluable contribution of this role goes further than support during inquests but includes Case Management Conferences, meetings, witness briefings, file viewings and court tours.

Deaths in Custody

This report is required by section 69(2)(a) of the Act to include information on deaths in custody. During the reporting period there was one death in custody reported to the Coroner, and two inquests into deaths in custody were completed.

Deaths in Care

During the reporting period there was one death reported of persons held 'in care' as defined in section 3 of the Act. Additionally, during the reporting period two inquests were completed in relation to deaths in care from previous reporting periods. Deaths in care findings have been published on the Magistrates Court website.

Other Inquests and Findings

All findings, recommendations, and responses received that are considered by coroners to be of public interest are published on the Magistrates Court website. The proportion of investigations subject to public inquest continues to be 3 to 5 per cent of reportable deaths, however, this is not proportional to the amount of time it takes coroners, counsel assisting, associates, and administrative staff to prepare a matter for inquest, the length of court time required, and the consideration of the matter to the point where findings are completed.

Tasmanian Suicide Register

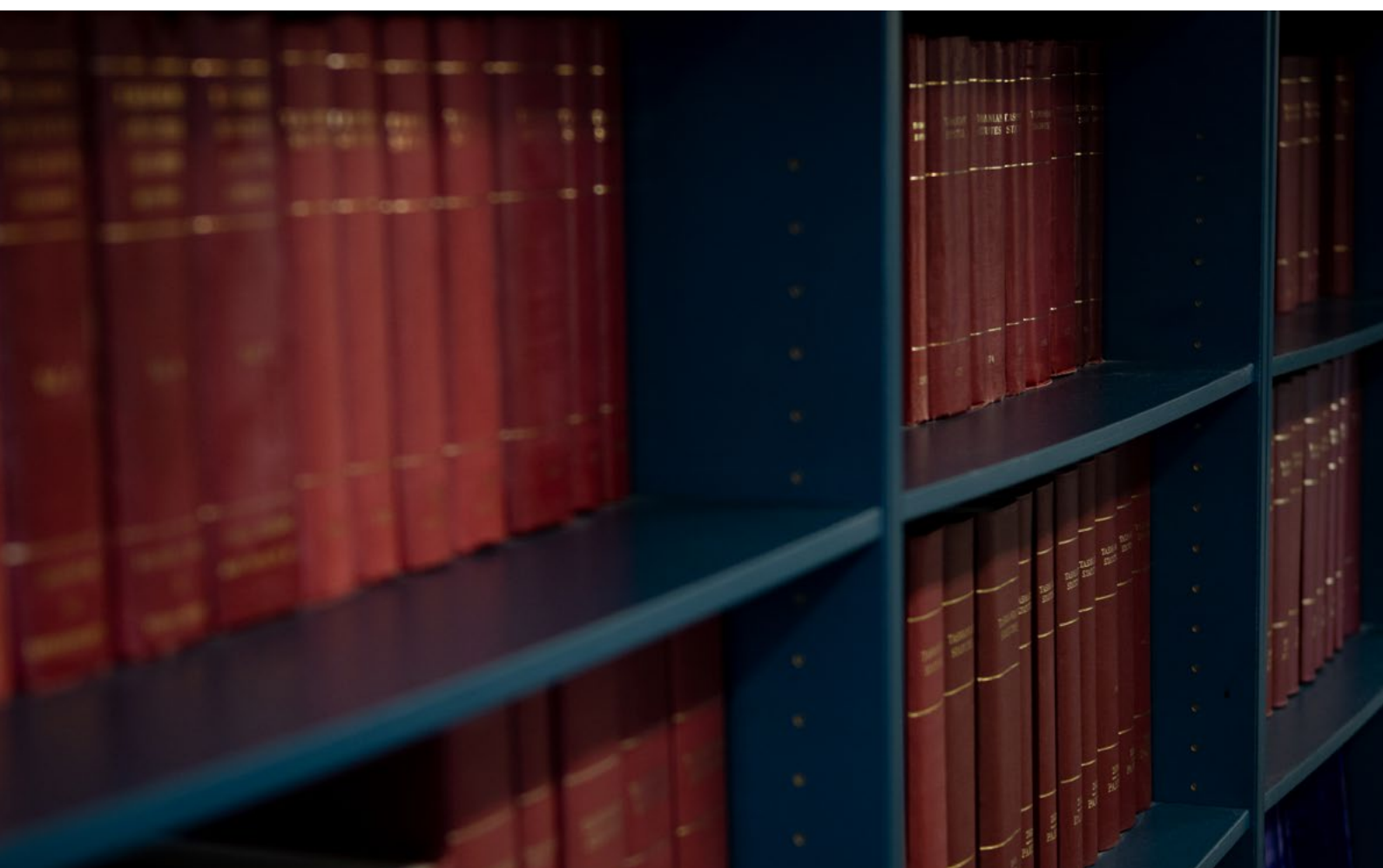
The Tasmanian Suicide Register (TSR) commenced operation in the Coronial Division of the Magistrates Court in 2017. The TSR contains detailed information of people who died by suicide in Tasmania and the circumstances surrounding their death. Information gathered during the coronial investigations enable the collection of rich and comprehensive suicide data, as obtained from police reports, autopsy and toxicology reports, medical records and affidavits. The TSR:

- contains real-time surveillance data for suicides in Tasmania
- enables detailed analysis of demographics and trends of suicide deaths over time
- is available to coroners to support coronial investigations, findings, and recommendations on suicide deaths
- provides data to inform public health and suicide prevention policy
- assists in the evaluation of suicide prevention initiatives
- contributes data to national suicide monitoring initiatives
- is accessible to genuine researchers in the field.

Over the past year, the following activities associated with the operation of the TSR have taken place:

- provision and presentation of year-to-date suicide data to coroners, coroners' associates and coronial staff
- completion of coding of closed suicide deaths reported in 2019 and 2020
- production of the third Report to the Tasmanian Government on Suicide in Tasmania (2012–2020) in collaboration with the Department of Health
- presentation of suicide data to the Premier's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, and Research and Data Cross-Agency Working Group – Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, pursuant to the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023–2027
- provision of suicide data to the National Suicide and Self-Harm Monitoring System managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- management of external data requests from government and statutory bodies and researchers to inform various suicide prevention efforts in Tasmania.

The Court acknowledges the ongoing support for the TSR from the Department of Health and the Department of Justice.



Operational data and financials

Performance indicators

A national framework of performance indicators adopted by the Court supports the aims of the Court. Key measures used to assess the performance of the Magistrates Court are:

- Backlog Indicator – a measure of effectiveness in relation to timeliness and delay
- Clearance Rate – an efficiency measure of the inputs per output unit
- Attendance Indicator – an effectiveness measure of timeliness and delay.

These measures should be treated as indicative rather than definitive as the Court does not have total control over the process for adjudicating criminal matters, resolving civil disputes and investigating coronial matters, and consequently other parties may introduce and contribute to delays.

Backlog indicator

This indicator is a measure of case processing timeliness. This measure has been developed on a national basis as a means of determining the performance of a court.

In the criminal jurisdiction, those defendants who have bench warrants associated with them have been excluded from the count, and in the civil jurisdiction those lodgements that have not been acted upon in the last 12 months have been excluded. The aim has been to focus on those matters that are part of an 'active pending' population.

Similarly, the indicator recognises that case processing must take some time and that such time does not necessarily equal delay. Timeliness can be affected by delays caused by factors other than those related to the workload of the Court (for example, a witness, a party, or counsel not being available or ready to proceed).

The backlog indicator measures the Court's pending caseload against timeliness standards and the Court's performance is set out in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 1: Summary figures by Court 2023–24

	No.	Lodgements Change year-on-year	No.	Finalisations Change year-on-year
Criminal				
Magistrates Court				
Criminal complaints ¹³	15,109	4.7%	13,398	1.6%
<i>Committal Proceedings</i>			334	-4.3%
Breaches of orders ¹⁴	5,684	16.2%	4,946	22.6%
Other applications ¹⁵	2,740	-10.4%	2,412	-7.5%
Youth Justice Court				
Criminal complaints ¹³	1,832	18.4%	1,681	23.7%
Committal Proceedings			17	13.3%
Breaches of orders ¹⁴	299	27.8%	237	25.4%
Other applications ¹⁵	139	7.8%	122	5.2%
Civil				
Civil Magistrates Court				
Civil claims (inc. minor civil, residential tenancy)	2,711	6.6%	2,761	25.1%
Family violence order applications	1,921	11.1%	1,822	8.3%
Restraint order applications	1,666	27.5%	1,594	17.8%
Childrens Court				
Care and protection applications and orders	583	-11.5%	563	-14%
Coroners Court				
Reportable deaths, fires and explosions	1,142	27.6%	856	-9.2%
Tribunals¹⁶				
Administrative Appeals	23	53.3%	48	11.6%
Mining Tribunal	0	0.0%	3	200.0%
TOTAL	33,849		30,794	

¹³ In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistics manual, the counting unit adopted for criminal complaints is a defendant per case based unit. This figure includes family violence and intervention order criminal activity (such as the breach of a family violence or intervention order) and not the civil activity (the application of an order) which is set out separately under 'civil'. Full details are provided in Table 5.

¹⁴ Breaches of orders include all breaches that are not categorised as criminal activity for national Australian Bureau of Statistics and RoGS reporting purposes. Orders include bail, suspended sentence, probation, and community service (now community correction orders), among others. A breakdown of breaches by order type is provided in Table 10.

In the 2023-24 Annual Report, new categories have been added to the breakdown of breaches from 2020–21 to 2023–24 (see Table 10). Consequently, 'breaches of orders' in Table 1 have been updated to reflect this change.

¹⁵ Applications to grant or vary bail, for restricted driver licence and for other applications.

¹⁶ The counting unit adopted for civil claims and tribunals is case based.

Source: CRIMEStats database; Civil Registry Management System (CRMS)

Table 2: Pending caseload at 30 June 2024 and backlog indicator by selected Courts 2023–24

Pending caseloads and backlog indicator ¹⁷	Pending caseload		% aged > 12 months	
	No.	change year-on-year	%	change year-on-year
Criminal				
Magistrates Court				
Criminal complaints	8,767	4.1%	21.0	-1.1 pp
Youth Justice Court				
Criminal complaints	780	2.2%	8.7	0.7 pp
Civil				
Civil Magistrates Court				
Civil Claims, Family Violence Orders and Restraint Orders	3,182	10.3%	10.3	-1.4 pp
Childrens Court				
Care and protection applications and orders	12	-55.6%	41.7	34.3 pp
Coroners Court				
Reportable deaths, fires and explosions	903	37.7%	32.2	-15.4 pp

pp refers to percentage points

¹⁷ This table summarises information provided in Tables 13 and 14. In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistical reporting manual, the pending caseload for civil claims, family violence and intervention orders, and care and protection orders counts only originating matters (eg application for an order) and not secondary processes (eg application to vary an order).

Table 3: Activity of the Magistrates Court (Criminal, including Youth Justice) by listing type 2023–24

	No.	change year-on-year
Total Listings in The Magistrates Court of Tasmania¹⁸	191,605	10.3%
Common hearing types ¹⁹ :		
Mention Listings	29,359	6.7%
Application Listings	13,983	21.8%
Hearing Listings	6,580	7.5%
Plea Listing	65,068	-0.4%
Sentence Listing	34,903	9.6%
Court Mandated Diversion Reviews	2,602	-14.9%
Contest Mention Listings	2,276	-10.7%

Table 4: Magistrates Court fines and fees (incl Youth Justice Court) 2023–24

	(\$'000)	change year-on-year
Criminal		
Fines	3,836	-13.1%
Court Costs	660	-6.1%
Appeal Costs Fund Levy	35	-0.4%
Victims of Crime Compensation Levy	284	1.6%
Other Costs ²⁰	577	218.7%
Civil		
Civil Court Fees	513	7.4%

¹⁸ Total listings includes all criminal matters, family violence and child protection applications that appeared before the Magistrates Court, including the Youth Justice jurisdiction, within the relevant reference period. Listings for civil claims are not included.

¹⁹ Some common listing types have been highlighted in the table above. It should be noted that a plea can be entered or sentences handed down at different stages of court listings, not limited to sentence or plea listings.

Source: CRIMESStats database

²⁰ Other costs' include special penalties, analysis fees, and other party costs

Source: CRIMESStats database; Civil Registry Management System (CRMS), FinanceOne

Table 5: Summary statistics by Court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Criminal							
Lodgements							
Criminal complaints ²¹	16,641	16,253	14,953	14,146	14,436	15,109	4.7%
Breaches of orders ²²	4,975	4,949	4,867	4,562	4,892	5,684	16.2%
Applications to grant or vary bail	496	625	660	590	789	1,012	28.3%
Applications for restricted driver licence	519	419	408	394	472	425	-10.0%
Other applications	1,028	1,111	1,405	1,583	1,797	1,303	-27.5%
Finalisations							
Criminal complaints ²¹	15,888	13,654	15,056	13,979	13,193	13,398	1.6%
Committal Proceedings	322	310	325	286	349	334	-4.3%
Breaches of orders ²²	4,555	4,161	4,706	4,137	4,033	4,946	22.6%
Applications to grant or vary bail	320	309	539	480	648	824	27.2%
Applications for restricted driver licence	520	419	383	398	469	413	-11.9%
Other applications	909	861	1,230	1,339	1,491	1,175	-21.2%
Youth Justice Court							
Lodgements							
Criminal complaints ²¹	1,140	1,063	1,112	1,286	1,547	1,832	18.4%
Breaches of orders ²²	237	201	171	201	234	299	27.8%
Applications to grant or vary bail	58	48	29	33	52	72	38.5%
Applications for restricted driver licence	1	0	2	3	1	1	0.0%
Other applications	52	56	33	59	76	66	-13.2%
Finalisations							
Criminal complaints ²¹	1,105	1,027	1,063	950	1,359	1,681	23.7%
Committal Proceedings	3	12	14	2	15	17	13.3%
Breaches of orders ²²	206	210	163	155	189	237	25.4%
Applications to grant or vary bail	34	23	20	33	47	61	29.8%
Applications for restricted driver licence	1	0	1	3	1	1	0.0%
Other applications	41	47	36	48	68	60	-11.8%

²¹ In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistics manual, the counting unit adopted for criminal complaints is a defendant per case based unit. This figure includes family violence and intervention order criminal activity (such as the breach of a family violence or intervention order) and not the civil activity (the application for an order) which is set out separately under 'civil'.

²² Breaches of orders include all breaches that are not categorised as criminal activity for national Australian Bureau of Statistics and RoGS reporting purposes. Orders include bail, suspended sentence, probation, and community service (now community correction orders), among others. A breakdown of these breaches by order type is provided in Table 10.

In the 2023–24 Annual Report, new categories have been added to the breakdown of breaches from 2020–21 to 2023–24 (see Table 10). Consequently, 'breaches of orders' in Table 5 have been updated to reflect this change.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	change 2022-23 to 2023-24
Civil²³							
Lodgements							
Civil claims ²³	3,424	2,545	1,807	2,153	2,544	2,711	6.6%
Family violence order applications ²⁴	1,361	1,370	1,404	1,594	1,729	1,921	11.1%
Restraint order applications	1,253	1,273	1,505	1,234	1,307	1,666	27.5%
Finalisations							
Civil claims ²³	3,670	3,308	2,508	2,041	2,207	2,761	25.1%
Family violence order applications	1,361	1,145	1,534	1,628	1,683	1,822	8.3%
Restraint order applications	1,252	1,092	1,519	1,276	1,353	1,594	17.8%
Children's Court							
Care and protection applications lodged	983	733	753	699	659	583	-11.5%
Care and protection applications finalised	897	698	714	667	652	563	-13.7%
Coroners Court							
Reportable deaths and fires lodged	654	751	778	880	895	1,142	27.6%
Reportable deaths and fires finalised	568	722	763	829	943	856	-9.2%
Tribunals²³							
Lodgements							
Administrative Appeals	38	14	22	13	15	23	53.3%
Mining Tribunal	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Finalisations							
Administrative Appeals	20	38	59	48	43	48	11.6%
Mining Tribunal	0	0	2	0	1	3	200.0%

²³ The counting unit adopted for civil claims and tribunals is case based.

²⁴ Family violence order application lodgements do not include the sub-category 'Other applications regarding family violence order', a new category in 2017 to 18, in order to maintain consistency with past Annual Reports. From 2018 to 19, the included categories were expanded for this report and for RoGS. Therefore, results shown are not directly comparable to previous years.

Source: CRIMESStats database; Civil Registry Management System (CRMS); MUNCCI Coronial database.

Table 6: Family and domestic violence summary statistics 2018–19 to 2023–24

Family Violence Orders (FVOs)	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Application to grant a FVO							
Lodgements	747	771	814	883	921	1,001	8.7%
Finalisations	780	648	916	929	982	1,117	13.7%
Applications to extend or vary a FVO							
Lodgements	326	312	272	347	373 ²⁵	399	7.0%
Finalisations	311	242	292	352	350 ²⁵	400	14.3%
Applications to extend or vary a Police FVO							
Lodgements	176	186	190	239	236	259	9.7%
Finalisations	167	164	207	234	247	249	0.8%
Applications to revoke a FVO							
Lodgements	42	28	43	45	46	57	23.9%
Finalisations	38	25	39	40	39	57	46.2%
Applications to revoke a Police FVO							
Lodgements	64	70	78	76	105	106	1.0%
Finalisations	59	65	73	70	110	110	0.0%
Applications to register an Interstate FVO							
Lodgements	5	2	2	0	1	1	0.0%
Finalisations	5	1	2	0	0	2	200.0%
FVOs made on Family Violence offences							
Lodgements	1 ²⁶	1	5	4	1	1	0.0%
Finalisations	1 ²⁶	0	5	3	2	1	-50.0%
Breach of FVOs and Police FVOs²⁷							
Lodgements	803	804	845	947	947	1,040	9.8%
Finalisations	738	752	873	839	905	1,024	13.1%

²⁵ Incorrect figures for the period 2022–23 were reported in the 2022–23 Annual Report

²⁶ Incorrect figures for the period 2018–19 were reported in the 2020–21 Annual Report

²⁷ For Breach of FVOs and Police FVOs from 2020–21 to 2023–24, the categories below have been added:

Section 35(1) – Attempt to breach of Family Violence Order

Section 35(1) – Breach of Interim Family Violence Order

Section 35(1) – Breach of Police Family Violence Order

Section 35(1) and Section 74(2) of *Justices Act 1959* – Attempt to Breach of Family Violence Order

To ensure comparability, prior year figures from 2020–21 to 2023–24 have been updated in the 2023–24 Annual Report.

Table 7: Children – care and protection summary statistics 2018–19 to 2023–24

Care and Protection Orders (CPOs)	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Applications for an CPO assessment							
Lodgements	256	200	189	160	163	143	-12.3%
Finalisations	228	171	188	166	166	144	-13.3%
Applications to grant a CPO							
Lodgements	393	236	262	194	153	154	0.7%
Finalisations	352	267	266	187	160	152	-5.0%
Applications to extend or vary a CPO							
Lodgements	211	177	194	212	177	140	-20.9%
Finalisations	219	160	173	189	170	137	-19.4%
Applications to revoke a CPO							
Lodgements	13	17	20	19	16	10	-37.5%
Finalisations	15	14	17	15	20	8	-60.0%
Other applications regarding CPOs							
Lodgements	110	103	88	114	119	136	14.3%
Finalisations	83	86	70	110	101	122	20.8%

Table 8: Restraint Order summary statistics 2018–19 to 2023–24

Restraint Orders (ROs)	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Application to grant a RO							
Lodgements	1,180	1,197	1,418	1,166	1,231	1,576	28.0%
Finalisations	1,178	1,032	1,431	1,197	1,279	1,504	17.6%
Applications to extend or vary a RO							
Lodgements	53	52	61	44	58	67	15.5%
Finalisations	52	42	64	49	55	66	20.0%
Applications to revoke a RO							
Lodgements	19	24	21	24	18	23	27.8%
Finalisations	21	18	19	30	19	24	26.3%
Other applications regarding a RO							
Lodgements	1	0	5	0	0	0	0.0%
Finalisations	1	0	5	0	0	0	0.0%
Breach of an RO or Interim RO²⁸							
Lodgements	125	88	109	93	94	131	39.4%
Finalisations	109	111	105	83	103	93	-9.7%

²⁸ For Breach of an RO or Interim RO from 2020–21 to 2023–24, the categories below have been added:

Section 41 – Breach of Interim High Risk Offender Order

Section 71(1) – Breach of area restriction order

To ensure comparability, prior year figures from 2020–21 to 2023–24 have been updated in the 2023–24 Annual Report.

Source: CRIMESStats database

**Table 9: Criminal matters by Court level and selected offence types
2018–19 to 2023–24**

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Magistrates Court (Adult)							
Crimes against the person							
Lodgements	3,294	2,861	2,781	2,906	2,895	3,021	4.4%
Finalisations	2,932	2,427	2,220	2,106	2,178	2,314	6.2%
Property and deception offences							
Lodgements	2,398	2,604	1,998	2,183	2,671	3,189	19.4%
Finalisations	2,344	2,075	2,141	1,929	2,037	2,561	25.7%
Drug offences							
Lodgements	1,173	1,162	1,047	786	752	800	6.4%
Finalisations	1,125	946	1,078	879	726	725	-0.1%
Public order and security offences							
Lodgements	1,567	1,959	1,876	1,671	1,729	1,818	5.1%
Finalisations	1,436	1,685	1,602	1,582	1,541	1,585	2.9%
Traffic and other offences							
Lodgements	6,596	5,982	5,668	4,954	4,827	4,618	-4.3%
Finalisations	6,802	5,371	5,842	5,392	5,067	4,613	-9.0%
Justice procedure offences							
Lodgements	1,479	1,446	1,408	1,493	1,385	1,606	16.0%
Finalisations	1,402	1,355	1,544	1,452	1,421	1,526	7.4%
Other offences							
Lodgements	134	239	175	150	89	57	-36.0%
Finalisations	169	105	229	139	108	73	-32.4%
Youth Justice							
Crimes against the person							
Lodgements	265	266	315	323	439	539	22.8%
Finalisations	273	238	235	216	319	406	27.3%
Property and deception offences							
Lodgements	508	399	322	531	670	787	17.5%
Finalisations	472	421	325	340	557	777	39.5%
Drug offences							
Lodgements	37	46	52	32	25	35	40.0%
Finalisations	40	37	54	28	26	32	23.1%
Public order and security offences							
Lodgements	162	210	248	239	253	294	16.2%
Finalisations	163	190	231	174	281	270	-3.9%

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	change 2022-23 to 2023-24
Traffic and other offences							
Lodgements	116	85	94	97	71	99	39.4%
Finalisations	112	86	113	97	76	97	27.6%
Justice procedure offences							
Lodgements	46	46	76	52	83	76	-8.4%
Finalisations	41	50	82	44	80	75	-6.3%
Other offences							
Lodgements	134	239	175	150	89	57	-36.0%
Finalisations	169	105	229	139	108	73	-32.4%

Source: CRIMESStats database

Table 10: Breaches of Orders and/or Order conditions 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Magistrates Court (Adult)							
Breach of bail							
Lodgements	3,886	4,062	3,836	3,649	3,943	4,762	20.8%
Finalisations	3,482	3,295	3,655	3,314	3,253	4,052	24.6%
Breach of suspended sentence²⁹							
Lodgements	676	614	588	450	416	463	11.3%
Finalisations	614	588	565	426	373	442	18.5%
Breach of Community Correction Order³⁰							
Lodgements	286	131	278	291	358	310	-13.4%
Finalisations	332	174	322	264	293	310	5.8%
Other breaches³¹							
Lodgements	127	142	125	140	137	149	8.8%
Finalisations	127	104	147	135	111	142	27.9%
Youth Justice Court							
Breach of bail							
Lodgements	148	117	115	140	166	244	47.0%
Finalisations	131	139	105	98	128	186	45.3%
Breach of suspended sentence²⁹							
Lodgements	35	29	22	26	28	22	-21.4%
Finalisations	32	30	24	22	26	19	-26.9%
Breach of Community Correction Order³⁰							
Lodgements	24	17	11	24	25	29	16.0%
Finalisations	26	15	8	24	16	26	62.5%
Other breaches³¹							
Lodgements	30	38	29	11	17	4	-76.5%
Finalisations	35	26	26	11	19	6	-68.4%

²⁹ For Breach of suspended sentence from 2020–21 to 2023–24, the category below has been added:

Section 27(4)(a) – Oral Application for Breach of Suspended Sentence

To ensure comparability, prior year figures from 2020–21 to 2023–24 have been updated in the 2023–24 Annual Report

³⁰ For Breach of Community Correction Order from 2020–21 to 2023–24, the categories below have been added:

Section 104(3) – Application to Cancel / Breach CSO's

Section 37(1)g – Breach of a condition of a Probation Order

Section 42(4)(a) – Oral application for breach of Probation Order

Section 9(1) – Breach of Probation Order

Section 36(1)(a) – Breach of condition of a Community Service Order (Original Complaint)

Section 42AI – Application to Breach a Home Detention Order

Section 42AV – Application to Breach a Community Correction Order

To ensure comparability, prior year figures from 2020–21 to 2023–24 have been updated in the 2023–24 Annual Report

³¹ For Other breaches from 2020–21 to 2023–24, the categories below has been added:

Section 67Q(f) – Breach of recovery order

Section 81(7) – Breach of Police Barring Order

Section 93(2)(a)(i)(iii) – Breach of Peace

Section 10(2)(ii) – Breach of Undertaking

Section 18(10) – Breach a condition of a restricted driver licence

To ensure comparability, prior year figures from 2020–21 to 2023–24 have been updated in the 2023–24 Annual Report

Source: CRIMESStats database

Table 11: Coronial – Summary of Coronial activity 2018–19 to 2023–24

Deaths reported to the Coroner	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Lodgements	654	751	778	880	893	1142	27.8%
Deaths in Custody or Care	10	10	4	4	2	0	-100%
Fires/Explosions	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Number of inquests held	23	14	22	19	25	21	-16%
Number of cases closed	568	722	763	829	943	882	-6.4%

Table 12: Coronial – Inquests and investigations completed 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Aircraft	0	1	0	0	1	1	-
Deaths in Custody or Care	121	6	10	12	1	4	300%
Domestic Accident	3	0	4	1	2	1	-50%
Drowning	5	10	4	11	9	13	44.4%
Drug Overdose	14	28	30	24	26	37	42.3%
Fall	69	93	105	84	128	133	3.9%
Homicide	5	8	6	4	3	7	133.3%
Hospital	31	32	27	23	14	15	7.1%
House Fire	1	2	3	2	2	2	-
Marine Fatality	0	5	0	0	0	0	-
Industrial Accident	7	1	2	5	2	3	50%
Mining	0	0	0	2	0	0	-
Natural	292	357	388	491	573	509	-11.1%
Other	20	28	42	30	41	22	-46.3%
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)/Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)	3	2	1	3	1	2	100%
Skeletal Remains	n/a	n/a	4	3	4	6	50%
Suicide	64	73	91	64	88	62	-29.5%
Undetermined Causes	18	28	20	21	13	19	46.1%
Vehicle Crash	252	48	26	49	35	46	31.4%
Total	568	722	763	829	943	882	-6.4%

Table 13: Criminal pending caseload at 30 June 2024 and backlog indicator 2018–19 to 2023–24

Pending caseload ³²	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Magistrates Court							
Total lodged pending completion	7,477	9,401	7,993	8,108	8,419	8,767	4.1%
Between 6 and 12 months	1,560	2,035	1,974	1,976	1,876	1,978	5.4%
Greater than 12 months	1,130	1,585	1,544	1,822	1,863	1,839	-1.3%
Backlog indicator							
% greater than 6 months	36.0	38.5	44.0	46.8	44.4	43.5	-0.9 pp
% greater than 12 months	15.1	16.9	19.3	22.5	22.1	21.0	-1.1 pp
Youth Justice Court							
Total lodged pending completion	395	414	369	644	763	780	2.2%
Between 6 and 12 months	78	58	58	123	153	192	25.5%
Greater than 12 months	30	35	20	41	61	68	11.5%
Backlog indicator							
% greater than 6 months	27.3	22.5	21.1	25.5	28.0	33.3	5.3 pp
% greater than 12 months	7.6	8.5	5.4	6.4	8.0	8.7	0.7 pp

pp refers to percentage points

³² In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistics manual, the counting unit adopted for criminal complaints is a defendant per case based unit. This figure includes family violence and intervention order criminal activity (such as the breach of a family violence or intervention order) and not the civil activity (the application of an order) which is set out separately under 'Civil Magistrates Court' in Table 14.

Source: CRIMESStats database

Table 14: Civil pending caseload at 30 June 2024 and backlog indicator 2018–19 to 2023–24

Pending caseload ³³	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Civil Magistrates Court							
Total lodged pending completion	3,648	2,989	2,258	2,444	2,886	3,182	10.3%
Between 6 and 12 months	1,158	1,084	472	721	725	1,035	42.8%
Greater than 12 months	493	477	362	317	337	329	-2.4%
Backlog indicator							
% greater than 6 months	45.3	52.2	36.9	42.5	36.8	42.9	6.1 pp
% greater than 12 months	13.5	16.0	16.0	13.0	11.7	10.3	-1.4 pp
Children's Court							
Total lodged pending completion	84	46	32	27	27	12	-55.6%
Between 6 and 12 months	15	8	10	9	10	1	-90.0%
Greater than 12 months	16	14	1	3	2	5	150.0%
Backlog indicator							
% greater than 6 months	36.9	47.8	34.4	44.4	44.4	50.0	5.6 pp
% greater than 12 months	19.0	30.4	3.1	11.1	7.4	41.7	34.3 pp
Coroners Court							
Total lodged pending completion	638	669	679	725	656	903	37.7%
Between 12 and 24 months	174	130	165	161	181	148	-18.2%
Greater than 24 months	98	102	136	162	131	143	9.2%
Backlog indicator							
% greater than 6 months	42.6	34.7	44.3	44.6	47.6	32.2	-15.4 pp
% greater than 12 months	15.4	15.2	20.0	22.3	20.0	15.8	-4.2 pp

pp refers to percentage points

³³ In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistics, the pending caseload for civil claims, family violence and intervention orders, and care and protection orders counts only originating matters (eg application for an order) and not secondary processes (eg application to vary an order).

Source: CRIMESStats database, Civil Registry Management System (CRMS).

Table 15: Criminal disposals by court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

Criminal disposals ³⁴	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Magistrates Court							
Total finalised cases	15,888	13,654	15,381	14,265	13,542	13,732	1.4%
Cases finalised in 6 to 12 months	3,830	3,323	4,509	3,574	3,206	3,611	12.6%
Cases finalised after 12 months	2,985	2,647	3,344	3,482	3,484	3,507	0.7%
Disposal indicator							
% greater than 6 months	42.9	43.7	51.1	49.5	49.4	51.8	2.4 pp
% greater than 12 months	18.8	19.4	21.7	24.4	25.7	25.5	-0.2 pp
Youth Justice Court							
Total finalised cases	1,105 ³⁵	1,015	1,083	959	1,379	1,698	23.1%
Cases finalised in 6 to 12 months	280	209	263	230	369	451	22.2%
Cases finalised after 12 months	86	112	80	110	173	206	19.1%
Disposal indicator							
% greater than 6 months	33.2	31.6	31.7	35.5	39.3	38.7	-0.6 pp
% greater than 12 months	7.8	11.0	7.4	11.5	12.5	12.1	-0.4 pp

pp refers to percentage points

³⁴ In accordance with the Report on Government Services (RoGS) statistics manual, the counting unit adopted for criminal complaints is a defendant per case based unit. This figure includes family violence and intervention order criminal activity (such as the breach of a family violence or intervention order) and not the civil activity (the application of an order) which is set out separately under 'civil' in Table 16.

³⁵ In 2018–19, this figure was incorrectly published as 1,102.

Source: CRIMESStats database

Table 16: Civil disposals by court level 2018–19 to 2023–24

Criminal disposals ³⁶	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Civil Magistrates Court							
Total finalised cases	6,283	5,916	5,561	4,945	5,289	6,276	18.7%
Cases finalised in 6 to 12 months	1,964	1,734	1,332	1,043	1,224	1,518	24.0%
Cases finalised after 12 months	1,073	1,109	952	618	678	666	-1.8%
Disposal indicator							
% greater than 6 months	48.3	48.1	41.1	33.6	36.0	34.8	-1.2 pp
% greater than 12 months	17.1	18.7	17.1	12.5	12.8	10.6	-2.2 pp
Children's Court							
Total finalised cases	448	344	321	231	197	207	5.1%
Cases finalised in 6 to 12 months	62	52	36	40	40	21	-47.5%
Cases finalised after 12 months	36	44	37	8	23	13	-43.5%
Disposal indicator							
% greater than 6 months	21.9	27.9	22.7	20.8	32.0	16.4	-15.6 pp
% greater than 12 months	8.0	12.8	11.5	3.5	11.7	6.3	-5.4 pp
Coroners Court							
Total finalised cases	568	722	763	829	943	856	-9.2%
Cases finalised in 12 to 24 months	183	171	238	214	217	189	-12.9%
Cases finalised after 24 months	66	130	125	135	172	137	-20.3%
Disposal indicator							
% greater than 6 months	43.8	41.7	47.6	42.1	41.3	38.1	-3.2 pp
% greater than 12 months	11.6	18.0	16.4	16.3	18.2	16.0	-2.2 pp

pp refers to percentage points

³⁶ In accordance with the RoGS statistics manual, the Civil Magistrates Court and Children's Court pending caseload for civil claims, family violence and intervention orders, and care and protection orders counts only originating matters (eg application for an order) and not secondary processes (eg application to vary an order).

Source: CRIMEStats database, Civil Registry Management System (CRMS).

Table 17: Criminal and Civil clearance rates by Court 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Criminal							
Magistrates Court	97.4	85.9	102.9	100.8	93.8	90.9	-2.9 pp
Youth Justice Court	96.7	95.5	97.4	74.6	87.9	91.8	3.9 pp
Civil							
Civil Magistrates Court	104.1	114.0	117.9	99.3	95.6	101.2	5.6 pp
Children's Court	112.3	141.6	117.2	117.9	127.1	131.0	3.9 pp
Coroner's Court	87.0	96.1	98.1	94.2	105.4	75.0	-30.4 pp

pp refers to percentage points

Source: CRIMESStats database, Civil Registry Management System (CRMS).

Table 18: Criminal and Civil attendance indicator by Court 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Criminal							
Magistrates Court	4.5	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.9	0.6 pp
Youth Justice Court	5.6	5.8	5.1	5.5	6.9	6.8	-0.1 pp
Civil							
Civil Magistrates Court	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.0	-0.2 pp
Children's Court	4.7	4.5	4.0	3.9	4.5	3.9	-0.6 pp
Coroner's Court	4.4	5.3	3.5	3.6	7.9	3.8	-4.1 pp

pp refers to percentage points

Source: CRIMESStats database, Civil Registry Management System (CRMS).

Table 19: Magistrates Court fines and fees (including Youth Justice Court) 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	change 2022–23 to 2023–24
Criminal							
Fines	4,093	3,525	3,997	4,097	4,416	3,836	-13.1%
Court Costs	789	701	757	641	703	660	-6.1%
Appeal Costs Fund Levy	39	35	37	33	35	35	-0.4%
Victims of Crime Compensation Levy	314	290	325	278	280	284	1.6%
Other Costs ³⁷	214	117	138	125	181	577	218.7%
Civil							
Civil Court Fees	548	418	402	457	477	513	7.4%

³⁷ 'Other costs' includes special penalties, analysis fees, and other party costs.

Source: CRIMESStats database, Civil Registry Management System (CRMS), FinanceOne

Table 20: Expenditure by outlay – Magistrates Court services 2018–19 to 2023–24

	2018–19 Actuals \$,000	2019–20 Actuals \$,000	2020–21 Actuals \$,000	2021–22 Actuals \$,000	2022–23 Actuals \$,000	2023–24 Actuals \$,000
Salaries of Magistrates and Staff	9,681	9,751	10,711	10,726	11,587	12,404
Other Employee Related Expenses	367	374	333	357	465	458
Information Technology	413	455	544	553	589	659
Materials Supplies & Equipment	96	144	137	101	141	168
Travel and Transport	328	260	306	348	334	358
Property Expenses	1,850	2,196	2,081	2,211	2,513	3,010
Other Expenditure	1,392	1,751	1,808	1,657	1,700	1,716
Consultants	13	10	23	35	36	16
Total	14,142	14,941	15,943	15,988	17,365	18,788

More information about the Magistrates Court of Tasmania financials can be found in the Department of Justice's Annual Report 2023–24. The Department of Justice Annual Report for 2023–24 can be found at: justice.tas.gov.au/annual-report



MAGISTRATES COURT

TASMANIA