

ANNUAL REPORT **2023-24**



**SUPREME COURT
OF VICTORIA**

Letter to the Governor

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of the State of Victoria and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Dear Governor

We, the judges of the Supreme Court of Victoria, have the honour of presenting to you our annual report for the 2023-24 financial year, reporting on the Court's activities from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Yours sincerely



Anne Ferguson

The Honourable Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Victoria

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is prepared as a requirement under provisions of the *Supreme Court Act 1986 (Vic)*. It is prepared primarily as a report to the Attorney-General of Victoria on Court activities. The report also provides information for Supreme Court users and others with an interest in the Court.

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November 2024 © Supreme Court of Victoria

The Supreme Court acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land upon which the Court sits across Victoria and pay our respects to ancestors, Elders, knowledge holders and leaders.

We extend that respect to all First peoples and acknowledge the ongoing leadership in striving to improve justice outcomes and thank them for sharing their knowledge and experiences with the Court.



Goal

To be a modern, superior court that is accessible to and trusted by all, fulfilling a fundamental role in our democratic society.

Purpose

To serve the community by upholding the law through just, independent and impartial decision making, and dispute resolution.

Values

Our goal and purpose are underpinned by the following values:

- excellence
- equality (before the law)
- accessibility
- integrity and transparency
- timeliness and efficiency
- certainty and clarity
- innovation and change
- courtesy and respect
- unity and wellbeing.

About the Supreme Court of Victoria

The Supreme Court hears some of the most serious criminal cases and complex civil cases in the State of Victoria, and some appeals from Victorian courts and tribunals.

The Supreme Court is a court for all Victorians and hears matters across the state.

The Court has two divisions: the Trial Division and the Court of Appeal.

The Trial Division is made up of the Criminal Division, the Common Law Division and the Commercial Court. It hears serious criminal cases including murder and terrorism, civil cases involving significant injuries, large monetary claims and complex legal issues, and other serious matters. It also hears appeals from the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, the Children's Court of Victoria, the Coroners Court of Victoria and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

The Court of Appeal determines whether a trial was conducted fairly and the law was correctly applied. It hears appeals of criminal and civil cases decided in the Trial Division of the Supreme Court, the County Court of Victoria, and some VCAT appeals. Most appeals require permission from the Court of Appeal before they can be heard.

The Chief Executive Officer oversees the administrative functions of the Court, including the registries, administration, Juries Victoria and the Law Library Victoria. The Funds in Court office operates discretely under the direction of the Senior Master.

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AT A GLANCE

These pages provide a high-level overview of the caseload and services at the Court. Further details, including analysis of the data, can be found in the Work of the Court section of this report.

Cases snapshot

The Court's performance is measured by:

1

Clearance rate. Cases finalised in a given period, expressed as a percentage of cases initiated¹.

2

On-time case processing. Percentage of cases finalised² within 12 and 24 months of initiation.

3

Case backlog. Number of cases awaiting finalisation.

The Court also reports on the quality of its court files, known as court file integrity. This is the percentage of case files that meet established standards of availability, accuracy and completeness, as determined by random audits. Court file integrity is critical to ensuring proceedings are managed efficiently.

Variance is the percentage difference between 2022-23 and 2023-24 figures. Benchmark is a standard that the Court measures its performance against.

Differences between 2022-23 figures in this report and those published in the 2022-23 annual report are due to cases being credited to the reporting period after the report's publication.

Total caseload

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	6,415	7,319	14.1%
Finalisations	5,900	6,716	13.8%
Pending	6,084	6,687	9.9%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	92.0%	91.8%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	63.2%	61.4%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	86.6%	89.4%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	13.4%	10.6%	0%

Case backlog

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Pending >12 months	36.4%	33.7%	20%
Pending >24 months	14.3%	12.4%	5%

Court file integrity

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Court file integrity	99%	98%	90%

¹ Includes cases commenced or filed.

² Includes cases and matters that were heard and determined, settled, not pursued, dismissed, permanently stayed, or any other manner where a case or matter may be considered concluded.

Court of Appeal

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	372	402	8.1%
Finalisations	323	362	12.1%
Pending	281	321	14.2%

Civil cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	135	146	8.1%
Finalisations	116	141	21.6%
Pending	107	112	4.7%

Civil cases: clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	85.9%	96.6%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	79.3%	60.3%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	100.0%	96.5%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	0.0%	3.5%	0%

Criminal cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	237	256	8.0%
Finalisations	207	221	6.8%
Pending	174	209	20.1%

Criminal cases: clearance rate and on-time processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	87.3%	86.3%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	83.6%	74.2%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	99.5%	96.8%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	0.5%	3.2%	0%

Trial Division

Total cases: civil and criminal

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	6,644	7,575	14.0%
Finalisations	6,126	6,964	13.7%
Pending	6,116	6,727	10.0%

Criminal Division: trials and pleas³

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	84	86	2.4%
Finalisations	124	85	-31.5%
Pending	130	131	0.8%

Criminal Division: trials and pleas clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	147.6%	98.8%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	26.6% ⁴	32.9%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	83.9%	71.8%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	16.1%	28.2%	0%

Commercial Court: cases summary

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	2,496	3,158	26.5%
Finalisations	2,181	2,981	36.7%
Pending	1,910	2,087	9.3%

Commercial Court: clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	87.4%	94.4%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	74.6%	70.3%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	92.3%	94.5%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	7.7%	5.5%	0%

Common Law Division: cases summary

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	3,086	3,363	9.0%
Finalisations	2,915	2,970	1.9%
Pending	3,609	4,002	10.9%

³ Figures include both standard and fast-track committals.

⁴ Criminal Division time to finalisation results in 2022-23 are partly affected by the introduction of fast-track procedure for homicide cases in March 2020, as well as longer-term ripple effects of pandemic restrictions.

Common Law Division: clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	94.5%	88.3%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	50.3%	49.0%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	79.6%	83.2%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	20.4%	16.8%	0%

Judicial and ADR⁵ registrar mediations

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Cases referred for mediation	559	539	-3.6%
Mediations completed	338	352	4.1%
Cases resolved on day of mediation	198	217	9.6%
Number of hearing days saved	1,043	1,081	3.6%

Services snapshot

Registry Services

	2022-23	2023-24
Counter enquiries answered ⁶	1,226	1,972
Self-represented litigants – enquiries answered	8,549	9,351
Subpoenas issued	4,579	5,287

Probate Office

	2022-23	2023-24
Applications for grants of representation filed	26,660	26,324
Grants issued	25,739	24,363
Applications made by people without legal representation	2,231	2,294
Wills deposited for safekeeping	413	417

Funds in Court

	2022-23	2023-24
Orders	4,944	5,727
Value of funds under administration, including real estate (\$ billions)	\$2.19	\$2.26
Administration expense ratio	0.64%	0.64%

⁵ Appropriate Dispute Resolution.

⁶ Principal Registry.

Law Library Victoria

	2022-23	2023-24
Queries, updates, tours and training attendees	134,008	126,711
Combined website visits and database usage	1,542,409	399,520 ⁷
Judgments published on the Library's website	1,134	1,085

Juries Victoria⁸

	2022-23	2023-24
Citizens randomly selected	322,972	344,160
Summonses issued ⁹	125,439	107,430
Citizens attended	21,494	20,739
Juries empanelled ^{10 11}	562	531

Community engagement¹²

	2022-23	2023-24
Website visitation	4,595,887	2,129,230 ¹³
Social media followers (X and Facebook)	24,993	25,287
Episode downloads of Gertie's Law podcast	27,136	17,411
Court education program participants	2,050 ¹⁴	3,045

Finances

	2022-23	2023-24
Total operating revenue (\$'000)	86,542	98,190
Total operating expenses (\$'000)	91,954	94,535
Net result from transactions (net operating balance) (\$'000)	(5,412)	3,655

⁷ Changes to reporting methods for database and website usage have affected the overall figure for 2023-24.

⁸ Juries Victoria provides juries for both the Supreme Court and County Court.

⁹ This categorisation has been amended from the 2022-23 report to more accurately reflect the metric measured.

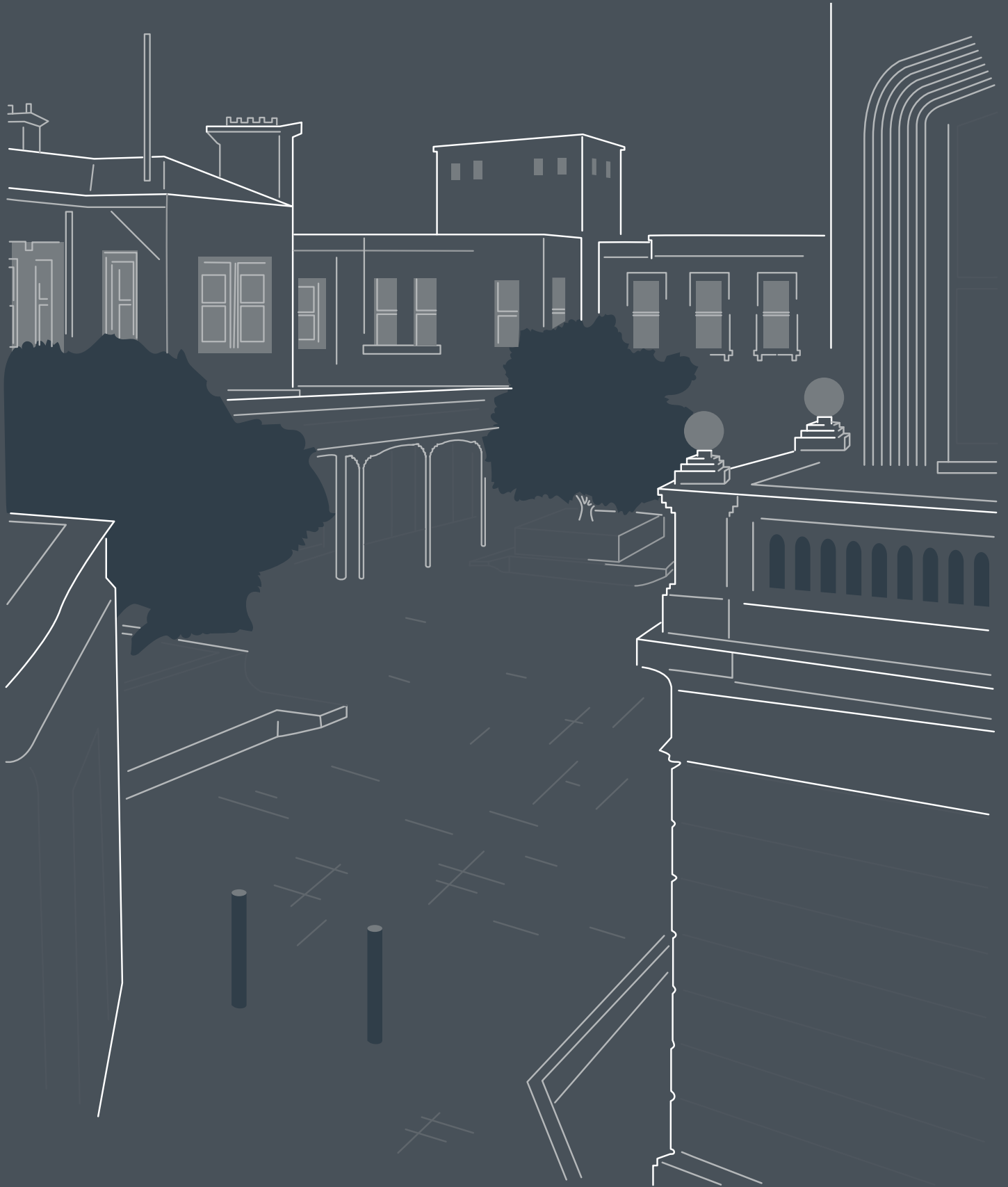
¹⁰ Figures include both Supreme and County Court trials.

¹¹ This categorisation has been amended from the 2022-23 report to more accurately reflect the metric measured.

¹² Figures relate to Supreme Court activity, excluding additional Court services (Funds in Court, Juries Victoria and Law Library Victoria).

¹³ Changes to reporting methods for website usage have affected the overall figure for the 2023-24 period. 2023-24 figures report the number of website visit sessions rather than number of pages viewed.

¹⁴ Including both online and onsite participation. Participation numbers are approximate.



Foreword: Chief Justice and CEO

It is a pleasure to present the 2023-24 annual report for the Supreme Court of Victoria.

The report demonstrates the dedication of the judiciary and staff to the core business of the Court in expertly resolving the rising number of cases in an increasingly challenging fiscal environment. We continue to innovate where we can to ensure that cases are dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible. We aim to put every resource at our disposal to its best use.

All divisions of the Court experienced increased case initiations and despite universally improved finalisation figures, pending case numbers continued to rise.

The 14.1% rise in cases reflects a number of economic, social and legal factors. The Court continues to respond to these challenges by doing all it can to adapt and improve. Examples are found across the Court. From the use of automation to process opt-out notices in group proceedings to a new approach to case management and listing in injury-based lists. The growth of the fast-track initiative to 48% of committed cases in the Criminal Division, and the Court of Appeal's increased finalisation of civil appeals. The continuing success of the Court mediation program and the increased volume of hearings by associate judges and judicial registrars. All have contributed to an overall increase in finalisations by 13.7% on last year, the highest number of finalisations since 2015-16.

The Court is committed to the community it serves. An important part of the administration of justice is ensuring that processes and outcomes are accessible to the public. Through our values of accessibility, integrity, transparency, innovation and change, we have continued to build on our past achievements and drive improvements for Court users.

This year the Court was the first Australian jurisdiction to publish guidelines for litigants on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in litigation.

The Court of Appeal built on our strong foundation of livestreaming to pilot an online observation program which saw more than 800 law students and Bar readers access online educational resources including videos, livestreams and recorded hearings to learn about the work of the Court and advocacy skills.

We continue to fulfil our responsibility to be a court for all Victorians. In 2023-24, the Court of Appeal sat on circuit in Bendigo and Shepparton. Criminal trials were held in Ballarat, Latrobe Valley, Shepparton and Wodonga, and civil circuits were held in Shepparton, Geelong, Wodonga and Wangaratta. Remote access also helps to bring the Court to the people, and we're especially pleased that the number of livestream viewers from regional and remote areas grew 68% in 2023-24.

History has taught us that change is a part of life. We will continue to adapt and evolve our operations, and we thank everyone, including the Court's judicial officers and staff, the legal community, Court Services Victoria and Court users, who continued to help us do so in 2023-24.



The Honourable Anne Ferguson
Chief Justice of Victoria



Michael Carroll
Chief Executive Officer

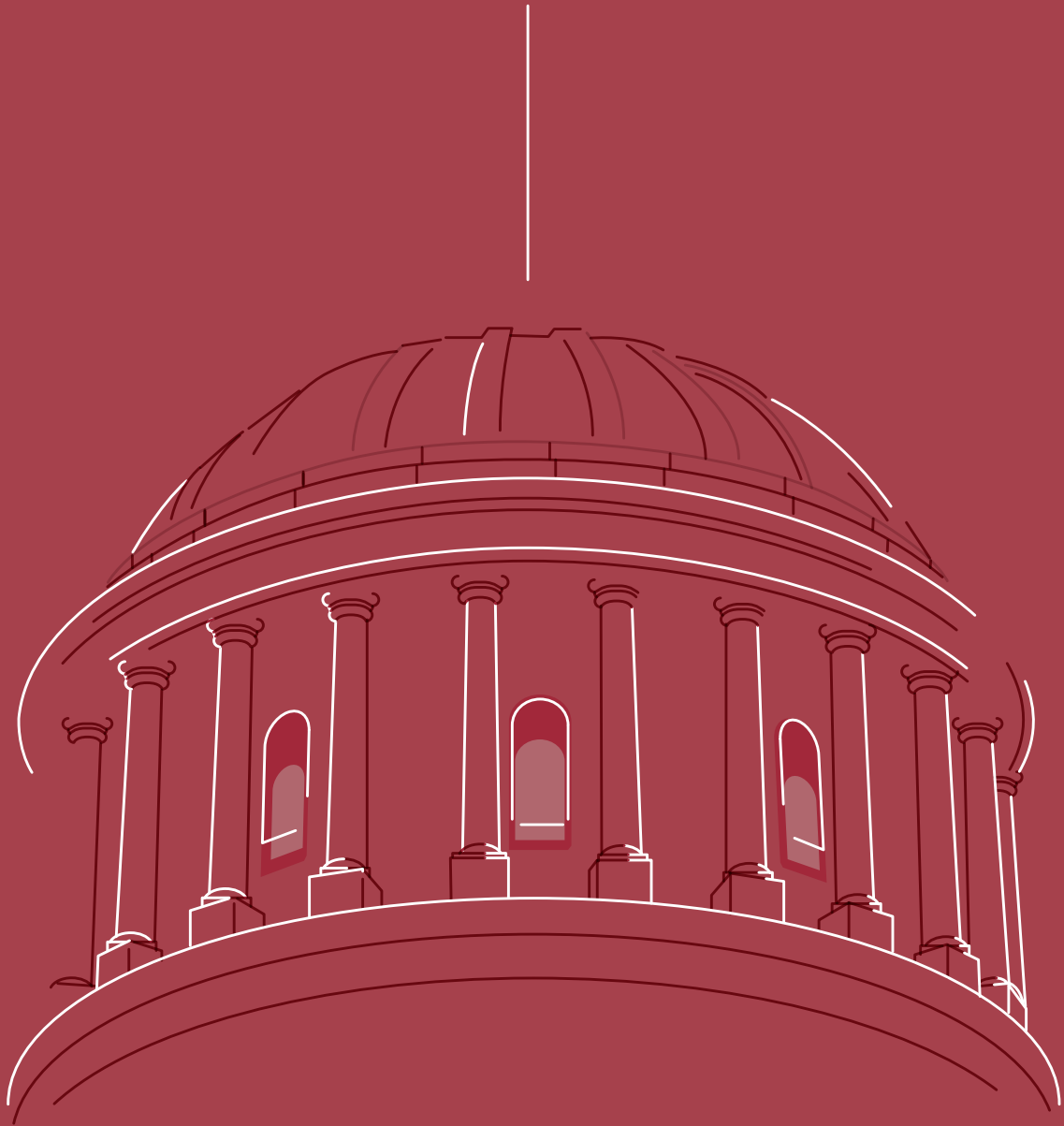


The Honourable Anne Ferguson
Chief Justice of Victoria



Michael Carroll
Chief Executive Officer

WORK OF THE COURT



Court of Appeal

ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Court of Appeal hears appeals from criminal and civil cases decided in the Supreme Court Trial Division and County Court, and some appeals from the Magistrates' Court (when constituted by the Chief Magistrate) and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (when constituted by the President or a Vice President).

Key points

1

A rise in conviction appeals resulted in an increase in pending criminal case numbers, median time to finalisation and case processing measures.

2

Cases arising from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants continue to add to the number of pending criminal cases greater than 12 months in age.

3

More than 800 law students and Victorian Bar readers were given the opportunity to learn more about the work of the Court, our judges and career pathways via an Online Observation Program.

Overview

An increase in new conviction appeals contributed to a 20.1% increase in pending criminal cases and an increase in the median time to finalisation, up from 10.6 months to 12.45 months. That increase also contributed to a reduction in the percentage of cases that were finalised within 12 months, down from 83.6% to 74.2%.

Of the pending cases arising from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants, all are greater than 18 months in age and continue to have a significant impact on the overall age of pending criminal cases. These cases are more complex to manage and require extra court resources and time than other appeals.

A total of 147 criminal judgments were handed down, which included *DPP v Tuteru* [2023] VSCA 188, *Skeates (a pseudonym) v King* [2023] VSCA 226, *Karam v The King* [2023] VSCA 318, *DPP v Lynn* [2024] VSCA 62 and *Pusey v The King* [2024] VSCA 110.

The clearance rate for civil appeals improved from 85.9% to 96.6%, driven by a 21.6% increase in finalisations.

The median time to finalisation increased from 9.3 months to 10 months.

A total of 83 civil judgments were handed down, which included *The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne v RWQ (a pseudonym)* [2023] VSCA 197, *Osborne v Butler* [2024] VSCA 6, *Connelly v Transport Accident Commission* [2024] VSCA 20 and *Waters v Diesel Holdings Pty Ltd* [2024] VSCA 77.

The Court of Appeal hosted an Online Observation Program in May and June 2024 where more than 800 law students and Victorian Bar readers registered to learn more about the work of the Court of Appeal, our judges and career pathways. Participants were able to access online educational resources, including videos, and watch advocacy in action via livestreams and recordings of hearings.

A total of 413 livestreams were available throughout the year to ensure that the public and interested parties were able to view most hearings remotely, including during regional circuits to Bendigo and Shepparton.

Total cases (appeal and leave to appeal)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	372	402	8.1%
Finalisations	323	362	12.1%
Pending	281	321	14.2%

Judicial officers who served in the Court of Appeal

CHIEF JUSTICE

Chief Justice Ferguson

PRESIDENT

Justice Emerton

JUDGES

Justice Priest

Justice Beach

Justice McLeish

Justice Niall

Justice T Forrest

(until 15 August 2023)

Justice Sifris

(until 22 December 2023)

Justice Kennedy

Justice Walker

Justice Macaulay

Justice Taylor

Justice Lyons

(from 31 October 2023)

Justice Boyce

(from 21 November 2023)

Justice Orr

(from 16 April 2024)

ADDITIONAL JUDGES OF APPEAL

Justice Hollingworth

(Criminal Division)

Justice Elliott (Criminal Division)

Justice Croucher (Criminal Division)

Justice Kidd

(Chief Judge of County Court)

Justice Richards

(Common Law Division)

Justice Tinney (Criminal Division)

Justice Forbes

(Common Law Division)

Justice Gorton

(Common Law Division)

Justice M Osborne

(Commercial Court)

Justice O'Meara

(Common Law Division)

Justice Tsalamandris

(Common Law Division)

Justice Waller (Commercial Court)

RESERVE JUDGES

Justice R Osborn

Justice Whelan

Justice Kaye

Justice T Forrest

(from 16 August 2023)

Justice Garde

Justice J Forrest

Justice Ginnane

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Pedley

Judicial Registrar McCann

Civil cases

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	135	146	8.1%
Finalisations	116	141	21.6%
Pending	107	112	4.7%

Clearance rate¹⁵ and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark ¹⁶
Clearance rate	85.9%	96.6%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	79.3%	60.3%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	100%	96.5%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	0.0%	3.5%	0%

Median time to finalisation (months)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Civil appeals	9.3	10.0	7.5%

Criminal cases

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	237	256	8.0%
Finalisations	207	221	6.8%
Pending	174	209	20.1%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	87.3%	86.3%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	83.6%	74.2%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	99.5%	96.8%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	0.5%	3.2%	0%

Median time to finalisation (months)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Appeals against conviction/conviction and sentence	10.6	12.5	17.9%
Appeals against sentence only	7.8	6.6	-15.4%
Median for all criminal cases	7.1	6.6	-7.0%

¹⁵ Clearance rate is a measure developed by the International Framework for Court Excellence to demonstrate a court's capacity to meet current demand.

A measure of 100% means the Court is finalising as many cases as it receives; less than 100% means the Court finalises fewer cases than were initiated and, therefore, the number of pending cases is growing.

¹⁶ Benchmarks are a court-wide measure and not tailored to specific divisions, allowing the Court's divisions to measure activity.

Trial Division Criminal Division

ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Criminal Division hears cases involving serious offences including murder, manslaughter and terrorism, in addition to certain hearings under the *Bail Act 1977* (Vic), *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997* (Vic) (CMIA), *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth), and appeals against convictions and sentences imposed by the President of the Children's Court. The division also hears a range of confidential applications under a number of Acts, including the *Major Crime (Investigative Powers) Act 2004* (Vic) and *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic).

Key points

1

The Criminal Division's 99% clearance rate is notable in the context of a continued increase in the number of matters committed via the fast-track process¹⁷, which now represent half of all new initiations of indictment matters and require significantly more pre-trial work than standard committal matters.

2

While the number of bail applications has reduced slightly from last year, the overall number of applications finalised by the division has increased due to high numbers of breach proceedings under the *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) and confidential applications.

3

Two judge-alone trials were heard and determined in 2023-24. These are the final judge-alone trials after the temporary amendment to the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009* (Vic) ended in late 2022.

Overview

This year the division continued last year's strong clearance rate of indictment matters (trials and pleas) by effectively finalising the same number of cases as there were new initiations.

The division heard 33 jury trials and the final two judge-alone trials to verdict (a total of 666 sitting days, including preliminary argument), 15 of which were fast-track matters. While this represents a 13.2% decrease in the number of jury trials from the previous year, there were only eight fewer trial sitting days. The division also heard 51 pleas (including 24 from fast-track matters), a 19% decrease from 2022-23.

The first application to suspend lifetime reporting obligations under the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004* (Vic) was heard and determined, with a number of further applications now pending or expected over the coming year.

In early 2024 the Court opened new purpose-built youth holding rooms in the Trial Division building, providing safer and fit-for-purpose spaces for young people in Youth Justice custody to attend the court.

¹⁷ Fast-track cases aim to reduce the overall time from charge to finalisation by managing them in the jurisdiction where they will be determined. Pre-trial steps that would typically take place in the Magistrates' or Children's Court now occur within the Supreme Court.

Judicial officers who served in the Criminal Division

PRINCIPAL JUDGE

Justice Jane Dixon

JUDGES

Justice Hollingworth
(until 14 June 2024)

Justice Elliott

Justice Croucher

Justice Beale

Justice Incerti

Justice Tinney

Justice Fox

RESERVE JUDGES

Justice Lasry
(until 23 February 2024)

Justice Champion

Justice Fullerton
(NSW Supreme Court)

ADDITIONAL JUDICIAL OFFICERS¹⁸

Justice Priest (Court of Appeal)

Justice Beach (Court of Appeal)

Justice Kaye (Court of Appeal)

Justice Niall (Court of Appeal)

Justice Walker (Court of Appeal)

Justice Taylor (Court of Appeal)

Justice Kaye (Court of Appeal)

Justice T. Forrest (Court of Appeal)

Justice Keogh
(Common Law Division)

Justice Moore
(Common Law Division)

Justice Forbes
(Common Law Division)

Justice Gorton
(Common Law Division)

Judicial Registrar McCann
(Court of Appeal)

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Freeman

Judicial Registrar Tueno

Cases committed to the Supreme Court

The Court was able to meet the indictment matter demand in 2023-24, with a 99% clearance rate (86 initiated cases and 85 finalised cases).

There are two streams of indictment matters committed to the Court – standard committal cases and fast-track cases. Fast-track cases have increased as a proportion of case initiations since the option was introduced during the pandemic, and this year they represented half of the new initiations.

Although there are more pre-trial steps to complete, fast-track cases took a similar time to finalise as standard committal cases, largely due to active case management. Active case management enables the division to streamline pre-trial processes, reduce delays, promote the efficient and effective resolution of pre-trial issues, and maximise the chance of trials being ready to begin on their listed date.

Preliminary data collected since fast-track cases commenced in early 2020 indicates that the time from the date of charge to finalisation of a fast-tracked case is on average 4.1 months faster than if there had been a committal hearing in the Magistrates' Court. It is expected this figure will continue to improve over time, as many of the division's early fast-track cases were affected by pandemic-related delays.

The unusually high number of jury discharges without verdict (16, double the number in the previous year) had a significant impact on time to finalisation. A number of those jury trials were required to be relisted for later dates, some of which remained pending at the conclusion of the reporting period.

In fast-track cases, the Court heard:

- ▶ 89 days of pre-trial witness examinations in relation to 41 accused, 96.6% of which were heard by judicial registrars
- ▶ 19 case conferences
- ▶ 21 guilty pleas before trial.

Total indictments (standard committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	47	43	-8.5%
Finalisations	91	47	-48.9%
Pending	73	70	-5.4%

Total indictments (fast-track committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	37	43	16.2%
Finalisations	33	38	18.8%
Pending	57	61	8.9%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing (all committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark ¹⁹
Clearance rate	148%	99%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	27%	33%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	84%	72%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	16%	28%	0%

¹⁸ Excluding judicial officers who presided over short confidential applications.

¹⁹ Benchmarks are a court-wide measure and not tailored to specific divisions. The court-wide benchmarks for 'time to finalisation' (also known as 'on-time case processing') are unsuitable for the Criminal Division given the nature of its caseload, exacerbated by the fact that fast-tracked cases will, on average, take longer to finalise than traditional committals. As the benchmark is not tailored to the work of the Criminal Division, it is not achievable.

Clearance rate and on-time case processing (standard committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark ¹⁸
Clearance rate	194%	109%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	30%	30%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	89%	74%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	11%	26%	0%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing (fast-track committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark ¹⁸
Clearance rate	89%	88%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	18%	37%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	70%	68%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	30%	32%	0%

Finalised²⁰ indictment cases (standard committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Trial/special hearing — jury	26	14	-50.0%
Trial/special hearing — judge-alone	0	0	-
Other finalisations under the CMIA ²¹	5	3	-40.0%
Plea ²²	44	26	-40.9%
Discontinuance	10	4	-60.0%
Transfer to another court	5	0	-100.0%
Other ²³	1	0	-100.0%
Total	91	47	-48.4%

Finalised²⁴ indictment cases (fast-tracked committals)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Trial/special hearing — jury	12	13	8.3%
Trial/special hearing — judge-alone	2	1	-50.0%
Other finalisations under the CMIA ²⁵	1	2	100.0%
Plea ²⁶	19	22	15.8%
Discontinuance	1	0	-100.0%
Transfer to another court	0	0	0.0%
Other ²⁷	0	0	0.0%
Total	33	38	8.6%

²⁰ This does not include cases where, for example, the trial concluded and the accused was found guilty but is still awaiting sentence. These types of cases will be reported in the financial year the entire proceeding is finalised.

²¹ Includes cases where the accused was found not guilty by reason of mental impairment.

²² Includes cases where a plea of guilty was entered during trial.

²³ Includes cases where a stay of the prosecution was ordered.

²⁴ This does not include cases where, for example, the trial concluded and the accused was found guilty but is still awaiting sentence. These types of cases will be reported in the financial year the entire proceeding is finalised.

²⁵ Includes cases where the accused was found not guilty by reason of mental impairment.

²⁶ Includes cases where a plea of guilty was entered during trial.

²⁷ Includes cases where a stay of the prosecution was ordered.

²⁸ Counted by individual accused, rather than matters which can include multiple accused.

Sentence indications

Since changes introduced in early 2022 allowed the Supreme Court to give more detailed sentence indications to an accused, these applications have proven very useful for resolving indictment matters prior to trial. Sentence indications are an opportunity for an accused to seek an indication of what sentence would be imposed if they pleaded guilty. In 2023-24, 14 applications for sentence indications were heard, 11 of which resulted in the accused pleading guilty. Based on the estimated trial duration provided by parties, resolution on a sentence indication saved more than 240 trial sitting days. Of all indictment matters that resolved with a plea of guilty and were finalised in 2023-24, 37.5% followed a sentence indication.

Case conferences

Case conferencing is an important aspect of active case management. A case conference is a hearing convened by a judge or judicial registrar to facilitate full and frank discussions between the parties to identify and narrow the issues in dispute and explore potential resolution of the case. Nothing discussed during the case conference can be used in evidence at trial. In 2023-24 the division heard 19 case conferences relating to 27 accused. Of the 44 individual accused's cases²⁸ that were finalised during the year, either by the accused pleading guilty or by the prosecution being discontinued, 52% had been the subject of a case conference.

Criminal applications

The division hears substantive criminal applications, such as bail applications, post-sentence applications and reviews,²⁹ applications and reviews under the CMIA, as well as urgent and confidential applications, such as those under the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) and *Major Crimes (Investigative Powers) Act 2004* (Vic).

Criminal applications are resource-intensive and account for significant judicial workload. There is also often an urgency in the hearing and determination of such applications. The division's capacity to hear applications alongside its trial and plea work is enhanced by the active case management processes.

In 2023–24 there were 110 primary bail applications³⁰, a reduction of 9.8% from the previous year. The number of CMIA and serious offender supervision order applications and reviews remained consistent, however, there were significant increases in the number of serious offender breach proceedings (145% increase) and confidential applications (57.4% increase). The high volume and time sensitivity of applications work in addition to the division's indictment cases workload often meant that the support of judicial officers from other divisions was required.

Regional sittings

In 2023–24, the division heard eight substantive matters at regional locations, including Ballarat, Latrobe Valley, Shepparton and Wodonga:

- ▶ 4 jury trials
- ▶ 3 pleas
- ▶ 1 sentence hearing.

Due to various constraints, including courtroom size, custodial facilities and judicial capacity, some regional matters were heard and determined in Melbourne.

Finalised criminal applications

	2022–23	2023–24	Variance
Primary bail applications	122	110	-9.8%
Secondary bail applications ³¹	95	85	-10.5%
CMIA applications and reviews	43	38	-11.6%
Serious offender — detention order-related applications and reviews ³²	11	4	-63.6%
Serious offender — supervision order-related applications and reviews ³³	18	18	0.0%
Serious offender — breach proceedings	11	27	145.5%
Confidential applications	108	170	57.4%
Total	408	451	10.5%

²⁹ Applications and reviews under the *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) for the continuing detention or supervision of a person once their sentence has ended.

³⁰ 'Primary bail applications' are the first application for bail made by an accused to the Supreme Court in a particular matter. It does not include bail applications made in the course of cases already committed to the Supreme Court for trial, which are counted as secondary bail applications.

³¹ Includes bail applications made in cases committed to the Supreme Court for trial, as well as applications for variation or revocation of bail.

³² Includes applications and reviews under the *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

³³ Includes applications and reviews under the *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

Trial Division Commercial Court

ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Commercial Court determines commercial disputes, including complex matters involving significant monetary claims. Judges oversee both general and specialist lists within the division, and are supported by associate judges, judicial registrars and the Commercial Court Registry.³⁴

Key points

1

The Commercial Court revised SC CC 1 Commercial Court Practice Note³⁵, which aims to facilitate the just, efficient, timely and cost-effective resolution of matters.

2

There continues to be an increasing number of pending group proceedings³⁶ that require substantial judicial and registry management.

3

The number of initiations of winding-up and mortgage recovery list matters has continued to increase significantly.

4

There has been an increase in initiations in and referrals to the Technology Engineering and Construction (TEC) List as a result of the decisions in *Thurin v Krongold Constructions (Aust) Pty Ltd*³⁷ and *Plunkett v Portier Pacific Pty Ltd*³⁸.

Overview

The Commercial Court's workload increased considerably in 2023-24. 3,158 cases were initiated, an increase of 26.5% from the previous year. The increase in workload is primarily due to two factors. First, a significant rise in initiations in the Corporations List (increase of 30.6%), particularly applications to wind up companies on the basis of insolvency.³⁹ Second, an increase in complex cases, in particular, group proceedings and

TEC List proceedings. Cases in these categories require active case management and consume significant Court resources, including judicial officer hearing time.

Despite the growth in initiations and the increase in the number of group proceedings, the Commercial Court increased finalisations by 36.7% on last year and its overall clearance rate to 94.4%.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	2,496	3,158	26.5%
Finalisations	2,181	2,981	36.7%
Pending	1,910	2,087	9.3%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	87.4%	94.4%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	74.6%	70.3%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	92.3%	94.5%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	7.7%	5.5%	0%

³⁴ For further information about Commercial Court matters managed by associate judges and judicial registrars see page 30.

³⁵ Refer to **SC CC 1 Commercial Court (Second revision)**, which took effect on 26 February 2024.

³⁶ Commonly referred to as 'class actions'.

³⁷ [2022] VSCA 226.

³⁸ [2024] VCAT 205.

³⁹ Initiations of Winding up - failure to comply with statutory demand matters rose 38% from the last financial year.

Judicial officers who served in the Commercial Court

PRINCIPAL JUDGE

Justice Delany

JUDGES

Justice Sloss

Justice Connock

Justice Lyons
(until 30 October 2023)

Justice Nichols

Justice Stynes

Justice M Osborne

Justice Attiwill

Justice Matthews

Justice Waller
(from 12 September 2023)

Justice Cosgrave
(from 8 December 2023)

RESERVE JUDGES

Justice Garde

Justice Croft

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate Justice Gardiner

Associate Justice Hetyey

Associate Justice Irving

Associate Justice Steffensen

Associate Justice Barrett

Associate Justice Gobbo
(from 15 August 2023)

RESERVE ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate Justice Eftim

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Englefield

Judicial Registrar Woronczak

Judicial Registrar Caporale

Judicial Registrar Gitsham

Judge-managed cases

Commercial Court judge-managed cases are managed and heard by a judge rather than an associate judge or judicial registrar.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	419	437	4.3%
Finalisations	423	401	-5.2%
Pending	614	650	5.9%

Corporations List

The Corporations List manages applications brought under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001* (Cth). These figures reflect Corporations List matters that are managed and heard by judges, associate judges and judicial registrars.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	1,293	1,689	30.6%
Finalisations	1,279	1,596	24.8%
Pending	464	557	20.0%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Connock

Justice Matthews

DEPUTY JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Delany

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate Justice Gardiner

Associate Justice Hetyey

Associate Justice Irving

Associate Justice Steffensen

Associate Justice Barrett

Associate Justice Gobbo
(from 15 August 2023)

RESERVE ASSOCIATE JUDGE

Associate Justice Eftim

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Woronczak

Judicial Registrar Caporale

Judicial Registrar Gitsham

Technology, Engineering and Construction List

The Technology, Engineering and Construction List draws together three strands of related disputes. Some of these matters have been referred to the Supreme Court from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) as a result of recent case law relating to VCAT's jurisdiction.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance ⁴⁰
Initiations	30	39	30.0%
Finalisations	22	33	50.0%
Pending	54	60	11.1%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Stynes

DEPUTY JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Delany

Group Proceedings List (cross-divisional list)

The Group Proceedings List is a cross-divisional list spanning the Common Law Division and the Commercial Court. Group proceedings, commonly referred to as class actions, are brought on behalf of seven or more people, whose claims arise out of the same, similar or related circumstances and raise substantial common factual or legal questions.

The table below relates to Commercial Court group proceedings only.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	16	12	-25.0%
Finalisations	3	10	233.3%
Pending	38	40	5.3%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Nichols

Justice John Dixon
(Common Law Division)
(until 29 September 2023)

Justice Keogh
(Common Law Division)
(from 29 September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Gitsham

Taxation List

The Taxation List manages taxation-related appeals from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and objections to decisions of the Commissioner of State Revenue. It also hears cases substantially relating to taxation, including taxation recovery and Goods and Services Tax (GST) disputes.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	13	12	-7.7%
Finalisations	8	9	12.5%
Pending	18	21	16.7%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Delany

DEPUTY JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Nichols

⁴⁰ Due to the small number of cases in some lists within the Commercial Court, statistical variations can appear disproportionately significant.

Arbitration List

Both Australian and international commercial arbitration disputes are initiated in the Arbitration List. They are brought under the *International Arbitration Act 1974* (Cth) or *Commercial Arbitration Act 2011* (Vic) and are often urgent.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	4	9	125.0%
Finalisations	5	8	60.0%
Pending	1	2	100.0%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Lyons
(until 30 October 2023)
Justice Stynes
(from 31 October 2023)

Commercial and Retail Leases List (cross-divisional list)

The Commercial and Retail Leases List is a cross-divisional list⁴¹ that manages substantial commercial and retail lease disputes, appeals under section 148 of the *Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeal Tribunal Act 1998* (Vic), and judicial review applications of VCAT commercial and retail lease decisions.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	13	8	-38.5%
Finalisations	10	4	-60.0%
Pending	7	11	57.1%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice M Osborne

Insurance List

The Insurance List manages commercial insurance cases including disputes about insurance or reinsurance policies, losses incurred in a commercial transaction, and business or property insurance disputes.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	4	6	50.0%
Finalisations	4	4	0.0%
Pending	23	25	8.7%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Lyons
(until 30 October 2023)
Justice M Osborne
(from 31 October 2023)

⁴¹ Commercial and Retail Leases List matters are filed in the Commercial Court and Common Law Division but are managed by the Commercial Court Registry and heard by Commercial Court judges.

Intellectual Property List

The Intellectual Property List hears matters concerning allegations of infringement on, or determination of, intellectual property including copyright, design, patents and trademarks.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	2	3	50.0%
Finalisations	1	2	100.0%
Pending	4	5	25.0%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Lyons
(until 30 October 2023)

Justice Attiwill
(from 31 October 2023)

Admiralty List

The Admiralty List manages shipping matters brought under the *Admiralty Act 1988* (Cth). This includes disputes about loss and damage to (or caused by) a ship, and loss or damage to goods as a result of them being shipped.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	0	1	-
Finalisations	1	1	0.0%
Pending	2	2	0.0%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Connock

Trial Division

Common Law Division

ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Common Law Division manages proceedings relating to property; tort and contract law; wills, trusts, equity and estates; and the Court's supervisory jurisdiction over other Victorian courts, tribunals and public officials. Proceedings are allocated to one of 13 specialist lists for management by judicial officers and staff with relevant expertise. The division also shares two cross-divisional lists with the Commercial Court and has a General List for matters that do not fit within any of the specialist lists.⁴²

Key points

1

The division responded to substantial and sustained growth in injury-based lists by implementing significant modifications to case-management and listing practices, aimed at improving the Court's capacity and efficiency in managing proceedings.

2

Such changes included commencing a comprehensive review of Practice Notes, conducting user group meetings and implementing measures to streamline court processes. These initiatives optimise resources, improve service delivery and expedite case resolutions while addressing diverse needs of court users.

3

The high volume of opt-outs in the COVID-19 State Government (Business Losses) group proceeding, exceeding 6,000, posed a significant management challenge. The Court's successful implementation of a new automated process for managing opt-out notices demonstrates potential for improved efficiency in managing similar challenges in the future.

Overview

The Common Law Division experienced growth in its caseload during 2023-24 with 3,363 new cases filed, reflecting a 9% increase in case initiations compared to the previous reporting period.

The primary drivers are the personal injuries-based lists, the Trust, Equity, and Probate List, and the Judicial Review and Appeals List.

Despite this increase, the division finalised 2,970 cases – a 1.9% increase compared to the previous period.

However, the pending caseload remained substantial, with 4,002 cases pending at the end of the financial year – a 10.9% increase on last year.

These figures reflect the ongoing challenges faced by the division in addressing ever-growing demand for its judicial and court staff resources.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	3,086	3,363	9.0%
Finalisations	2,915	2,970	1.9%
Pending	3,609	4,002	10.9%

Clearance rate and on-time case processing

	2022-23	2023-24	Benchmark
Clearance rate	94.5%	88.3%	100%
Cases finalised within 12 months	50.3%	49.0%	75%
Cases finalised within 24 months	79.6%	83.2%	90%
Cases finalised >24 months	20.4%	16.8%	0%

⁴² For further information about Common Law matters heard by associate judges, see page 30.

Judicial officers who served in the Common Law Division

PRINCIPAL JUDGE

Justice John Dixon
(until 29 September 2023)

Justice Andrew Keogh
(from 29 September 2023)

JUDGES

Justice Cavanough

Justice Ginnane
(until 4 November 2023)

Justice McDonald

Justice Quigley

Justice Richards

Justice Moore

Justice Forbes

Justice Gorton

Justice O'Meara

Justice Tsalamandris

Justice Gray

Justice Harris
(from 4 November 2023)

Justice Watson
(from 13 November 2023)

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate Justice Daly

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou

Associate Justice Irving

Associate Justice Barrett

Associate Justice Gobbo
(from 15 August 2023)

Associate Justice Goulden
(from 2 November 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Keith
(until 8 March 2024)

Judicial Registrar Englefield

Judicial Registrar Baker

Judicial Registrar McCann

RESERVE JUDGE

Justice John Dixon
(from 29 September 2023)

Justice Ginnane
(from 4 November 2023)

Civil Circuit List

The Civil Circuit List manages cases, mostly personal injury claims, with a significant link to regional Victoria. The Court schedules sittings in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Morwell, Sale, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

During the year, judges heard trials in Shepparton, Geelong, Wodonga, and Wangaratta, while matters set down for trial in other regional locations were finalised due to settlement.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	89	108	21.3%
Finalisations	127	98	-22.8%
Pending	178	188	5.6%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Keogh
(until October 2023)

Justice Forbes
(from October 2023)

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Irving
(from September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Confiscation and Proceeds of Crime List

This list manages civil proceedings brought under Victorian and Commonwealth legislation providing for the restraint or forfeiture of property allegedly connected with criminal activity.

The number of cases remained relatively small. However, they require case management over several years and typically involve a large number of parties and determination of a substantial amount of applications. As a result, a judicial registrar was assigned to assist with the case management load in 2023-24.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance ⁴³
Initiations	7	5	-28.6%
Finalisations	7	7	0.0%
Pending	18	16	-11.1%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Forbes
(until October 2023)

Justice Gorton
(from October 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar McCann

⁴³ Due to the small number of cases some lists within the Common Law Division, statistical variations can appear disproportionately significant.

Dust Diseases List

The Dust Diseases List manages proceedings in which plaintiffs claim to suffer from a condition attributable to the inhalation of dust, such as asbestos and silica.

The rate of initiations in the list continued its upward trend, with most filed proceedings relating to asbestos exposure. Due to the specific nature of asbestos-related conditions, these proceedings generally progress to finalisation with greater expediency compared to other matters in the personal injury-based lists.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	314	396	26.1%
Finalisations	309	333	7.8%
Pending	299	362	21.1%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Keogh
(until October 2023)
Justice Forbes
(from October 2023)
Justice O'Meara
(from October 2023)

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou
(until September 2023)
Associate Justice Irving
(from September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Employment and Industrial List

The Employment and Industrial List manages contractual and industrial disputes, appeals from disciplinary and other tribunals, and other employment-related matters.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	22	27	22.7%
Finalisations	23	24	4.3%
Pending	20	23	15.0%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice McDonald

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou

Group Proceedings List (cross-divisional list)

The Group Proceedings List is a cross-divisional list spanning the Common Law Division and the Commercial Court. Group proceedings, are brought on behalf of seven or more people whose claims arise out of the same, similar or related circumstances and raise substantial common factual or legal questions. The high-profile nature of cases within this list typically attracts media attention and the cases require substantial case management over an extended period, often several years.

Four new common law group proceedings were initiated, bringing the total number of pending group proceedings to 20. The list managed a substantial volume of opt-outs and facilitated the settlement approval process in the Uber group proceeding. This workload occupied much of the list's resources and required strategic allocation of other court staff to ensure efficient case management.

The table below relates to Common Law Division group proceedings only.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	3	4	33.3%
Finalisations	0	2	-
Pending	18	20	11.1%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice John Dixon
(until 29 September 2023)
Justice Keogh
(from 29 September 2023)
Justice Nichols
(Commercial Court)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Institutional Liability List

The Institutional Liability List manages claims against an organisation, founded on personal injury or death due to alleged physical or sexual abuse of a minor. The list was established in February 2020 to manage growing numbers of personal injury damages claims following legislative amendments in 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2020 to facilitate historical child abuse claims.

The list experienced a slight decrease in initiations compared to the previous financial year, with an increase in the number of finalised claims primarily attributable to the significant increase in initiations in the previous period, as well as more intensive case management activities facilitating the finalisation of settled matters and providing a more accurate representation of the active pending caseload. The volume of pending cases remains substantial, making it the second largest list in the Division, behind the Personal Injuries List.

The considerable interlocutory work required in these matters continues to have a significant effect on resources. While new case management measures are expected to expedite the progression of proceedings to trial, the division continues to experience significant pressure on its judicial and administrative resources.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	515	504	-2.1%
Finalisations	292	459	57.2%
Pending	793	838	5.7%

Judicial Review and Appeals List

The Judicial Review and Appeals List includes proceedings relating to judicial review of, and statutory appeals from, decisions of lower courts, tribunals, public offices or bodies.

This list experienced an increase in initiations, with a notable rise in cases filed by self-represented litigants. This development presents particular challenges, as such cases typically require intensive triage and case management protocols. To address these challenges, the division has implemented measures to facilitate pro bono representation and continues to develop strategies for the efficient allocation of resources.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	219	249	13.7%
Finalisations	236	218	-7.6%
Pending	194	225	16.0%

Major Torts List

The Major Torts List manages proceedings that are primarily of a tortious nature including defamation, nuisance, intentional torts, police torts and contempt proceedings.

An increase in initiations in the list brought the overall number of pending proceedings to 120. Finalisations remained stable throughout the period.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	44	73	65.9%
Finalisations	49	47	-4.1%
Pending	94	120	27.7%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Keogh
(until October 2023)

Justice Forbes
(from October 2023)

Justice O'Meara
(from October 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Cavanough
(until October 2023)

Justice Ginnane
(until October 2023)

Justice Richards
(from October 2023)

Justice Gray
(from October 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Keith
(until 8 March 2024)

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice John Dixon
(until 29 September 2023)

Justice Keogh
(from 29 September 2023)

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Daly

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Personal Injuries List

Proceedings managed in the Personal Injuries List include claims arising out of industrial accidents, motor vehicle accidents, medical negligence, and public and occupier's liability.

The list has experienced a consistent pattern of increases in initiations, with notable incremental growth over the past four financial years. Medical negligence claims are the primary driver of this trend, representing approximately 50% of initiations this financial year.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	487	615	26.3%
Finalisations	512	456	-10.9%
Pending	795	954	20.0%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Keogh
(until October 2023)

Justice Forbes
(from October 2023)

Justice O'Meara
(from October 2023)

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou
(until September 2023)

Associate Justice Irving
(from September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Professional Liability List

The Professional Liability List manages claims for financial loss against a professional for breach of duty in tort or contract, related statutory breaches, and breach of equitable duties (excluding claims against medical and health practitioners, which are managed in the Personal Injuries List, and building, construction and engineering practitioners, which are managed in the Commercial Court).

The number of initiations within this list has remained higher than normal over the past two financial years, mainly due to claims against legal practitioners for alleged breach of duty to clients seeking damages or compensation from redress schemes in respect of historical child abuse.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	71	66	-7.0%
Finalisations	51	41	-19.6%
Pending	99	124	25.3%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Gorton

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Daly

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Baker

Property List

The Property List manages proceedings concerning rights over real estate, including possession or sale of real estate.

During the reporting period there was a slight decrease in initiations, and increase in finalisations. About 50% of finalisations are a result of judgments or orders granting relief, with about 70% of all finalised matters concluding within 12 months. This efficient finalisation rate can be attributed to the nature of these proceedings and the significant proportion of matters heard and determined by associate judges.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	238	225	-5.5%
Finalisations	223	241	8.1%
Pending	206	190	-7.8%

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice McDonald

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Daly
(from September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Keith
(until 8 March 2024)

Testators Family Maintenance List

The Testators Family Maintenance List manages applications brought under Part IV of the *Administration and Probate Act 1958* (Vic) for a provision or further provision from a deceased estate.

The list extensively utilises judicial and court-annexed mediations conducted by deputy prothonotaries to encourage early settlements and preserve estate assets by minimising legal costs. Most proceedings are resolved by consent or court-facilitated mediation, with judicial determination required in only a small number of cases.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	372	361	-3.0%
Finalisations	360	388	7.8%
Pending	485	458	-5.6%

Trusts, Equity and Probate List

The Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear a wide range of proceedings concerning wills, probate, and the administration of deceased persons' estates. Matters in relation to trusts of a non-commercial nature are also managed in the list.

The list has experienced an increase in initiations, primarily due to an influx of probate proceedings. In response to the growing demands in the list, an associate judge has been assigned to help manage the caseload.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	342	383	12.0%
Finalisations	358	329	-8.1%
Pending	329	383	16.4%

Valuation, Compensation and Planning List

The Valuation, Compensation and Planning List manages proceedings involving the valuation of land, compensation for compulsory acquisition of land, planning appeals from from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), and disputes involving land use or environmental protection.

The division managed a number of complex matters during this period with high-profile judgments handed down on issues of public interest and planning law.

Total cases

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Initiations	27	29	7.4%
Finalisations	33	35	6.1%
Pending	46	40	-13.0%

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Moore

Justice Gray

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Englefield

JUDGES IN CHARGE

Justice Moore

Justice Gray

ASSOCIATE JUDGE IN CHARGE

Associate Justice Barrett
(from September 2023)

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Keith
(until 8 March 2024)

JUDGE IN CHARGE

Justice Richards

Justice Quigley

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Keith
(until 8 March 2024)

Associate Judges' Chambers

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATE JUDGES' CHAMBERS

Associate judges manage work arising within the civil jurisdiction, both from the associate judges' original jurisdiction and matters on referral. Associate judges and judicial registrars manage proceedings in specialist lists, sit in the Associate Judges' Practice Court and conduct judicial mediations.

PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATE JUDGE

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate Justice Daly

Associate Justice Gardiner

Associate Justice Mukhtar
(until 1 November 2023)

Associate Justice Hetyey

Associate Justice Irving

Associate Justice Steffensen
(Senior Master of Funds in Court)

Associate Justice Barrett

Associate Justice Gobbo
(from 15 August 2023)

Associate Justice Goulden
(from 2 November 2023)

RESERVE ASSOCIATE JUDGE

Associate Justice Efthim

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Englefield

Judicial Registrar Caporale

Judicial Registrar Conidi

Judicial Registrar Woronczak

Judicial Registrar Gitsham

Judicial Registrar McCann
(assisting)

Overview

During 2023-24 associate judges and judicial registrars heard matters across the following specialist lists:

- ▶ Corporations List (including shareholder oppression matters and the winding up of corporations)
- ▶ Employment and Industrial List
- ▶ Judicial Review and Appeals List
- ▶ Personal Injuries List
- ▶ Dust Diseases List
- ▶ Civil Circuit List
- ▶ Institutional Liability List
- ▶ Property List
- ▶ Mortgage Recovery List
- ▶ Testators Family Maintenance List
- ▶ Professional Liability List
- ▶ Major Torts List.

Associate judges and judicial registrars assist with managing the Supreme Court's workload. These judicial officers determine many substantive applications and manage the conduct of many proceedings. Through this work the issues in dispute are frequently narrowed and, when feasible, result in resolution of matters prior to trial. This leads to substantial cost savings for both the parties and the Victorian public.

The data presented in this report reflects the volume and throughput of cases handled, but it does not fully capture the impact these efforts have on reducing the number of hearing days before a judge in the Trial Division. Hearings and special fixtures reported within this section represent a subset of the data reported by the Commercial Court and Common Law Divisions.

Associate Judges' Chambers hearings

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Practice Court and Specialist Lists	6,390	8,496	33.0%
Special fixtures	215	296	31.7%

The increase in associate judges and judicial registrar specialist list hearings is attributed to some Associate Judges' Practice Court hearings being moved to the relevant specialist list, as well as growth in the overall workload in the Associate Judges' Chambers.

Commercial Court matters – Associate Judges’ Chambers

These include cases referred by judges in the Commercial Court, together with matters within the associate judges’ original jurisdiction. Original jurisdiction initiations increased from 45 in 2022–23 to 70 in 2023–24. While there was a decrease in hearings, more associate judges were made available to conduct judicial mediations, including urgent pre-trial mediations.

Commercial Court Lists

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Hearings listed	279	273	-2.2%
Special fixtures	84	80	-4.9%

Corporations List

There was a 32% increase in Corporations List initiations within the associate judges’ and judicial registrars’ original jurisdiction. More complex matters continue to present before the Court, requiring longer and more frequent hearings.

Corporations List

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Hearings listed	3,085	3,822	23.9%
Special fixtures	17	36	71.7%

Common Law Division specialist lists – Associate Judges’ Chambers

There was a marked increase in hearings across the Common Law Division specialist lists managed by associate judges.

Common Law Division

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Hearings listed	2,521	3,117	23.6%
Special fixtures	198	180	-9.5%

Associate Judges’ Practice Court

The Associate Judges’ Practice Court mitigates delays by hearing substantive and urgent applications when specialist lists are at capacity. The decrease in hearings is explained by the increased listing of suitable matters in the associate judges and judicial registrar specialist lists.

Associate Judges’ Practice Court List

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Hearings listed	784	619	-21.1%

Judicial Mediation

ABOUT JUDICIAL MEDIATION

Judicial mediations are conducted by associate judges and judicial registrars. Court-annexed mediations are also conducted by the Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) registrar, ADR deputy registrar and other deputy prothonotaries.

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

- Associate Justice Hetey
- Associate Justice Irving
- Associate Justice Steffensen
- Associate Justice Barrett
- Associate Justice Gobbo
(from 15 August 2023)

RESERVE ASSOCIATE JUDGES

- Associate Justice Efthim

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

- Judicial Registrar Englefield
- Judicial Registrar Baker
- Judicial Registrar Keith
- Judicial Registrar Woronczak
- Judicial Registrar Caporale
- Judicial Registrar Conidi
- Judicial Registrar McCann
- Judicial Registrar Gitsham

ADR REGISTRAR

- ADR Registrar Day

ADR DEPUTY REGISTRAR

- ADR Deputy Registrar Marengo
(until 9 July 2023)

DEPUTY PROTHONOTARIES

- Benjamin Calvitto
- Kate Price
- Kate Clark
- Shane Draper

Overview

Cases are referred to mediation from the Commercial Court, Common Law Division and Court of Appeal. Cases can be referred to mediation at any stage of the litigation, including at, or just before, the beginning of trial.

In addition to the Court’s mediation program, many cases are mediated by a private mediator agreed on by the parties. These mediators are often barristers or solicitors who practise in the area of alternative dispute resolution.

The ADR Centre continued to manage the Court’s mediation program under the guidance of Judicial Registrar Caporale and ADR Registrar Day.

The Centre’s work and the Court’s mediation program were overseen by the ADR Committee, chaired by Justice Keogh.

Although facilities at the SCV Mediation Centre can also accommodate a hybrid of online and in-person mediations, most mediations were conducted in person following its opening in May 2023.

A total of 539 cases were referred to judicial or court annexed mediation and 312 were completed. Of these, 63% were resolved or part resolved on the day of the mediation; 11.4% of the cases that did not resolve on that day resolved within 30 days of the mediation.

Settling matters at mediation saved an estimated 1,081 trial days and millions of dollars in legal costs for litigants. Costs Court mediations saved a further estimated 527 hearing days.

Mediation activity

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Cases referred for mediation	559	539	-3.6%
Mediations completed	338	352	4.1%
Cases resolved on day of mediation	198	217	9.6%
Cases part resolved on day of mediation	9	3	-66.7%
Percentage of cases resolved or part resolved on day of mediation	61%	63%	3.3%
Hearing days saved by cases being resolved at mediation	1,043	1,081	3.6%

Costs Court

ABOUT THE COSTS COURT

The Costs Court determines costs disputes between litigants arising from court proceedings in all jurisdictions in Victoria (party/party disputes) and disputes between legal practitioners and their clients — usually over the solicitor’s bill — under the legal profession legislation (solicitor/client disputes). It focuses on resolving disputes by mediation and ‘assessments in chambers’⁴⁴, saving costs for litigants and efficiently using Court resources. Taxations now form a very small part of the Costs Court’s work⁴⁵.

Key points

1

Work continues on the new scale of costs, planned to come into operation on 1 January 2025. Under the new scale, successful litigants can recover party/party costs on a time costing basis or upon the basis they have been charged by their own solicitor. The simplified model promotes greater transparency, reduces costs of party/party taxations and is intended to reduce the gap between the costs a successful litigant pays to their solicitor and the amount recovered.

2

Work began on a comprehensive revision of the Costs Court Practice Note that will assist the profession to apply the new scale and updated procedures in the Costs Court.

3

Costs Registrars provided training to deputy prothonotaries in the Principal Registry and other areas of the Court who regularly interact with the Costs Court.

Overview

During the year, 310 new summonses were initiated in the Costs Court. There were 82 solicitor/client summonses with the majority (nearly 61%) initiated by law practices rather than their clients. This is explained by continuing referrals from the Supreme Court (Testators Family Maintenance List) and County Court (pursuant to workplace injury and compensation legislation), which are initiated as applications by legal practitioners (46%). The number of referrals of all solicitor/client matters decreased by about 4.9% in 2023–24.

There were 228 new party/party summonses, constituting 73.55% of the new work in the Costs Court — 155 matters arose from costs orders in the Supreme Court and 50 from the County Court. The balance arose from matters in the Magistrates Court and from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Overall, Costs Court initiations decreased by 18% after two previous years of increasing initiations. Party/party summonses decreased by 7% and solicitor/client summonses decreased by 37%.

Mediations

All party/party disputes over \$100,000 are mediated. Most solicitor/client disputes are listed for mediation following monthly directions hearings. Mediations continue to be the most time and cost-efficient means of resolving costs disputes.

The program has produced outstanding results this year. Of the 108 mediations completed (up from 87 mediations in 2022–23), 85 were resolved on the day of the mediation, resulting in a resolution rate of 78.7%, up from 67.8% last year. The estimated taxation days saved by matters resolving at mediation totalled 527 days, resulting in significant time saving for the Court and a cost saving to the parties (more than \$3 million in appearance fees alone).

The success of the mediation program is most notable in complex matters with larger costs claims and with the flexibility with which matters are mediated. For example, the Judicial Registrar successfully mediated 18 summonses in related Supreme Court proceedings as a single mediation event. The total claim for costs amounted to approximately \$12.5 million, saving a conservative estimate of 117 days of Court time if the matters were to be taxed individually.

⁴⁴ Pursuant to Part 8 of Order 63 of the *Supreme Court (General Civil Procedure) Rules 2015*. Assessments are done on written material and without an oral hearing.
⁴⁵ A formal hearing by the Costs Court, requiring the attendance of the parties, to quantify legal costs.

Assessments in chambers

Assessments come from a variety of sources — party/party claims under \$100,000, matters that failed to resolve at mediation irrespective of the amount of the claim and referrals from the Testators Family Maintenance List, Supreme and County Courts. In this latter category, detailed written assessments, similar to written rulings, were provided to the parties and the courts for consideration.

In most cases, the assessment procedure itself is cost neutral and an effective alternative to taxation as assessments are done on the material filed up to the point of assessment. In 2023–24, the Costs Court completed 163 assessments, the majority of which were party/party matters with an acceptance rate of 84.7%.

Taxations

In 2023–24, taxations constituted 4.7% of the Costs Court's work, with 15 matters from a total of 318 finalised matters being taxed.

The transition from taxations to more innovative and cost-effective means of resolving costs disputes continues to be a significant achievement for the Costs Court, providing considerable benefits to litigants.

The more efficient use of Court resources has enabled Judicial Registrar Conidi to conduct weekly mediations in the Commercial Court, Common Law Division and under Part IV of the *Administration and Probate Act 1958* (Vic) as well as devoting a significant amount of time to the Litigious Costs Committee which is responsible for the development of a new scale of costs.

Judicial officers who served in the Costs Court

JUDICIAL REGISTRAR

Judicial Registrar Conidi

COSTS REGISTRARS

Costs Registrar Roger Walton
Costs Registrar Penny Van den Berg

Registry and Court Support Services

ABOUT THE REGISTRY AND COURT SUPPORT SERVICES

Registry Services provides front-line services to Court users and specialist legal, case management, policy and administrative support to the judges of each division. Court Support Services includes the work of the Digital Litigation and Business Intelligence teams. These services are provided under the direction of judicial registrars, the Executive Director, Supreme Court Operations and the Prothonotary.

The Probate Office is managed separately by the Registrar of Probates (see page 39).

Key points

1

Automated systems for group members to opt out of a group proceeding and for the acceptance of certain types of filed documents were developed and implemented.

2

The Court of Appeal's inaugural Online Observation Program provided opportunities for law students and Bar readers to learn about the work of the Court of Appeal through curated resources, on-demand videos and access to livestreamed hearings.

3

2,401 hearings were livestreamed, supporting the Court's values of transparency, accessibility and integrity.

Overview

Registry Services

COURT OF APPEAL REGISTRY

The Court of Appeal Registry continued its support to the judiciary with the preparation and management of cases heard by the Court of Appeal. This included the coordination of regional circuits to Bendigo and Shepparton where local students had the opportunity to meet the judges of appeal and observe hearings.

During the year the registry created an Online Observation Program. That program provided more than 800 law students and Victorian Bar readers with the opportunity to learn more about the work of the Court of Appeal, judges and career pathways via online educational resources that included videos and access to livestreams and recordings of hearings.

The Registry continued to facilitate livestream technology to enable wider accessibility for practitioners and the public to view most proceedings.

CRIMINAL DIVISION REGISTRY

The Criminal Division Registry continued to support the division's active case management processes that enable the efficient hearing and determination of trials and applications.

The case management support provided by the division's registry lawyers enabled the division to maintain full trial listing capacity throughout the year as well as identifying those proceedings that may be amenable to early resolution. Case management requirements in fast-tracked matters are particularly significant and these matters account for close to half the trial proceedings in the division.

The Registry continued its support to the division's judicial officers in hearing and determining criminal applications that account for a significant proportion of the division's workload. Applications often involve intersecting complexities and can require significant judicial time, as well as urgent hearing listings. Support for these applications by registry lawyers enabled judicial officers to prepare for, hear and determine applications quickly and efficiently, reducing out-of-court judicial work and maximising listing capacity.

Cessation of government funding at the conclusion of the financial year for registry lawyer roles that supported active case management means that there will need to be a careful assessment of the impact of the loss of these roles on the operations of the division.

COMMERCIAL COURT REGISTRY

The Commercial Court Registry (CCR) continued to provide an adaptive and responsive service to the judiciary and Court users.

During 2023–24, the CCR:

- ▶ worked with other areas of the Court to develop and implement a system for automatic online opt outs for group proceedings. The online opt-out system became operational in March 2024, making it quicker and easier for group members to opt out and minimising manual data entry processes for staff.
- ▶ processed 4,808 manual opt-out forms in the Flex Commissions group proceeding, prior to the implementation of the online opt-out system
- ▶ worked closely with staff from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to develop streamlined processes for various types of VCAT matters referred to or being heard by Supreme Court judges
- ▶ assisted the Principal Registry to implement the auto-acceptance of certain types of filings, resulting in less delay to Court users.

PRINCIPAL REGISTRY

- ▶ The Principal Registry includes the Office of the Prothonotary (see page 38) and provides services to the Costs Court (see page 34), certain cases within the Commercial Court and front-line registry services for the Common Law Division (see page 24).

Court Support Services

DIGITAL LITIGATION TEAM

The Digital Litigation team supports the judiciary, associates, practitioners and Court users to engage with pre-trial processes and Court hearings, supporting the Court's values of transparency, accessibility and integrity through the coordination of public and private livestreaming of proceedings.

The 12,045 hearings conducted by the Court this financial year all received some level of support from Digital Litigation such as use of eCourt technology, Mediation Centre technology, livestreaming, remote or hybrid hearing arrangements.

Some 2,401 hearings were livestreamed either via the Court's website or on request. Of these, 993 were livestreamed to the public via a link on the website, an increase of 106 from the previous financial year. Livestreaming of court hearings enhances the Victorian community's access to hearings. In 2023–24, 808 participants viewed livestreams in regional and remote communities, an increase of 68% from the previous financial year.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TEAM

The Business Intelligence (BI) team is responsible for the ongoing data management, analysis and reporting elements of the Court's operations, supporting the information requirements of the Court and external stakeholders.

In 2023–24, the BI team continued its development and deployment of a number of reporting/analysis components for the Court, including:

- ▶ interactive dashboards to assist divisions with analysing and reporting on their performance
- ▶ quarterly performance reports to inform judiciary/management
- ▶ continued development and delivery of a data warehouse, which will improve the Court's ability to meet future demand for data
- ▶ development and delivery of the Court's Data Governance Framework, along with data sharing and data breach policies.

Business improvement initiatives

REIMAGINING REGISTRY SERVICES

The Court continued the implementation of the Reimagining Registry Services program. Key elements delivered in 2023–24 included a streamlined onboarding program for new staff, an automated tool for group members to opt out of a group proceeding and the configuration of the Court's eFiling system to automatically accept certain documents for filing.

Several initiatives under the Court's Access to Justice program were delivered. These included:

- ▶ Simplified representation on the Court's website of procedural steps involved in matters commonly brought by self-represented litigants in the Supreme Court.
- ▶ A 'print page' feature on the website to enable people to print a clean copy of a viewed page.
- ▶ Continued support for self-represented litigants in the form of information, procedural advice, and referrals to free or low-cost legal services. The Court commenced a pilot referral service to Monash University Law Clinics and continued its support of the Self-representation Service conducted by Justice Connect and the Victorian Bar Pro Bono Referral Scheme.
- ▶ In 2023–24, the self-represented litigant coordinators responded to 9,357 enquiries from unrepresented parties or potential parties to court proceedings and the Court made 27 referrals to the Victorian Bar pro bono scheme.

Office of the Prothonotary

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE PROTHONOTARY

The Prothonotary is an officer of the Court under the *Supreme Court Act 1986* (Vic) and is vested with a range of powers under the Rules. The Prothonotary is supported by a number of deputies and has responsibility across all lists and divisions.

Overview

The Office of the Prothonotary provides key services including authenticating orders, issuing default judgments and warrants, fee waivers, file searches, coordinating subpoenaed materials and supporting admissions of lawyers to practise. Other services include managing file transfers between jurisdictions, coordinating service of proceedings outside Australia and administering bails.

Providing support to court users

In 2023–24, the Office of the Prothonotary took 21,917 phone calls from Court users (about 440 phone calls per week). Additionally, registry staff responded to more than 13,000 email enquiries, providing procedural advice and information on court proceedings.

Default judgments and warrants

The Office of the Prothonotary is responsible for issuing default judgments where a party fails to defend a claim. The Prothonotary is also responsible for issuing warrants of possession of property and warrants of seizure and sale. In both cases, the Prothonotary must be satisfied that the requirements of the *Supreme Court (General Civil Procedure) Rules 2015* (Vic) are met.

This year, 1,016 default judgments and warrants were issued, up 23% from 2022–23. The number of default judgments and warrants has been steadily increasing since the height of pandemic restrictions in 2020–21. There were 490 default judgments (up 45%) and 306 warrants of possession (up 34%) issued, as well as 220 warrants of seizure and sale (down 16%).

Fees and fee waivers

Fees are payable in accordance with the *Supreme Court (Fees) Regulations 2018* (Vic) and are charged under three categories: corporate, standard and concession. Fees paid under the regulations are not retained by the Court. Fees may be waived in instances of financial hardship or when certain automatic fee waiver criteria are met. The Prothonotary collects supporting evidence where 'standard' or 'concession' fees are applied for, or the automatic waiver provisions apply (for example, if the applicant is represented under certain pro bono schemes, granted legal aid, serving a sentence of imprisonment or is a minor). Where granted, waivers apply for the duration of the proceeding subject to a change in financial circumstances.

During the year, 329 financial hardship waiver applications were granted (up 37%), with waived fees totalling \$219,558.70.

File searches and subpoena coordination

The Office of the Prothonotary oversees requests by non-parties, including media organisations, to inspect court files. It also manages subpoenas requiring the production of documents and other materials in preparation for court proceedings.

In 2023–24, there were 3,259 appointments to inspect subpoenaed documents (up 23.5% from 2022–23).

Admissions as an Australian lawyer

In conjunction with the Chief Justice's chambers, the Office of the Prothonotary supports the process for applicants gaining admission as Australian lawyers and as officers of the Supreme Court of Victoria. During this year 1,999 individuals were admitted, a 9% increase from 2022–23 (1,585 in person and 414 on the papers).

The Office of the Prothonotary issued 136 certificates of good standing (up from 130 in 2022–23) and 65 duplicate admission orders (certificates), (down from 78 in 2022–23) both predominantly supporting admitted Australian lawyers seeking to practise in foreign jurisdictions.

Probate Office

ABOUT THE PROBATE OFFICE

Probate is the process by which the Court finds that a will is valid and can be acted upon by the executor/s. The Court has exclusive authority to make orders about the validity of wills, appointment of administrators of deceased estates where there is no valid will and administration of deceased estates.

The Probate Office manages all applications for grants of probate and administration. It maintains a register of all grants issued by the Court and wills deposited with the Court for safekeeping.

Key points

1

The *Supreme Court (Administration and Probate) Rules 2023* came into effect 1 March 2024, enabling the Registrar of Probates to determine more non-contested applications related to informal wills.

2

Applications for letters of administration on intestacy grew to their highest level, indicating more Victorians are dying without a valid will.

3

Nearly \$30 billion of Victorian assets of deceased estates were disclosed in applications. The issuing of grants by the Probate Office enabled these assets to be sold or distributed according to either the will or the laws of intestacy⁴⁶.

Overview

There were 493 fewer applications filed with the Probate Office this year than in 2022-23. This decrease was expected following last year's largest single year-on-year increase in filings. The lower mortality rates in Victoria during the corresponding period are reflected in the lower application numbers. Despite the overall lower application numbers, applications for administration on intestacy increased by 2.3%. This is representative of a longer-term trend, with more Victorians dying without leaving a valid will.

In 2023-24, the average time between filing and obtaining a grant was 15 days, with a median of nine days. This increase from 2022-23 is largely attributable to changes in assistant registrars, as well as the impact of the work undertaken on a project to update the Probate Online Advertising System (POAS). It is expected this project will be completed in 2024-25, with the integration of the advertising functionality in the RedCrest-Probate eFiling system, creating a more user-friendly experience for members of the profession and public.

There was also an increase in the number of caveats filed and the volume of applications requiring judicial determination, with 34.9% more probate applications pending in the Trusts, Equity and Probate List. One reason for this is the increasing number of applications concerning informal wills. It is anticipated that the enactment of the *Supreme Court (Administration and Probate) Rules 2023* will alleviate some of this additional pressure on judicial officers. These rules increase the power of the Registrar of Probates to determine informal will applications for estates valued under \$3,000,000, from the previous \$1,000,000.

The number of application searches also increased by 11.5%. This is attributable to the Probate Office storing more historical files than usual. Work has commenced to settle the processes to transfer electronic Probate Office files to the Public Record Office Victoria. This will be the first significant transfer of electronic records performed by the Court. The Probate Office will work closely with the Archives & Records team on this transfer, along with progressing work on transferring wills made by soldiers in the first and second world wars prior to going into battle.

⁴⁶ The laws relating to how an estate is distributed in the absence of a will.

Applications filed

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Probate	22,794 (85.5%) ⁴⁷	22,301 (84.7%)	-2.2%
Administration upon intestacy	3,007 (11.3%)	3,076 (11.7%)	2.3%
Administration with the will annexed (attached)	584 (2.2%)	611 (2.3%)	4.6%
Reseals of foreign grants	235 (0.9%)	293 (1.1%)	24.7%
Other applications, including for limited grants	40 (0.2%)	37 (0.1%)	-7.5%
Total applications filed	26,660	26,324	-1.3%

Probate Office activities

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Applications made by people without legal representation	2,231 (8.4%)	2,294 (8.7%)	2.8%
Grants issued through the small estates service	155	148	-4.5%
Caveats filed	302	337	11.6%
Probate Office files pending in the Trusts, Equity and Probate List	109	147	34.9%
Advertisements published on the Probate Online Advertising System (POAS)	31,672	31,201	1.5%
Emails responded to by the Probate Office	10,991	9,226	-16.1%
Wills deposited with the Probate Office for safekeeping	413	417	1%
Searches of Probate Office files	1,652	1,842	11.5%

⁴⁷ The percentage of overall applications filed during the period.

Corporate Services

ABOUT CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services incorporates a number of areas that provide support to judicial officers, staff and Court users at the Supreme Court.

As part of corporate consolidation across a number of jurisdictions during the year, new models for People, Finance and IT support services were established and became operational.

To support the consolidated corporate model, the Governance and Program Delivery Office was created and, along with the Security & Assets, Archives & Records, and Communications & Engagement teams, operated under the guidance of the Court's Chief Executive Officer.

Overview

The Supreme Court's **IT & Digital Support** function transitioned to a new service model on 26 February 2024.

The Court's **Finance**, and **People, Wellbeing & Culture** functions transitioned to a new shared service model and became operational on 13 May 2024.

During this financial year the **Security & Assets** team was involved in the delivery of substantial capital works projects across the Court, including new courtrooms in the William Cooper Justice Centre, two youth justice holding rooms, upgraded lifts, and new stormwater works and footpaths in the Trial Division and Court of Appeal laneways.

Archives & Records transferred a volume of records to the custody of the Public Record Office, including adoption records and registers, regional divorce case files, applications under the Environment Protection Authority and the Ombudsman Acts from the 1970s, and appeal books for the Privy Council, the High Court of Australia and the Civil List.

The team was also engaged in retrieving and appraising records from storage and processing them under the Retention and Disposal Authority for Supreme Court records, and assisting the legal profession and the public with enquiries about historical court files.

The **Communications & Engagement** team connected journalists to more than 600 hearings via video links, Zoom and over the phone. In total, the team facilitated more than 1,470 connections for media to remotely access Court hearings.

More than 992,000 people visited the Court's website, some on multiple occasions, with 2,129,230 website sessions recorded. The team published 71 news items on the website, and a range of resources about the work of the Court for the community including regular judgment and sentencing summaries, and recordings of hearings and ceremonial sittings. Interest in the Court's Gertie's Law podcast continued with the total number of downloads since its 2020 launch surpassing 450,000.

The Court's education program hosted more than 3,000 Victorian VCE Legal Studies students from 142 schools. The students met judicial officers and learned about the work of the Court.

ADDITIONAL COURT SERVICES



Funds in Court

ABOUT FUNDS IN COURT

Funds in Court (FIC) supports the function of the Senior Master, an associate judge, who holds, invests and manages funds paid into Court for the benefit of persons under a legal disability.

FIC works to enhance the lives of clients, ensuring the safe and effective investment of their funds at low cost, and use of their funds in a manner that responds to their diverse needs and aspirations.

FIC is a self-funded, not-for-profit division of the Court. FIC does not charge direct fees for the services provided. Investment returns, less FIC’s operating expenses, are credited to client accounts via interest rates that are declared annually.

The Senior Master also manages funds paid into Court pending the outcome of a proceeding, as security for costs, and pursuant to the *Trustee Act 1958 (Vic)*.⁴⁸

Key points

1

Managed funds and assets valued at \$2.26 billion⁴⁹ in 2023–24, achieving competitive investment returns for clients.

2

FIC supported 6,849 clients, responding to more than 110,621 requests to release money, making 5,727 orders and 131,727 payments.

3

A project that upgraded, enhanced and consolidated the FIC technology infrastructure streamlined data processing, provided faster information request processing for staff and significantly strengthened the security of clients’ information.

4

Additional roles were created within the client services team structure to support the embedding of a client-centred service model that meets contemporary community expectations.

⁴⁸ Such funds are referred to as ‘non-award funds’ and are held in Common Fund No. 1. For more details about FIC and its operations see <https://fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/>.

⁴⁹ Data within this section is reported to 2 decimal points. This is to preserve accuracy of the volume of funds being managed, costs incurred by clients, and investment returns.

Judicial officers who served in Funds in Court

SENIOR MASTER

Associate Justice Steffensen
Associate Justice Ierodiaconou
(acting)

JUDICIAL REGISTRARS

Judicial Registrar Woronczak
Judicial Registrar Englefield
(acting)

Client services

Funds in Court (FIC) provides a range of services to clients.

Client Services Officers are a client's day-to-day contact at FIC, and are primarily responsible for submitting requests for funds to judicial officers.

Client Liaison Officers visit clients and their caregivers (in person or online) and assist with understanding a client's will and preferences. Client Liaison Officers conducted 533 meetings in 2023-24 (541 in 2022-23).

Legal Officers provide legal advice relevant to the use of client funds, including advice on contracts, legal costs, debts, the sale, purchase and modification of properties, trusts, wills and estates, and capacity. They prepare complex court orders and assist clients in dealing with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the Transport Accident Commission and other statutory bodies.

Taxation Officers provide advice and support relevant to the income earned from clients' funds in Court. A trust tax return is lodged for each client account with the Australian Taxation Office. In 2023-24, 6,553 annual trust tax returns were lodged.

Number of orders, payments made and documents received

Payments are made pursuant to court orders made by the Senior Master or judicial registrar. Client Services Officers, Client Liaison Officers and Legal Officers review requests and documents provided by clients and caregivers in relation to proposed uses of funds.

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Orders	4,944	5,727	15.84%
Payments made on behalf of clients	127,239	131,727	3.53%
Documents received in relation to client requests	97,354	110,621	13.63%

Client service delivery

FIC exceeded the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- ▶ 94.08% of clients' invoices were approved and ready for payment within five working days of being received (KPI 90%)
- ▶ 96.73% of the 44,879 telephone calls were answered within 60 seconds (KPI 90%)
- ▶ 87.75% of client requests were responded to within five working days of being received (KPI 80%).

FIC welcomes feedback and treats complaints seriously. During 2023-24, 79 complaints were recorded (59 in 2022-23).

Funds held

The total value of funds under administration, including direct investment in real estate and other assets, was \$2.26 billion on 30 June 2024 (\$2.19 billion in 2022-23).

Funds paid into Court are held in Common Fund No. 1 (non-award funds), Common Funds No. 2 and No. 3 (client funds), the Guarantee and Reserve Account (operational funds) and real estate.⁵⁰

The Victorian Auditor-General has concluded that FIC's 2023-24 financial report is presented fairly and has issued an unmodified audit opinion.⁵¹

Common Funds and property (\$ millions)

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Common Fund No. 1	\$51,586	\$49,541	-3.96%
Common Fund No. 2	\$957,014	\$964,117	0.74%
Common Fund No. 3	\$746,168	\$787,514	5.54%
Guarantee and Reserve Account	\$65,549	\$66,819	1.94%
Real estate	\$368,710	\$440,114	19.37%
Number of properties	515	515	0%

Money paid into/out of Court (\$ millions)⁵²

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Paid into Court			
Common Fund No. 1	\$75,920	\$23,920	-68.49%
Common Fund No. 2	\$137,731	\$124,333	-9.73%
Paid out of Court			
Common Fund No. 1	\$88,575	\$27,853	-68.55%
Common Fund No. 2	\$62,554	\$83,035	32.74%

New client accounts opened by jurisdiction of payment in order or award

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Supreme Court order	196	238	21.43%
County Court order	80	79	-1.25%
Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VoCAT) award	516	635	23.06%
Total	792	952	20.20%

New non-award accounts opened

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Non-award accounts	92	66	-28.26%

⁵⁰ The real estate held on trust mostly comprises residential properties in which clients live.

⁵¹ Financial reports are available at www.fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/reports/fic-financial-reports/.

⁵² There were several unusually large payments in and out of Common Fund No. 1 in 2022-23 based on orders of the Court made in commercial proceedings.

Investments⁵³

Investment Services considers and implements investment advice provided by consultants engaged by the Senior Master. The performance of the Common Funds continues to meet or exceed relevant benchmarks over the longer term.

To assist FIC to meet its investment objectives, the Senior Master is supported by an Investment Review Panel comprising industry experts in an advisory capacity on investment decisions and investment related issues.

The Investment Compliance Committee monitors compliance with FIC's Asset Management Policy and the *Supreme Court Act 1986* (Vic). No breaches were reported in 2023-24.

Common Fund No. 1 aims to provide a secure return on liquid investments through cash and fixed interest investments.

Common Fund No. 2 aims to provide the maximum return from investments in cash and fixed interest securities. The aim of FIC's investment strategy is to maximise income while preserving capital and providing sufficient liquidity to enable payments to clients.

Common Fund No. 3 aims to provide clients with capital growth and dividend income over an investment timeframe of at least six years. It invests in Australian shares and cash.

The Guarantee and Reserve Account provides for FIC's administrative expenses and may also be used for smoothing of the annual interest rates paid to clients.⁵⁴ The fund is invested to provide a secure return on liquid investments. This account is also intended to serve as a prudential safeguard for the investments of the Common Funds.

Operating expenses and investment returns to clients⁵⁵

FIC benchmarks its operating expenses via its administration expense ratio. This represents the total cost to clients of managing their funds.⁵⁶ It was 0.64% for 2023-24 (0.64% in 2022-23).

Declared interest rate⁵⁷

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Common Fund No. 2	2.25%	2.55%	13.33%
Common Fund No. 2 and Common Fund No. 3 ⁵⁸	2.05%	2.35%	14.63%

Performance

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Common Fund No. 3	10.50%	12.44%	18.48%

Corporate governance

FIC's governance and assurance structure includes committees of independent industry experts addressing audit, risk, investment, information technology, executive remuneration and client services.⁵⁹

53 For more details about FIC's investment management, including fact sheets about the performance of Common Funds No. 2 and No. 3, see <https://fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/about-us/how-funds-are-managed-and-invested/>.

54 *Supreme Court Act 1986*, ss. 113(20)-(21).

55 For more details about how FIC's interest rates are determined and FIC's operational costs, see <https://fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023-2024-Crediting-Rates-and-Operational-Costs.pdf>.

56 The administration expense ratio is calculated by dividing the total operating expenditure for the financial year (excluding depreciation) by the total net assets at the end of the financial year (including property).

57 In addition, 0.05% interest was credited to non-award funds in Common Fund No. 1 (0.05% in 2022-23).

58 The rates credited where a client has funds in both Common Fund No. 2 and Common Fund No. 3.

59 For more information about corporate governance, visit <https://fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/about-us/governance/>.

Juries Victoria

ABOUT JURIES VICTORIA

Juries Victoria summons citizens to serve as jurors on Supreme and County Court trials across the state. Juries are made up of a cross-section of Victorian citizens, each bringing their own experiences and expectations into the courtroom. Every jury reflects the community from which it is drawn and represents the values and standards of that community.

Key points

1

More than 340,000 randomly selected Victorians were assessed for jury service based on their eligibility, availability and personal circumstances.

2

More than 20,000 people attended court for jury service across the state, down slightly from the previous reporting period due to the decrease in County Court jury trial listings.

3

Results of the Juror Experience Survey, which commenced in 2024, show more than three-quarters of individuals who attended for jury service found it to be a positive experience overall.

Overview

This reporting period was the first since COVID-19 restrictions to follow pre-pandemic practices for its entire duration, the effect of which is reflected in the significant decrease in summonses issued, as well as the decreases in most other categories. While citizens randomly selected in this reporting period increased despite the overall downward trend, this is due to nearly 70,000 individuals selected in June 2024, but whose jury service will fall outside the reporting period.⁶⁰ Discounting these individuals would result in a total variance of -15.1%, in line with the decrease in summonses issued.

In 2024, Juries Victoria began surveying individuals who had attended jury service in the previous quarter to measure perceptions of, and overall satisfaction with, Victoria's jury system. Although only two quarterly surveys have been conducted, early results have proved insightful.

The survey highlighted the potential for improvements in community engagement and education, with only 30% of respondents reporting being fairly or extremely knowledgeable of Victoria's jury system prior to their attendance, less than the 41% who reported being slightly or not at all knowledgeable. Similarly, 56% of respondents reported having no understanding prior to attending of the nature of offences jurors might hear.

The survey revealed several areas of strength, with an overwhelming majority of respondents being satisfied with Juries Victoria (92%) and the professionalism of staff (94%). A further 78% of respondents considered their jury service a positive experience, with only 5% considering it a negative experience.

⁶⁰ New jury rolls of randomly selected citizens are usually generated in July rather than June to avoid the distorting effect on activity reports. Due to operational requirements this year, new jury rolls were instead generated in June 2024.

Jury activity

Citizens randomly selected

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Melbourne	76,991	78,925	2.5%
Regional Victoria	245,981	265,235	7.8%
Total	322,972	344,160	6.6%

Summonses issued⁶¹

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Melbourne	42,754	37,441	-12.4%
Regional Victoria	82,685	69,989	-15.4%
Total	125,439	107,430	-14.4%

Citizens attended⁶²

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Melbourne	13,946	13,047	-6.4%
Regional Victoria	7,548	7,692	1.9%
Total	21,494	20,739	-3.5%

Juries empanelled⁶³

Supreme Court

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Civil — Melbourne	9	13	44.4%
Civil — Regional Victoria	2	4	100.0%
Criminal — Melbourne	38	32	-15.8%
Criminal — Regional Victoria	4	4	0%
Total	53	53	0%

County Court

	2022-23	2023-24	Variance
Civil — Melbourne	41	45	9.8%
Civil — Regional Victoria	3	9	200.0%
Criminal — Melbourne	354	303	-14.4%
Criminal — Regional Victoria	111	121	9.0%
Total	509	478	-6.1%
Total across both jurisdictions	562	531	-5.5%

61 This categorisation has been amended from the 2022-23 report to more accurately reflect the metric measured.

62 Not all individuals summoned are required to attend.

63 This categorisation has been amended from the 2022-23 report to more accurately reflect the metric measured.

Law Library Victoria

ABOUT LAW LIBRARY VICTORIA

Law Library Victoria supports the administration of and access to justice and the practice of law by providing comprehensive and authoritative legal information to judicial officers, the profession and the Victorian community.

The Supreme Court Library Committee, chaired by Justice Garde, is augmented by three representatives from other Victorian jurisdictions to form the Law Library Victoria Committee, which manages the Library and oversees its strategic direction.

The Library’s Director is Supreme Court Librarian Laurie Atkinson.

Key points

1

The Library website received a high volume of traffic, with an average of 1,400 visitors per month. Access to the digital collection remained high, with online resources accessed an average of 843 times per day.

2

Engagement with the Library through events, training, and research support remained high, with 5,805 in-person and online enquiries. More than 220 events were attended by more than 2,500 people from around Australia and overseas. The Library provided more than 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) for practitioners, including legal practitioner tours of both the digital and physical collections.

3

Law Library Victoria regional visits included Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon and Mornington. Practitioners and support staff learned more about the Library’s legal research resources, free to Victorian lawyers and available anytime, anywhere.

Overview

Launched in early 2024, the redesigned Library website features a modern interface, improved security and reporting, and easy access to the Library’s collections. New features include a personalised library, specialised area of law collections, and a revamped Library Bulletin with daily updates.

The Library’s education program provided practitioners with more than 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) points. The training was delivered in-person at law firms and in regional centres around Victoria, as well as online via webinars and on-demand videos.

New Rules for the Supreme Court Library were adopted by the Supreme Court in 2024. The *Supreme Court Library Rules 2024* replace the *Supreme Court Library Rules 2019* and the *Supreme Court Library Fund Investment Rules 2021*. The changes streamline library governance, halving the number of individuals involved in library-associated committees. The new Rules are operational from 1 July 2024.

Library snapshot

	2022-23	2023-24
Queries, updates, tours, events and training attendees	134,008	126,711
Website visits and database usage	1,542,409	399,520 ⁶⁴
Judgments published on the Library website	1,134	1,085

⁶⁴ Changes to reporting methods for database and website usage have affected the overall figure for the 2023-24 period.

Collections

Part of the Library's collection policy is to move to electronic resources and away from print titles, creating improved efficiencies. This means that a book that was only available in physical form to a single user can be accessed concurrently by many as an eBook.

Multiple electronic titles were acquired in the 2023-24 year, including:

- ▶ Uniform Evidence Law, 18th edition, 2023
- ▶ Expert Evidence 7th edition, 2023
- ▶ Lawyers' Professional Responsibility, 7th edition, 2020
- ▶ Meagher, Gummow & Lehane's Equity Doctrines & Remedies, 5th edition
- ▶ Jacobs' Law of Trusts in Australia, 8th edition, 2016.

Research support

On-site and digital research support is provided by the Law Library's librarians. The Library provides a dedicated librarian for each court, from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and the Victorian Bar, while legal practitioners are supported by the virtual and physical reference desk.

Research requests and general enquiries range from straightforward to complex. In 2023-24 the Library responded to 5,805 enquiries across all service points.

The Library Bulletin is a free and convenient service that provides the legal community with updates on the law. In early 2024 the Bulletin was revamped and is now available as a webpage with daily updates in addition to a fortnightly email alert.

The Bulletin is one of the most visited pages on the Library website, with more than 13,000 views since its launch. The Bulletin email is distributed to an average of 9,000 recipients every month.

Digital Library

The Library website is the central portal for library services and resources, with daily activity averaging 279 sessions. During 2023-24 there were more than 97,000 visits to the website. The number of legal practitioners registering to use the website increased by 9%.

The Library provides an authoritative and comprehensive digital collection, curated especially for the Victorian legal profession. The collections utilise the combined knowledge and expertise of the Library's staff to provide a quick and easy avenue of research.

The Library provides a publishing service to the Supreme Court on behalf of the Council of Law Reporting in Victoria. Court judgments are processed and published to the Library catalogue, the Library Bulletin, and sent to external publishers, with X (formerly Twitter) alerts providing timely updates and opportunities for the profession to discuss. In 2023-24 the Library published 1,085 judgments.

Engagement

To increase the awareness and reach of services the Library is involved in events, sponsorship and training. The Library presented and participated in more than 260 events and activities that engaged the legal profession, tertiary students, the public and court staff with legal research training and cultural experiences.

Standout events included the Regional Roadshow, Victorian Law Week, Lyrical Lunchtimes, and tours of the Supreme Court Library and the Library website. Overall, more than 2,500 people from across Australia and overseas attended events held by the Library.

Funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, the Law Library conducted a Regional Roadshow, visiting lawyers in Ballarat, Bendigo, Mornington, and Traralgon. These visits provided professional development opportunities, with the goal of enhancing research skills and increasing awareness of the authoritative legal resources available through the Library website.

The Library actively connects with the legal profession online, engaging social media followers with quality research content and timely legal information. The total number of followers across all social media channels grew by 8% from 2022-23.

Email campaigns are regularly sent to registered lawyers. These emails kept practitioners updated about Library resources, services, CPD events, eLearning and the launch of the new Library website. Each campaign reached more than 20,000 Victorian practitioners.



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Supreme Court of Victoria was established in its present form under section 75 of the *Constitution Act 1975 (Vic)*. The Court's governance structures are prescribed in the *Supreme Court Act 1986 (Vic)*.

Overview

The Chief Justice, as the head of the Supreme Court, is responsible for the effective, orderly and efficient execution of the business of the Court while the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) oversees the administrative functions, including ensuring the judiciary are supported to do their work and that Court users have information and guidance on Court process.

Funds in Court is recognised as a support function of the Court and operates as a discrete division under the direction of the Senior Master.

Governance established by law

Council of Judges

The Council of Judges, also established under the *Supreme Court Act 1986 (Vic)* and chaired by the Chief Justice, considers the operation of the Court in compliance with statutory requirements and makes Rules of the Court.

Court Services Victoria

The *Court Services Victoria Act 2014 (Vic)* established Court Services Victoria (CSV) as an independent statutory body corporate to provide services and facilities to Victoria's courts, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Judicial College of Victoria and the Judicial Commission of Victoria. CSV was formed to strengthen the independence of Victoria's courts and tribunals, and to put court administration into the hands of an entity directed by the judiciary.

Internal governance

Judicial Leadership Group

The Judicial Leadership Group provides strategic advice to the Chief Justice on the effective execution of the Court's business. Its members in the reporting period were:

CHIEF JUSTICE

Chief Justice Ferguson

PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

Justice Emerton

PRINCIPAL JUDGE OF THE CRIMINAL DIVISION

Justice Jane Dixon

PRINCIPAL JUDGE OF THE COMMON LAW DIVISION

Justice John Dixon
(until 30 July 2023)

Justice Andrew Keogh
(from 31 July 2023)

PRINCIPAL JUDGE OF THE COMMERCIAL COURT

Justice Delany

PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATE JUDGE

Associate Justice Ierodiaconou

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Michael Carroll
(Acting CEO until January 2024)

Administrative Leadership Group

The Administrative Leadership Group, led by the CEO, supports the administrative functions of the Court, including operations and administration, policy and planning, communications, as well as judicial support and registry services.



APPENDIX

Financial Information

The Supreme Court's financial accounts are published as part of the audited financial accounts of Court Services Victoria (CSV). This information is available in CSV's annual report, by visiting www.courts.vic.gov.au.

Comprehensive operating statement for the financial year ending 30 June 2024

	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Income from transactions		
Output appropriations	42,217	51,358
Special appropriations	44,280	46,831
Grants	45	-
Total income from transactions	86,542	98,190
Expenses from transactions		
Employee expenses and judicial officer remuneration	73,565	76,153
Interest expense	63	216
Grants and other transfers	600	555
Supplies and services	17,725	17,611
Total expenses from transactions	91,954	94,535
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)	(5,412)	3,655
Other economic flows included in net result		
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows	(154)	197
Total other economic flows included in net result	(154)	197
Net result from continuing operations	(5,566)	3,851
Comprehensive result	(5,566)	3,851



SUPREME COURT OF VICTORIA

Supreme Court of Victoria
210 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

supremecourt.vic.gov.au