

Annual Report

2024–25



Queensland Sentencing
Advisory Council

Accessibility

The report provides detailed information about the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's non-financial performance for 2024–25.

Open data

Information about consultancies, overseas travel and the Queensland Language Services Policy is available at the Queensland Government Open Data website (<https://data.qld.gov.au>).

Information about the Council's financial performance is available in the Department of Justice annual report 2024–25 at www.justice.qld.gov.au.

Public availability

An electronic copy of this report is available at: www.sentencingcouncil.qld.gov.au. Printed copies are available using one of the contact options below:

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Feedback

Feedback is important for improving the value of our future reports. We welcome comments, which can be made by contacting us at:

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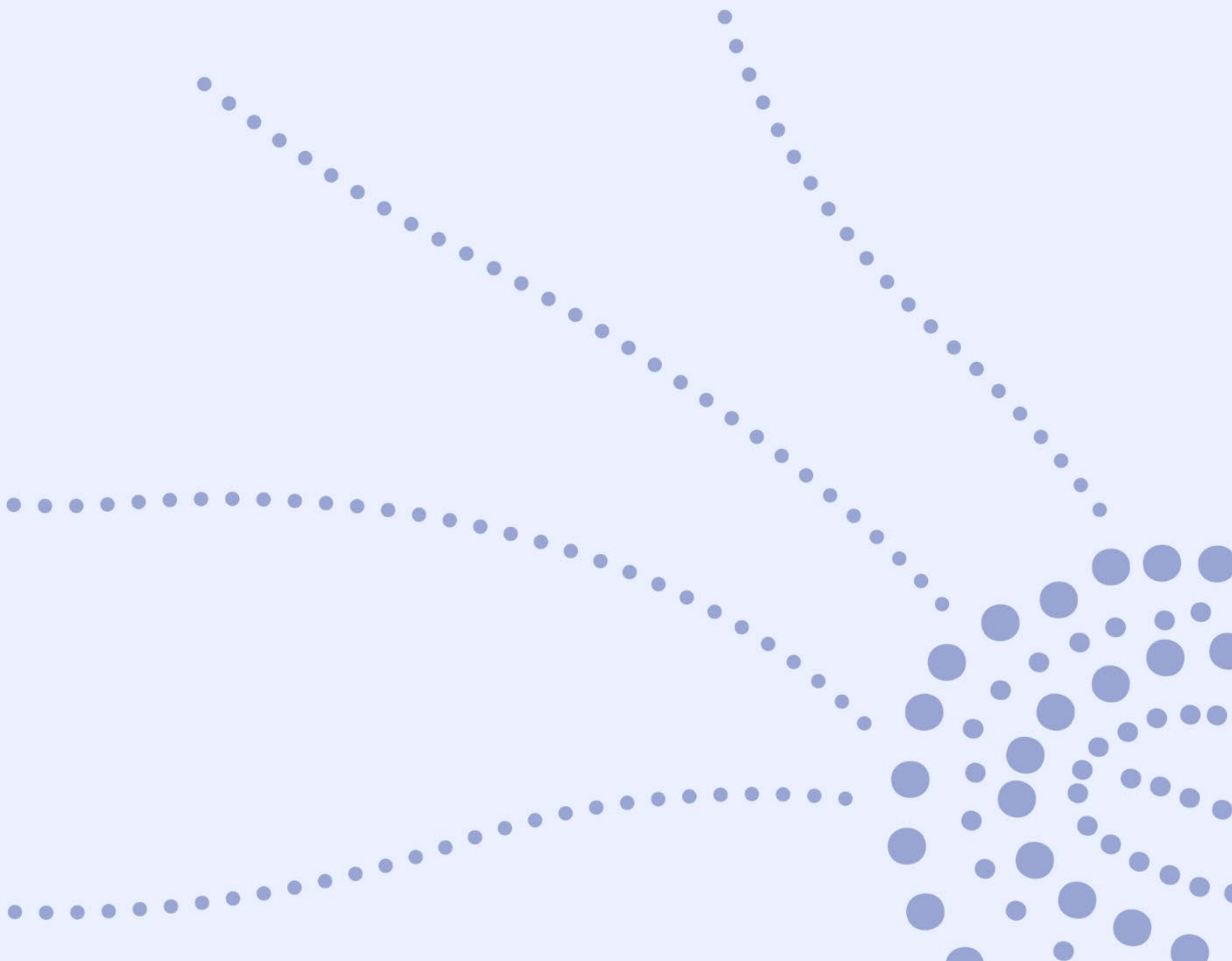
Postal address: GPO Box 2360
Brisbane Qld 4001

General phone: (07) 3738 9499

General email: info@sentencingcouncil.qld.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge and give our respects to the Traditional Owners and Caretakers of this land, where they have performed age-old ceremonies of storytelling, healing, music, dance and celebration. We would also like to acknowledge and give our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council recognises and prioritises the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to address their disproportionate representation in Queensland's criminal justice system. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate artwork *Overcoming Obstacles* by Casey Coolwell was commissioned to embody our commitment to understanding the drivers of over-representation in the Queensland criminal system. To view the artwork please visit [our website](#).



Statement of compliance

10 September 2025

The Honourable Deb Frecklington MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity
GPO Box 149
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Attorney-General,

I am pleased to deliver for presentation to Parliament the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's 2024–25 Annual Report.

I certify this annual report complies with the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided on page 26 and 27 of this annual report.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Ann Lyons AM
Chair
Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council

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Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council

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Chair's foreword



On behalf of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, I am pleased to present the 2024–2025 Annual Report.

The Council continues to establish itself as a respected authority on sentencing-related matters while also prioritising meaningful community engagement. Over the past financial year, the Council has focused primarily on delivering outcomes under both our previous and current Terms of Reference.

In December 2024, we delivered our report to the Attorney-General on how sexual assault and rape offences are sentenced in Queensland. This report, the result of a 19-month investigation, involved extensive research, data analysis, and reviews of case law and legislation, alongside meaningful consultation with stakeholders. It stands as a testament to the Council's commitment to independent research and evidence-based recommendations.

To inform the report, we engaged widely with victim-survivors, advocates, and experts, including prosecutors, defence practitioners, and judicial officers. These conversations gave us critical insights into their experiences and perspectives. Our research uncovered the intricate and often misunderstood nature of sexual violence in Queensland, which remains a largely hidden and underreported issue.

The Council recognised that Queensland's laws must reflect an evolving societal understanding of sexual violence and its enormous impact on victim-survivors. Equally, effective system responses depend on incorporating the perspectives of both victim-survivors and those operating within the justice system.

The Council's insights have already begun to influence future policy and practice. In May 2025, the Queensland Government presented for consideration, significant legislative reforms to the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* (Qld) for violent sexual offences. These reforms include restrictions on the use of 'good character' evidence in sexual offence cases and the introduction of a new aggravating statutory factor, which ensures courts treat sexual assault and rape offences against children with greater severity.

These proposed changes reflect key recommendations from our final report, *Sentencing of sexual assault and rape: The Ripple Effect*, marking an important step forward in addressing sexual violence.

We adjusted our focus in February 2025, intensifying our efforts on the current Terms of Reference about domestic violence offences. To date, we have conducted extensive consultations across regional Queensland, engaging with more than 50 key stakeholders. Our travels to Cairns, Mount Isa, the Torres Strait Islands, Townsville, Roma, Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg have allowed us to listen and gather valuable insights, which will be essential to our review and will be incorporated as part of our final report due to the Attorney-General in February 2026.

Although this work is vital to the Council, we have also been busy with developing other key research and sentencing information products.

In August 2024, we launched our Sentencing DataHub – a groundbreaking online resource that makes sentencing statistics for more than 90 offences accessible to the public. Built entirely in-house, it promotes transparency, improves community understanding of sentencing, and empowers stakeholders with reliable, up-to-date data.

We published two Sentencing Spotlights on murder and manslaughter, diving into the data to explore trends from cases sentenced between July 2005 and June 2024. Importantly, the data tells us that 1 in 4 murder offences are domestic violence offences.

In May this year, we also published a Sentencing Spotlight on contravention of a domestic violence order ahead of our final report on domestic and family violence sentencing reforms. The publication revealed how the justice system responds to first-time offenders compared to repeat offenders, underscoring the continued importance of effective sentencing responses.

We also delivered an updated guide to the sentencing of children in Queensland. The update incorporated the changes made under the Queensland Government's Making Queensland Safer amendments. This updated guide equips the community with a valuable resource that enhances their understanding of sentencing and helps them navigate legal changes with confidence.

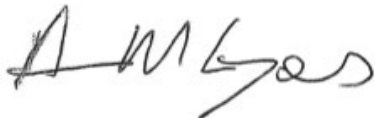
Throughout the year, we continued to facilitate the Council's long-running *Judge for Yourself* sessions for the community and secondary schools.

At the core of our work lies the efforts of a small yet exceptional team of Secretariat staff, whose dedication continues to help the Council achieve its strategic objectives. Your commitment and advice have been truly appreciated.

To the Council members and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, I extend my heartfelt gratitude. Your distinct expertise, fearless advice, grounded in your unique perspectives, have been invaluable.

Although the criminal justice system is often referred to as a single entity, its operation is supported by countless dedicated individuals – from the legal sector and correctional services to healthcare professionals, advocates, and service providers. As Chair, hearing from so many of you across the system this past year has been a privilege, and I am grateful for the time and insight you have volunteered on so many important issues.

The pleasure of serving in this role this past financial year is surpassed only by my absolute confidence in the Council's future achievements.



The Honourable Ann Lyons AM

Chair

Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council

Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council | Annual Report 2024–25

Our organisation

About us

The Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council (the Council) is an independent statutory body, established under the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* (Qld) (PSA). The Council's primary purpose is to provide advice, research, and public engagement on sentencing matters, ensuring transparency and community understanding.

The Council's functions include:

- Advising the Attorney-General on matters relating to sentencing, if asked.
- Providing the community with information to enhance knowledge and understanding of sentencing.
- Publishing information about sentencing.
- Conducting and publishing research on matters related to sentencing.
- Engaging with the community to understand and gather views on sentencing and related issues.
- Giving the Court of Appeal written views about guideline judgments, if asked.

The Council can have up to 14 members, appointed by Queensland's Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney-General. Council members bring diverse skills and expertise, including:

- Criminal law,
- Domestic and family violence,
- Youth justice,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives (at least one member must be an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander), and
- Lived experiences as a victim-survivor of crime (at least one member must meet this criterion).

The Council also works closely with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel (Advisory Panel), which provides independent advice and amplifies the voices of First Nations communities in sentencing reforms.

The Council is supported by a Secretariat of 11 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, employed by the Department of Justice. The Secretariat's expertise spans research, data analysis, media and community engagement, legal policy, and administration.

Our commitment with First Nations peoples

The Advisory Panel, established in November 2018, helps the Council address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland's criminal justice system.

The Advisory Panel:

- Ensures that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are heard.
- Provides insights into the impact of current sentencing practices on these communities.
- Offers valuable recommendations to support reforms that improve outcomes for First Nations peoples.

The Advisory Panel, which meets bi-monthly, comprises up to eight independent members, including experts, practitioners, and advocates.

Our commitment to human rights

The Council aligns its strategies and activities with the *Human Rights Act 2019*, striving to ensure all actions respect, protect, and promote human rights. This commitment is reflected in every aspect of our work during 2024–25.

Vision, purpose, and values

Vision

Just sentencing and community understanding.

Purpose

To inform, engage, and advise the community and government about sentencing in Queensland.

Values

- Evidence-based solutions to justice, fairness and service to the community.
- Respect, promote, and enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience and culture.
- Honest, transparent communication, and collaboration.
- Diversity, equality, recognition and respect.
- Integrity and confidentiality.

Our response to the Queensland Government's objectives for the community

The Council supports the Queensland Government's objectives by:

- Engaging with Queenslanders and promoting understanding of sentencing and its implications.
- Providing key insights by delivering data-driven analysis through our Terms of Reference to inform criminal justice reforms.
- Educating the public by enhancing transparency and awareness of sentencing and legislative changes.

Our strategic objectives in 2024–25

This annual report highlights the Council's achievements under its 2024–25 Strategic Plan, structured around three core pillars: Inform, Engage, and Advise.

Inform — Promoting community understanding of sentencing

Deliver well-designed and innovative sentencing products and make them accessible.

Sentencing Spotlights

In 2024–25, the Council published three Sentencing Spotlights:

- Murder,
- Manslaughter, and
- Contravention of a Domestic Violence Order.

The Spotlight on contravention of a domestic violence order was released during Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month (May). All Spotlights are available via the Council's website and were downloaded 474 times collectively during the financial year.

Guide to the sentencing of children in Queensland

The third edition of the Guide was published in June 2025, reflecting changes to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld) as a result of the *Making Queensland Safer Act 2024*. This updated Guide enhances public understanding of how sentencing for children is determined and builds on the success of the second edition, which recorded over 1,000 downloads during 2024–25.

Inform newsletter

The Council published five editions of its e-newsletter, *Inform*, reaching more than 900 subscribers with an average open rate of nearly 65 per cent. The subscriber base grew by almost 150 readers during the year, providing updates on new initiatives, research, and events.

Sentencing DataHub

In August 2024, the Council launched its Sentencing DataHub, simplifying access to sentencing statistics for academic, legal, and public use. Initially covering 80 offences, it expanded in November 2024 to include over 90 offences, with the DataHub attracting more than 5,300 webpage views by June 2025. This innovation earned QSAC the Innovation Award at the Department of Justice's Divisional Excellence Awards.

Council website

The Council's website saw significant growth, with 69,469 users (up 11.5%) and 180,714 page views (up 17.4%). Improvements to navigation and user experience were implemented, and additional enhancements are planned for 2025–26.

Collaborate with key partners to progress dialogue and understanding on key issues

Progress sentencing dialogue and research

The Council's work was cited 25 times¹ across journal articles, government publications, and parliament reports — an increase from the 9 citations in 2023–24.

Submissions to inquiries, references to the *Sentencing DataHub*, and publications like *Sentencing Spotlights* directly contributed to this increased recognition.

¹ See Appendix 3.

Progress understanding on key issues

In December 2024, the Council submitted its report *Sentencing Sexual Assault and Rape: The Ripple Effect*, to the Attorney-General, following comprehensive consultations with victim-survivors and advocates.

Regional consultation explored the impacts of domestic and family violence sentencing reforms, capturing community feedback to shape an evidence-based response.

More information about the Terms of Reference can be found on page 6.

Quarterly Sentencing Round-up

The Council maintained its *Sentencing Round-up* series, summarising sentencing-related legislative amendments, practice directions, legislative amendments, court decisions, and academic research. All editions are freely available on the Council's website.

Scan the environment for emerging and contentious sentencing issues and respond

We actively monitor the media and sentencing environment and engage with key stakeholders to understand and respond to emerging sentencing issues. The Council also partners with stakeholders, including its Advisory Panel, Practitioners' Forum, and Research Consultative Forum, to anticipate and respond to sentencing-related issues.

Regional feedback highlighted a need for training on sentencing practices, leading the Council to commit to delivering professional workshops in 2025–26.

Promote our role as a sentencing commentator

Contributing to broader sentencing commentary and working with the media

The Council recognises the importance of facilitating informed commentary to ensure well-informed debate around sentencing and its impacts on the community. As part of this role, the Council has actively engaged with the media over the past year, providing valuable insights and data on key issues.

The Council has participated in interviews and/or received media coverage on the following topics:

- Findings and recommendations from the Council's report on the sentencing of sexual violence offences.
- Proposed legislative changes informed by the recommendations in the sentencing sexual violence report.
- Research on sentencing trends related to manslaughter, women's imprisonment rates, domestic violence orders, and sexual offences.
- *Sentencing Spotlight* on contravention of a domestic violence order, including associated data.
- Comparative data between adults and children sentenced to detention.
- Restorative justice practices and their role in sentencing.
- Data insights on children breaching bail.

The Council has also responded to numerous media requests, providing:

- Data and statistics,
- Background information, and
- Contextual insights for story development on sentencing-related matters, particularly related to domestic and family violence.

Engage — gathering views on sentencing

Deliver on engagement strategy, inclusive of regional and remote Queensland

Judge for Yourself program

This program is designed to improve community awareness and promote a better understanding of sentencing.

- Delivered 18 workshops for schools and community groups across Queensland, combining face-to-face and online formats.
- Presented public lunchtime sessions at the Supreme Court Library Queensland, a program set to continue into the next financial year.
- The Judge for Yourself webpage received more than 12,500 views.

The Council also participated in 11 speaking engagements with community groups and schools to discuss sentencing issues.

Community views research

To inform sentencing issues:

- Partnered with the University of the Sunshine Coast to facilitate focus groups on community views regarding rape and sexual assault offences, leading to recommendations for legislative reform.
- Engaged Monash University to explore victim-survivor perspectives on legislative amendments to section 9(10A) of the PSA in relation to sentencing for domestic and family violence.
- Conducted regional consultations in communities such as the Torres Strait Islands, Cairns, Roma and Mount Isa.

Consultation paper and public submissions

The Council released a Consultation Paper on domestic and family violence reforms in March 2025, posing six questions to capture feedback on these practices. Following this, 19 written submissions and more than 50 stakeholder consultations were completed.

More information about the Terms of Reference can be found on page 6.

Social media

The Council used platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with stakeholders.

- Facebook grew by 1.4 per cent, reaching 1,567 followers, while LinkedIn achieved 183.8 per cent growth, ending with 457 followers.
- LinkedIn's audience-building strategy strengthened professional engagement with the legal sector, solidifying the Council's reputation and expanding its reach within this key professional network.

Strengthening stakeholder networks

Research Consultative Forum

The Research Consultative Forum met twice during the year to discuss Terms of Reference projects and research priorities.

Forum members offered feedback on our research projects in relation to both sentencing of sexual assault and rape, as well as sentencing for domestic and family violence. Members also discussed emerging sentencing research and issues.

Practitioner Consultative Forum

The Council met once with the Practitioner Consultative Forum this year, providing an avenue for discussions with judiciary members, legal professionals, and government agencies on practical sentencing challenges.

Annual stakeholder survey

Survey responses from 41 stakeholders highlighted strong performance of the Council in relation to the pillars of inform (78% positive), engage (80.5% positive), and advise (62.6% positive, possibly lower than 2023–24 due to revised question phrasing).

More than 80 per cent of respondents agreed that the Council's resources and publications are credible, and 78 per cent found them useful to stakeholders.

Work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel provided critical input on:

- *Sentencing Spotlight* research in relation to murder, manslaughter and contravention of a domestic and family violence offence sentencing
- The development of the *Sentencing DataHub*.
- Regional consultations for domestic and family violence sentencing reforms.
- The Sentencing of Sexual Assault and Rape: The Ripple Effect report, ensuring culturally safe recommendations.

Advise – provide evidence-based advice on sentencing

Respond effectively and professionally to all Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference – Sentencing sexual assault and rape

Finalised in December 2024, after 19 months of research and consultation, the report delivered 20 key findings and 28 recommendations.

The recommendations received widespread coverage in February 2025, and by May, legislative reforms were proposed into parliament to reflect a number of the Council's recommendations. These included:

- Restricting the use of 'good character' evidence in sexual offences.
- Recognising harm caused to a victim as an express purpose of sentencing.
- Introducing an aggravating factor for sexual assault and rape committed against children.
- Ensuring victims are not disadvantaged if victim impact statements are not provided.

Terms of Reference – Domestic and family violence sentencing reforms

On 17 May 2023, the former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice asked the Council to examine the impact of two important domestic violence sentencing reforms, namely the increase to maximum penalties for the offence of contravention of a domestic and family violence order, and the requirement to treat offences in the context of domestic and family violence as aggravated for the purpose of sentencing.

Key objectives of the review include:

- Reviewing sentencing practices for domestic violence offences following these reforms.
- Evaluating how sentencing trends and outcomes for contravention of a domestic violence order may have changed following the 2015 increase in the maximum penalties.
- Advising on the impact of the aggravating factor on sentencing outcomes across all domestic violence offences.
- Examining whether the aggravating factor is impacting victim satisfaction with the sentencing process.
- Identifying trends or anomalies in the application of the aggravating factor, or in sentencing for domestic violence-related conduct generally, that lead to inconsistencies or hinder the sentencing process.

In March 2025, the Council released a Consultation Paper asking six questions. In response, the Council received 19 written submissions from stakeholders and the broader community.

To capture additional perspectives, the Council embarked on significant regional consultation across Cairns, Mount Isa, the Torres Strait Islands, Townsville, Roma, and the Wide Bay region.

Building on feedback from community consultations and written submissions, as well as the Council's own research and policy analysis, the Council's final report is due to the Attorney-General in February 2026.

Participate in initiatives across the criminal justice system to advise about sentencing

In 2024–25, the Council met with key members of the judiciary to share information about the Council's work and had regular officer-level meetings with Magistrates Courts Service and the Supreme, District and Land Courts Service, and the Queensland Law Reform Commission to share information.

The Council presented to the Applied Research in Crime and Statistics conference in Brisbane, about Compassion in Sentencing, and at the request of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, gave a presentation to a delegation of Korean prosecutors in relation to the sentencing of young children.

Presentations were also given at the Neighbourhood Watch Connection Day in Carrara, about sentencing practices, particularly in relation to youth, and to a Legalwise seminar about the availability of sentencing resources more broadly.

The Council secretariat continued to provide information and advice across the criminal justice system by participating in:

- The Crime Research and Evaluation Network, a government stakeholder group focusing on criminal justice research and evaluation activities
- The Streamlining the Criminal Justice System Committee meetings, and
- Meetings with the Justice Reform Office Data Working Group.

Provide views to the Court of Appeal, if asked, about guideline judgements

The Council was not requested to provide advice on guideline judgments during 2024–25.

Plans and priorities for 2025–26

As the Council starts a new chapter with the appointment of new members, our 2025–26 Strategic Plan will outline key objectives to guide reform, engage with communities, and make meaningful contributions.

Strategic direction

The Council plays a critical role in shaping its strategic direction through:

- Developing and reviewing the Strategic Plan to align with justice priorities.
- Approving research and community engagement plans to address sentencing issues and enhance public understanding.
- Establishing key performance indicators to measure progress and ensure accountability.
- Focus on high-impact initiatives by prioritising significant projects and reforms.
- Oversight of risk management, ensuring effective mitigation strategies are in place.
- Budget management, ensuring resources align with priorities and strategic objectives.

Terms of Reference – Domestic and family violence sentencing reforms

Major deliverables

The Council is committed to delivering its final report on domestic and family violence sentencing reforms to the Attorney-General in February 2026. Key related outputs are likely to include:

- Findings from Monash University's study on victim-survivor perspectives regarding the legislative amendment requiring domestic and family violence offences to be treated more seriously (section 9(10A) of the PSA).
- Research on:
 - The impact of treating domestic violence as an aggravating factor (s9(10A) of the PSA) on sentencing outcomes for a range of different offences.
 - A comparison of sentencing remarks for manslaughter before and after the introduction of section 9(10A) of the PSA.
 - Changes in sentencing trends for contravention of a domestic violence order both before and after the increase to maximum penalties.
 - Examination of the use of short sentences of imprisonment for domestic violence offences.
 - Sentencing for contraventions of a domestic violence order, where it is not the most serious offence sentenced in a matter.
 - Understanding the use of exceptional circumstances, based on a content analysis of sentencing remarks.

Additional research and engagement

Further analysis will include:

- Analysis of sentencing for domestic violence offences.
- Thematic analysis of sentencing submissions and remarks for domestic violence-related offences.
- Stakeholder interviews regarding the aggravating factor and increased penalties for contravention of a domestic violence order.

Other key priorities

Sentencing DataHub enhancements

- Expanding the DataHub to provide insights into the use of custodial sentences, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Developing insights into sentencing and imprisonment rates for women and girls.

Community engagement and training

- Delivering online and in-person sentencing training for community service providers.
- Undertaking a regional engagement program, ensuring sentencing education reaches all Queenslanders.

Supporting journalistic reporting

- Reviewing and updating the *Court reporting guide for journalists* to ensure accurate reporting on sentencing and justice issues.

Improving public resources

- Continuing website enhancements to improve user experience and accessibility.
- Expanding and upgrading online resources with engaging, accurate, and relevant materials.

Research and partnerships

- Strengthening collaborations with universities by hosting students and supporting sentencing-related research projects.
- Developing tailored resources for victim-survivors and offenders to improve understanding.

Expert engagement and analysis

- Continuing engagement with the Research Consultative Forum and Practitioner Consultative Forum to facilitate robust discussion on sentencing issues.
- Advising and engaging with data modelling and crime research working groups to support evidence-based policymaking.

Opportunities and challenges

Access to data and sentencing information

The Council relies on partnerships with external agencies to access Queensland criminal justice data and sentencing information. While these partnerships are strong, limited agency resources and incomplete data sets can create challenges. The Secretariat dedicates significant time and expertise to conducting:

- Data cleaning and analysis,
- Integration of administrative data, and
- Comprehensive reviews of sentencing remarks and submissions for accurate reporting.

Enhancing public understanding of sentencing

A focus for 2025–26 is addressing misconceptions about sentencing by providing high-quality information in clear and engaging formats to improve community understanding and trust in the judicial process.

Regional and remote community engagement

Queensland's vast geographical scale presents challenges in reaching regional, rural, and remote communities. To overcome this, the Council is:

- Including regional members in the Advisory Panel to better represent community views.
- Conducting face-to-face consultations in locations like Cairns, Mount Isa, Torres Strait Islands, and Wide Bay.

- Expanding digital resources and creating video content for state-wide access.

Council and Advisory Panel membership

The Council and the Advisory Panel are strengthened by the diversity and depth of experience their members bring. Vacancies on the Council and on the Panel can be challenging, though new appointments infuse fresh perspectives and renewed momentum into the Council's work.

Attracting and retaining skilled Secretariat staff

The Council's work relies on the highly specialised skills of its Secretariat, including expertise in legal policy, statistical analysis, and community engagement. While we face challenges in recruiting and retaining such talent, the dedication of our Secretariat ensures we continue to deliver robust, evidence-based resources to the community.



Our people

The Council consists of the Council, an Advisory Panel, and a Secretariat, with each group playing a distinct role in fulfilling the Council's functions.

The Council

Members are appointed in their private capacity, based on their professional expertise in areas like criminal justice, legal reform, and victim advocacy. Members may also contribute to Project Boards, which guide governance for major projects such as responding to Terms of Reference.

Council membership

As of 30 June 2024, the Council has 14 members, including a Chair and a Deputy Chair.

Chair: The Honourable Ann Lyons AM, Chair since October 2023.

Membership changes in 2024–25

Significant changes to the Council's membership occurred during the financial year, reflecting both departures and new appointments.

- Departures:
 - Jon Rouse (July 2024) – finalised his role as the Interim Victims Commissioner.
 - Philip McCarthy (August 2024) – appointed as a District Court Judge.
 - Jacob Lodziak (September 2024) – appointed as a Magistrate.
 - Warren Strange (October 2024) – appointed to the Administrative Review Tribunal
- Appointments:
 - Beck O'Connor (July 2024)
 - Kristy Bell (May 2025)
 - Nathan Crane (May 2025)
 - Douglas Wilson (May 2025)

Council biographies (members as at 30 June 2025)

The Honourable Ann Lyons AM, Chair

A graduate of The University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Laws and QUT with a Master of Laws, Ann Lyons was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1977. She has had a distinguished career in criminal law, civil litigation, and the judiciary, including her appointment as a Supreme Court Judge in 2006 and Senior Judge Administrator in 2017. Ann's achievements include being named Woman Lawyer of the Year (2004) for her significant contributions to Queensland's legal profession.

Professor Elena Marchetti, Deputy Chair

A Professor at Griffith Law School, Elena's research focuses on sentencing, justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and domestic and family violence legal reform. She has earned multiple Australian Research Council Fellowships and serves as a co-Director of the Disrupting Violence Beacon. Elena holds several key roles in the justice community, including member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts, Queensland Patron of the Justice Reform Initiative, and editorial board member of the Journal of Criminology.

Other Council members (brief highlights):

- **Beck O'Connor:** Queensland's first Victims' Commissioner, committed to advocating for the recovery and dignity of crime victims.
- **Brett Schafferius:** Assistant Commissioner of Police for the Far North Region, with a strong emphasis on regional justice.
- **Dan Rogers:** Principal at Robertson O'Gorman Solicitors, specialising in human rights and criminal justice reform.
- **Debbie Kilroy OAM:** Justice reform advocate, found of Sisters Inside, and abolitionist for dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex.
- **Douglas Wilson:** Accomplished Barrister, specialising in criminal law and focusing on trial and appellant work in the Supreme and District Courts of Queensland.
- **Jo Bryant:** Former CEO of Protect All Children Today Inc. and a Board Member of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, advocating for the safety and support of vulnerable children.
- **Julie Dick SC:** Former Judge of the District Court with extensive experience in child protection, forensic science advisory roles, and criminal justice reform.
- **Kristy Bell:** Highly regarded criminal defence lawyer, known for her empathetic and discreet approach.
- **Matt Jackson:** Criminal and regulatory law barrister, specializing in human rights and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sentencing reforms.
- **Nathan Crane:** A Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions with leadership in high-profile criminal cases.
- **Sherrie Meyer:** Chair of Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group, passionate about supporting victims and families affected by trauma.
- **Thelma Schwartz:** Principal Legal Officer of Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel plays a critical role in providing insights and advice to the Council on addressing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland's criminal justice system.

The Advisory Panel meets bimonthly. Whilst originally established in November 2018, the Advisory Panel has only been permanent since 2022–23.

Advisory Panel membership

As at 30 June 2024, the Panel has 6 members, including a Chair.

Panel Chair: Thelma Schwartz, Chair since May 2024.

Membership changes in 2024–25

There were two additional members appointed to the Advisory Panel during 2024–25, namely John Cattnach and Helen Akee.

Advisory Panel biographies (members as at 30 June 2025)

Thelma Schwartz, Panel Chair

Thelma is the Principal Legal Officer of Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation providing legal and non-legal support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and survivors of family violence and sexual assault. She was previously a member of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce.

Thelma has worked extensively with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, providing legal services and legal representation as a criminal defence solicitor with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service for over nine years.

Thelma identifies as of Torres Strait Islander heritage alongside her German/Samoan and Papua New Guinean heritage.

Other Council members (brief highlights):

- **Christopher Emzin:** Academic and former Inspector with QPS, specialising in Indigenous practices in justice.
- **Graham White:** Director of Sector Engagement and Communications at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.
- **Helen Akee:** Chairperson of the Keriba-Mina Zenadh Indigenous Corporation, actively engaged in community development and governance.
- **John Cattanach:** Senior Lawyer specialising in child protection and legal access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Professor Kevin Williams:** Adjunct Professor at the University of the Sunshine Coast's School of Law and Society, with academic, legal, and human rights expertise.
- **Laurie Bateman:** Police officer and former trained for disengaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.
- **Stephen Tillett:** Head of the First Nations Justice Office within Department of Justice.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat supports the Council by informing, engaging, and advising Queenslanders on sentencing matters.

Leadership

April Chrzanowski: Appointed as Director in January 2023, April brings expertise in law, criminology, and mathematics, with practical experience in criminal justice policy, evaluation, research, and teaching.

Key functions

Administration: Ensures efficient office management, compliance with departmental requirements, and Council member and staff support.

Research and Statistics: Completes evidence-based research and quantitative analysis to inform policy and community engagement.

Policy: Provides legal expertise and facilitates stakeholder consultations on sentencing reforms and legislative matters.

Media and Engagement: Develops communications strategies to engage the community and raise public awareness about sentencing.

Corporate governance

Meetings and remuneration

Meetings

Council meetings

The Council met 11 times between July 2024 and June 2025.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel meetings

The Advisory Panel met six times during the same period.

Remuneration

Council and Advisory Panel members are remunerated following the Queensland Government's Remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of government bodies policy.

- Total remuneration for Council members (2024–25), including out of pocket expenses: \$47,831.57.²
- Total remuneration for Advisory Panel members (2024–25): \$3,692.25.³

Management and information systems

Our risk management

The Council manages risks using a comprehensive risk register, covering both strategic and operational risks.

- Risks are reviewed quarterly and aligned with the Department of Justice's risk management framework.
- The Council Chair and Secretariat Director oversee risk management and mitigation strategies.
- Using a modified PRINCE2 methodology, the Council identifies and mitigates risks early in project planning, with lessons learned documented during the closure phase.

Internal audit and external scrutiny

The Council complies with the internal audit policy and external scrutiny processes of the Department of Justice.

In 2024–25, the Council was not subject to any major internal audits, reviews, or external review requests.

Information systems

The Council uses the Department of Justice's eDOCS system for secure electronic record management. This system adheres to regulations, including:

- *Public Records Act 2002*,
- Information Standard (Recordkeeping), and
- Information Standard (Retention and Disposal of Public Records).

Staff receive regular training on information and cyber security to protect data and maintain confidentiality.

Recordkeeping

The Council is committed to maintaining accurate records:

- Departmental recordkeeping policies align with the *Public Records Act 2022*.
- Operating Guidelines, updated in October 2024, govern staff responsibility in managing records.

² See appendix 1.

³ See Appendix 2.

Code of Conduct and Public Service Values

Code of Conduct

Council compliance

The Council adheres to its Code of Conduct, compliant with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.

The Code applies to all official duties, including participating in conferences, training events, or work-related social gatherings.

Misconduct or conflicts of interest are handled per Queensland Government procedures.

A copy of the Code of Conduct is available on the Council's website.

Advisory Panel compliance

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel also adheres to the Council's Code of Conduct, which governs their official duties.

Secretariat compliance

As Department of Justice staff, Secretariat members comply with the whole-of-government Code of Conduct, promoting ethical behaviour and accountability.

The Secretariat adheres to the four core principles of ethics, which guide their conduct:

- Integrity and impartiality,
- Promoting the public good,
- Commitment to the system of government, and
- Accountability and transparency.

New members participate in induction training to understand these responsibilities, reinforced by mandatory annual online refresher courses.

Queensland public service values

Secretariat members are also guided by the Queensland Government's public service values:

- Bold but faithful – We approach our work with courage and integrity.
- We deliver – We take responsibility and see things through.
- Back the facts – We use evidence, insight and experience.
- Engage and collaborate – We work together and challenges ourselves and others to achieve great outcomes.
- Lift each other up – We take pride in our work and deliver as one.

Operating Guidelines

The Council follows a governance framework outlined in its Operating Guidelines, which address:

- Roles and relationships,
- Meeting protocols and financial management,
- Confidentiality, declaration of interests, and conflict resolution.

Advisory Panel compliance

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel follows a similar governance framework to ensure consistent operational standards.

Right to Information

The Council did not receive any Right to Information (RTI) requests during 2024–25.

Strategic workforce planning and performance

In 2024–25, the Council underwent no formal organisational change and continued operating under the Justice Policy and Reform division, within the Secretariats Support branch.

Health and wellbeing

As Department of Justice employees, Secretariat staff benefit from:

- Flexible work arrangements, promoting work-life balance.
- Mandatory ergonomics training to support physical health.
- Access to the Benestar Employee Assistance Program.
- Vicarious trauma training to support mental health and resilience.

Professional development

Secretariat staff and Council members:

- Maintain performance development for regular feedback and growth.
- Participate in relevant events, such as professional development courses, cultural capability training, and conferences.

Diversity and inclusion

The Council and Secretariat remain dedicated to building a workforce that reflects the community, promoting an inclusive culture that values the diverse skills and insights of people across genders, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, and abilities.

Early retirement, redundancy, and retrenchment

The Council did not offer any redundancy, early retirement, or retrenchment packages in 2024–25.

Budget

Allocated budget (2024–25): \$1,915,600

Actual expenditure: \$2,193,956

The deficit primarily resulted from expenses related to responding to the Terms of Reference, including significant regional consultation, which were pre-approved to be covered by the DoJ, to enable the Council to ensure high-quality outputs.

Summary of financial performance

The Council is not a statutory body under the *Statutory Bodies Act 1982* or the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (FA Act). Funding for the Secretariat is allocated through the Department of Justice, with the Director-General serving as the accountable officer under the FA Act.

- Comprehensive financial details can be found in the DoJ's annual report: justice.qld.gov.au
- The Council is committed to releasing as much public service data as possible through the Queensland Government's Open Data initiative at: data.qld.gov.au

Consultancies and overseas travel

The Council did not expend any funds on consultancy services during 2024–25.

The Council did not incur any expenses for overseas travel during 2024–25.

Compliance checklist

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s	ARRs – section 7	5
Accessibility	Table of contents	ARRs – section 9.1	6
	Glossary		32
	Public availability	ARRs – section 9.2	2
	Interpreter service statement	Queensland Government Language Services Policy ARRs – section 9.3	2
	Copyright notice	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs – section 9.4	2
	Information Licensing	QGEA – Information Licensing ARRs – section 9.5	2
General information	Introductory Information	ARRs – section 10	7–9
Non-financial performance	Government's objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives	ARRs – section 11.1	10
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs – section 11.2	11–18
	Agency service areas and service standards	ARRs – section 11.3	11–18
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs – section 12.1	22, 25 28, 29
Governance – management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs – section 13.1	19–21
	Executive management	ARRs – section 13.2	19–21
	Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs – section 13.3	N/A
	Public Sector Ethics	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i>	23

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
		ARRs – section 13.4	
	Human Rights	Human Rights Act 2019 ARRs – section 13.5	9
	Queensland public service values	ARRs – section 13.6	23
Governance – risk management and accountability	Risk management	ARRs – section 14.1	22
	Audit committee	ARRs – section 14.2	22
	Internal audit	ARRs – section 14.3	22
	External scrutiny	ARRs – section 14.4	22
	Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs – section 14.5	22
	Information Security attestation	ARRs – section 14.6	22
Governance – human resources	Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1	24
	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment ARRs – section 15.2	24
Open Data	Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	2 25
	Consultancies	ARRs – section 31.1	25
	Overseas travel	ARRs – section 31.2	25
	Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 31.3	N/A
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	N/A
	Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	N/A

Appendix 1: Council members, meetings, and remuneration

Name	Position	Meeting attendance	Approved annual fee	Actual fees received ^a	Out of pocket expenses
Ann Lyons	Chair	6	\$6,240	\$6,480 ^a	\$633.80
Elena Marchetti	Deputy Chair	9	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Kristy Bell	Member (from 6 May 2025)	2	\$4,800	\$738.48	
Jo Bryant	Member	8	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	\$1,578.33
Nathan Crane*	Member (from 6 May 2025)	1			
Julie Dick	Member	7	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Matthew Jackson	Member	8	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Debbie Kilroy	Member	8	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Jackub Lodziak*	Member (until 30 August 2024)	0			
Philip McCarthy*	Member (until 23 August 2024)	2			
Sherrie Meyer	Member	7	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Beck O'Connor*	Member	5			
Dan Rogers	Member	10	\$4,800	\$4,800.12	
Brett Schafferius*	Member	5			
Thelma Schwartz	Member	5	\$4,800	\$5,372.44 ^a	
Warren Strange*	Member (until 14 October 2024)	4			
Douglas Wilson	Member (from 6 May 2025)	2	\$4,800		
TOTAL			\$54,240.00	\$45,619.44	\$2,212.13

* Public sector employees who are not paid fees unless approved by the government.

^a Actual fees received are as received during the current financial year, though may relate to payments due for work completed in the previous financial year.

Appendix 2: Advisory Panel members, meetings, and remuneration

Name	Meeting attendance	Approved fee per meeting	Actual fees received ^a	Out of pocket expenses
Laurence Bateman*	0			
Chris Emzin ^{b, c}	2	\$150	\$300	
John Cattnach	4	\$150	\$600	\$11.25
Thelma Schwartz (Chair) ^{b, c}	6	\$150	\$900	
Stephen Tillett*	3			
Graham White ^c	4	\$150	\$450	
Kevin Williams ^{b, c}	6	\$150	\$900	\$81.00
Helen Akee	3	\$150	\$450	
TOTAL		\$900	\$3,600	\$92.25

* Public sector employees are not paid fees unless approved by the Queensland Government.

^a Actual fees received are as received during the current financial year, though may relate to payments due for work completed in the previous financial year.

^b Meeting fee for June 2024 meeting was paid after close of 2023–24 financial year, so appears in this financial year.

^c Meeting fee for June 2025 meeting was paid after close of 2024–25 financial year, so will appear in next financial years report.

Appendix 3: List of citations

Journal Articles

- Ballin, M., Humphries, K., Lewis, A. ., Rolan, G., & Ronken, C. (2024). Survivor Perspectives on Institutional Use of Child Sexual Abuse Material. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.3581>
- Freiberg, A. (2025). Reflections on 50 years of sentencing reform: The good, the bad and the future. *Alternative Law Journal*, 50(2), 140-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1037969X251323921>
- Hine, K., Davenport-Klunder, K., Creamer, C., Lattas, D., & Burton, K. (2025). From evasion to retaliation: exploring the motivations behind assaults on police. *Policing and Society*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2025.2475134>
- Hull, I., Christensen, L. S., McKillop, N., & Rayment-McHugh, S. (2024). Females' Engagement in Offline and Online Sexual Offending and Their Interactions With the Criminal Justice System: A Gender and Age Comparison. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605241299445>
- Anna Johnson, Myrna Dawson. 2024. Filicide and criminal justice outcomes: Are maternal and paternal perpetrators treated differently?. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.107019>.
- Kuluk, A., Allard, T., Thompson, C. et al. Examining the timing of mental health contacts across female offending trajectories. *Health Justice* 13, 34 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-025-00338-4>
- Dimitra Lattas, Kelly Hine, Catherine Creamer, Kelley Burton, Katelyn Davenport-Klunder (2025) Understanding Youth Assaults of Police Officers in Australia: A Power Threat Meaning Framework Analysis. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. First published: 05 June 2025 - <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.70032>
- Queensland Law Society. QSAC report has 28 recommendations. *Proctor*. 7 February 2025. <https://www.qlsproctor.com.au/2025/02/qsac-report-has-28-recommendations/>
- Queensland Law Society. QSAC seeks input on DFV law changes. *Proctor*. 27 March 2025. <https://www.qlsproctor.com.au/2025/03/qsac-seeks-input-on-dfv-law-changes/>
- Queensland Law Society. Society committee chair joins QSAC. *Proctor*. 6 May 2025. <https://www.qlsproctor.com.au/2025/05/qls-committee-chair-joins-qsac/>
- Richards, K., Miles, G., & Elias, A. (2025). Sexual Offending with Child-Like Sex Dolls in Australia: An Analysis of Court Cases. *Deviant Behavior*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2025.2487627>

Non-Government Publications

- Mizzi, J., Hughes, C., Halsey, M., Cleary, J., Deegan, S., and Goodwin-Smith, I., (2024). Beyond Bars: Exploring Challenges and Solutions to the Problem of Short Custodial Stays in Regional South Australia. Centre for Social Impact, Flinders University. <https://doi.org/10.25957/5r7j-c662>.
- Parker, Megan (2024) Navigating the Paradox: Judicial Decision-Making About Young People Who Sexually Offend. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/251295/>
- Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group Annual Report 2024 <https://qhvs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024-QHVSG-Annual-Report.pdf>
- Rimer, J. R., & Callaway, E. (2024). Costs of online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Australia: An initial review. *International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Australia*. November 2024. <https://snctrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Nov-2024-Costs-of-online-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-in-Australia-full-report.pdf>

Government Publications

Department of Justice. Reporting on the Childrens Court in Queensland: A guide for media representatives. December 2024. <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/4aa3c035-f1dc-4ae9-9a77-124a5716456d/resource/f60c9a4c-3075-46bb-b672-470c4aae9412/download/childrens-court-media-guide.pdf>

Queensland Law Reform Commission. Non-fatal strangulation: Section 315A review. Our Terms of References. Background Paper 1. November 2024. <https://www qlrc.qld.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0005/813866/nfs-background-paper-final-20241125.pdf>

ACT Law Reform and Sentencing Advisory Council. Report into dangerous driving: sentencing and recidivism, Report No 1/2024, September 2024. <https://www.act.gov.au/open/report-into-dangerous-driving-sentencing-and-recidivism>

Parliamentary Reports

Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee. Report No. 13, 57th Parliament – Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2024. 2 August 2024. <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/docs/find.aspx?id=5724T1154>

Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee. Report No. 16, 57th Parliament – 2024-25 Budget Estimates – Volume of Additional Information. 9 August 2024. <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/docs/find.aspx?id=5724T1182>

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee. Report No. 1, 58th Parliament - Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024. 6 December 2024. <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/docs/find.aspx?id=5824T0225>

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee. Report No. 9, 58th Parliament - Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025. 16 May 2025. <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/docs/find.aspx?id=5825T0458>

Appendix 4: Glossary

Term	Meaning
Advisory Panel	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel
ARRs	Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies
DoJ	Department of Justice
eDOCS	Online document and record management system
FAA	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i>
FPMS	Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019
FTE	Full-time equivalent
PRINCE2	Projects In Controlled Environments
PSA	<i>Penalties and Sentences Act 1992</i> (Qld)
QPS	Queensland Police Service
The Council	Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council
ToR	Terms of Reference



Queensland Sentencing
Advisory Council

sentencingcouncil.qld.gov.au