



DISTRICT COURT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2017

Annual Review

CONTENTS

FROM THE CHIEF JUDGE	1
THE DISTRICT COURT AT A GLANCE	3
OUR JUDGES	4
CRIMINAL JURISDICTION	5
Lodgments	5
Finalisations	7
Sentencing	8
Matters on Hand	9
The District Court on Circuit	10
Initiatives	11
CIVIL JURISDICTION	12
Caseload	12
Lodgments	12
Finalisations	13
Cases on Hand	15
Appellate Jurisdiction	15
OTHER HIGHLIGHTS	16
DISTRICT COURT COMMITTEES	17
as at 31 December 2017	

FROM THE CHIEF JUDGE



Kevin Sleight

Chief Judge, District Court of Western Australia

I am pleased to present the 2017 Annual Review of the District Court of Western Australia.

The Criminal Jurisdiction

The total number of criminal matters committed to the District Court for trial and sentence in 2017 was 2,602, an increase of 4% over the past 12 months and an increase of 31.3% over five years. As at the end of 2017 there were 1,934 cases on hand (that is, waiting to be dealt with). This is an increase of 14.6% on the number of cases on hand at the end of 2016. Over five years the number of cases on hand has increased by 91.1%.

Of particular concern, is the increase in the number of persons waiting to be sentenced at any one time. As at the end of 2017 the number of people waiting to be sentenced was 981. Many of these people had been remanded in custody awaiting sentence. The median delay in sentencing increased from 24 weeks in 2016 to 26 in 2017 (an increase of 18.2%). The increase over five years has been 73.3%.

In 2017 the Court conducted 498 criminal trials compared with 507 in the previous year. However, the complexity and length of trials has increased. In 2017 there were 67 trials of six days or more compared with 49 in the previous year (an increase of 36.7%).

In 2017 there was a substantial increase in directions hearings. The main reason for the increase is the number of cases where the State applies under section 31A of the *Evidence Act 1906* (WA) to lead propensity evidence at an accused's trial. In 2017 there were 359 directions hearings compared with 275 in 2016 (an increase of 30.5%). Over five years the increase has been 71%. These directions hearings place a substantial demand upon judicial resources.

The Civil Jurisdiction

In 2017 there were 5,336 civil lodgments, a slight decrease from 2016 when there were 5,370 civil lodgments. However over a five year period the number of lodgments has increased by 13%. In 2017 the number of civil matters finalised was 5,136, again a slight decrease on 2016 when 5,177 were finalised. However, over a five year period the finalisation number has increased by 8.7%.

There were 47 civil trials conducted in 2017 compared with 49 in 2016.

Child Witnesses

The District Court is conducting an increasing number of trials of sexual offences which involve young children giving evidence. Many of these children are very young – some as young as four or five years of age. These children are being asked to give evidence in an adult world in which the children are potentially seriously disadvantaged in giving their evidence. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recognised this disadvantage and has recommended in its Criminal Justice Report that State and Territory governments establish an intermediary scheme similar to that in operation in England and Wales. The intermediary scheme involves children and other vulnerable witnesses being assessed by an appropriately qualified person (an intermediary) who provides to the Court a written assessment as to the communication skills of the witness. Most often the intermediary is a qualified speech therapist. Prior to the

witness giving evidence in court, the Court conducts a ground rules hearing with counsel at which the communication assessment report is discussed and the Court establishes ground rules or guidance for counsel in relation to the manner in which the witness is to be questioned. The intermediary also assists the Judge during the taking of the evidence by giving advice concerning the level of understanding of the child of questions asked. The scheme has been highly successful in England and Wales and is currently being piloted in New South Wales. A steering committee has been established in Western Australia, chaired by me, which will make recommendations to the Western Australian Government as to the implementation of such a scheme in Western Australia. It is hoped that by the end of 2018 an intermediary scheme will be operational in the District Court.

The Royal Commission has also recommended that the evidence of all children and other vulnerable witnesses in sex abuse cases be pre-recorded prior to trial. In 2017 the Court conducted 103 hearings pre-recording the evidence of children and vulnerable witnesses. This compares with 45 such hearings in 2013, an increase of 220%. This reflects the increase in sexual abuse cases and a more liberal approach taken by the Court as to the circumstances when an order will be made to pre-record the evidence of a child or vulnerable witness.

Judicial Workload

The number of hearings and the increase in the length and complexity of trials, particularly in the criminal jurisdiction, have created a substantial increase in the workload of the Judges of the Court. Over a five year period the aggregate annual sitting time has increased by 17.8%. This workload is unsustainable. This increase in sitting times does not take into account the increase in the time spent out of court preparing for trials, preparing for sentencing and writing decisions. An interesting statistic which demonstrates the increase in the workload of Judges out of court relates to consent orders. In the criminal jurisdiction in 2013 the number of consent orders made was nine. In 2017 the number of consent orders made was 839. To address the workload issues, arrangements were made in 2017 to provide Judges with additional time out of court.

Additional Resources

In 2017 the Western Australian Government recognised the workload of the District Court and agreed to provide an additional two Judges. These two additional Judges were commissioned in December 2017 and commenced sitting in January 2018.

I express my appreciation to the Western Australian Government for recognising the substantial increases in the workload of the District Court over a number of years. The provision of additional Judges will enable the Court to tackle the backlog of criminal cases and also relieve the workload on the Judges.

Retirement and Movements of Judicial Officers

On 9 October 2017 his Honour Judge David Parry ceased sitting in the District Court and returned to the State Administrative Tribunal. On the same date her Honour Judge Belinda Lonsdale commenced as a Judge of the District Court, replacing Judge Parry as a Judge sitting in the District Court.

On 31 December 2017 her Honour Judge Anette Schoombee retired from the District Court. I thank Judge Schoombee for her time on the Court. Her Honour Judge Fiona Vernon replaced Judge Schoombee as from 9 January 2018.

As mentioned earlier the Western Australian Government has appointed two additional Judges in response to the workload of the Court. The appointment of these two new Judges was announced in December 2017 and took effect from 9 January 2018. The two new Judges appointed were his Honour Judge Hylton Quail and her Honour Judge Kathleen Glancy.

On 5 July 2017 Registrar Lyn Wallace retired. Registrar Wallace had been a Registrar of the Court for excess of 30 years. I wish to acknowledge and thank her for her lengthy service to the District Court.

Contributions to the Court

I have already mentioned the substantial increase in the workload upon the Judges. However, that increase in workload is not confined to the Judges. It has also been experienced by the Registrars and all of the court staff. I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone for their hard work. It provides the foundation for the Court providing justice to persons appearing before the Court.

Because of the increase in the workload of the Court, the Executive Manager Su Owen, and other managers within the registry have undertaken a major review of the internal structure of the registry and, in 2018, a restructuring project will be implemented which is hoped will provide greater efficiencies.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Judges, Registrars and staff who sit on the numerous internal and external committees which enable the Court to conduct its business efficiently.

Kevin Sleight

Chief Judge, District Court of Western Australia

THE DISTRICT COURT AT A GLANCE

Our 2017 achievements

- The increase in the criminal workload continued with the median time to criminal trial for matters committed to the Court increasing to 35 weeks (an increase of 3% on top of the 9.7% on the previous year). The median time to sentence for matters committed to the Court increased to 26 weeks; an increase of 18.2% on top of the 22.2% on the previous year).
- Used video-conferencing facilities to prisons to deal with 740 persons in custody which equated to approximately 245 hours of courtroom usage. This results in savings in the Department of Justice – Corrective Services' costs of transportation and saves persons in custody from the inconvenience of unnecessary trips to court.
- Continued to finalise 70% of all new civil cases within 12 months of lodgment.
- Continued the implementation of eFile processes for all new civil cases.

Our 2018 priorities

- Reducing median time to sentence.
- Mandating eLodgment in the civil jurisdiction through the eLodgment portal for all legal professionals and embedding the court user, procedural and process changes necessary to support its success.
- Implement the new structure for District Court administration to support the changing work environment of the Court.

Our jurisdiction

Criminal:

All matters that must be tried before a jury, or judge alone, except those for which the maximum term of imprisonment that can be imposed is a life sentence; although, in 2017, the *District Court of Western Australia Act 1969* was amended to extend the jurisdiction of the District Court to impose a sentence of life imprisonment for a serious methylamphetamine crime.

Civil:

General claims for liquidated sums, debt or damages up to \$750,000 and unlimited jurisdiction for all personal injury claims.

Appellate: Appeals from:

- Magistrates exercising civil jurisdiction;
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Assessors; and
- Arbitrators under Part XI of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*.

Our areas of operation

Perth					
Albany	389km from Perth	Carnarvon	814km	Kalgoorlie	544km
Broome	1664km	Derby	1770km	Karratha	1275km
Bunbury	155km	Esperance	592km	Kununurra	2214km
Busselton	193km	Geraldton	370km	South Hedland	1304km

Our workload

- 467 criminal trials including 99 circuit trials
- 1,253 people committed for trial from Magistrates Court
- 1,345 people committed for sentence from Magistrates Court
- 47 civil trials
- 4,774 new actions commenced by writ
- 119 appeals determined
- 2,134 civil mediations and pre-trial conferences

Our people

- 28 judges (4 serving in other jurisdictions)
- 5 registrars
- 36.8 court administration staff
- 53 judicial support staff

Our budget

An amount of \$23.3M

OUR JUDGES

The following were the Judges of the Court as at 31 December 2017:

Chief Judge

His Honour Judge Kevin Frederick Sleight

Judges

His Honour Judge Denis John Reynolds
His Honour Judge Philip Richard Eaton
His Honour Judge Philip Pierre McCann
Her Honour Judge Julie Anne Wager
His Honour Judge Andrew Steven Stavrianou
Her Honour Judge Troy Denise Sweeney SC
His Honour Judge Bruce James Hamilton Goetze
His Honour Judge Michael John Bowden
Her Honour Judge Anette Margret Ilse Schoombee
His Honour Judge Christopher Peter Stevenson
His Honour Judge Stephen George Scott
Her Honour Judge Felicity Clare Earls Davis
His Honour Judge Patrick Brian O'Neal
His Honour Judge Simon Elliot Stone
His Honour Judge John Gerard Staude
His Honour Judge Ronald Edward Birmingham QC
His Honour Judge Anthony Samuel Derrick SC
His Honour Judge Timothy Sharp
Her Honour Judge Audrey Gillian Braddock SC
His Honour Judge David Ronald Parry
His Honour Judge Robert Enos Cock QC
His Honour Judge Mark Edward Herron
Her Honour Judge Vicki Laura Stewart
His Honour Judge Laurence Mark Levy SC
Her Honour Judge Linda Petrusa SC
His Honour Judge Michael John Gething
His Honour Judge Alan Laurence Troy
Her Honour Judge Belinda Jane Lonsdale

Other appointments held by Judges of the District Court of Western Australia

The following District Court Judges are not available to the Court as they are engaged for the appointment indicated below:

His Honour Judge DJ Reynolds	President, Children's Court of WA
His Honour Judge T Sharp	Deputy President, State Administrative Tribunal
His Honour Judge DR Parry	Deputy President, State Administrative Tribunal
His Honour Judge RE Cock QC	Chairperson, Prisoners Review Board

Judicial retirements since December 2016

Her Honour Judge Anette Margret Ilse Schoombee retired on 31 December 2017.

Judicial appointments since December 2016

Her Honour Judge Belinda Jane Lonsdale was appointed on 9 October 2017.

Judicial movements since December 2016

His Honour Judge David Ronald Parry returned to the State Administrative Tribunal as Deputy President on 9 October 2017.

Registrars as at 31 December 2017

Principal Registrar	Shane Melville
Registrar	George Augustus Kingsley
Deputy Registrar	Simon Peter Harman
Deputy Registrar	Richard John Hewitt
Deputy Registrar	Jacquie Kubacz

Registrar retirements since December 2016

Registrar Lyn Wallace retired on 5 July 2017.

CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

The Court deals with all serious criminal offences that must be tried before a judge and jury, or a judge sitting alone, except those for which the maximum term of imprisonment that can be imposed is life imprisonment. However, in 2017, the *District Court of Western Australia Act 1969* and the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1981* were amended to extend the jurisdiction of the District Court to impose a sentence of life imprisonment for a serious methylamphetamine crime, including attempts to commit and conspiracy to commit such crimes.

Prosecutions determined by the Court include serious assaults, sexual assaults, serious fraud, commercial theft, burglary and drug related offences.

Please note that figures may differ slightly from those previously published due to regular data integrity checks.

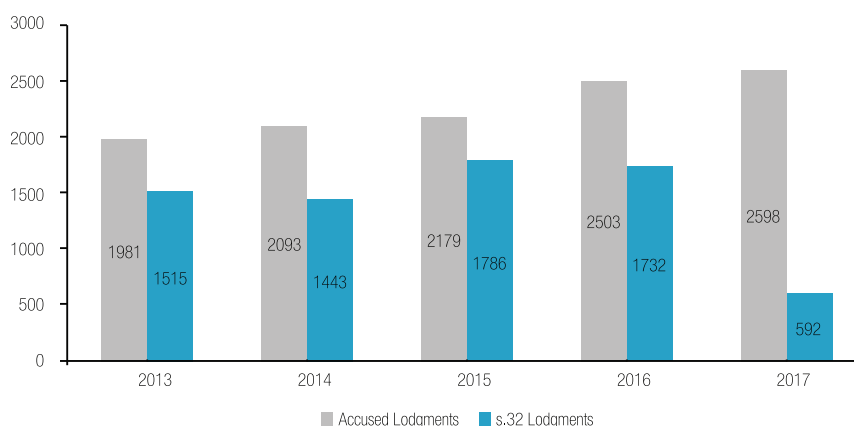
LODGMENTS

Criminal lodgments increased in 2017 with 2,598 new accused matters lodged, a 3.8% (95 matters) increase when compared with 2,503 matters in the previous year.

Included in Graph 1 below is the number of summary charges requested by accused persons, pursuant to a section 32 *Sentencing Act 1995* notice, to be dealt with by the Court when sentencing. This procedure allows an accused who is to be sentenced following conviction in the District Court, to request to be sentenced by the sentencing judge on any outstanding summary charges to which they have pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court.

In 2017 there were 592 Section 32 charges lodged, 1,140 or 66% less than the 1,732 lodged in 2016. The significant reduction is a result of a change of procedure within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Western Australia whereby consent was removed for charges unrelated to an indictable offence being brought up to be dealt with before the District Court on a Section 32 notice.

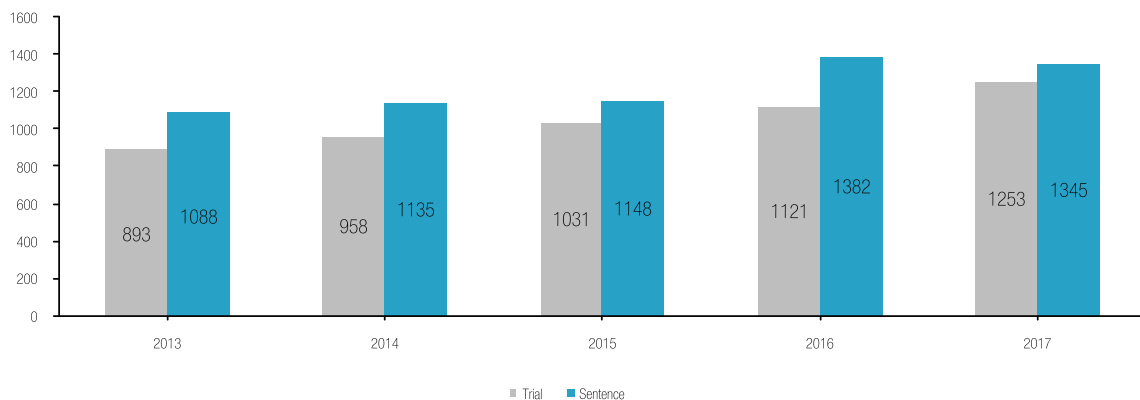
Graph 1 Accused Matters and Section 32 Charges Lodged



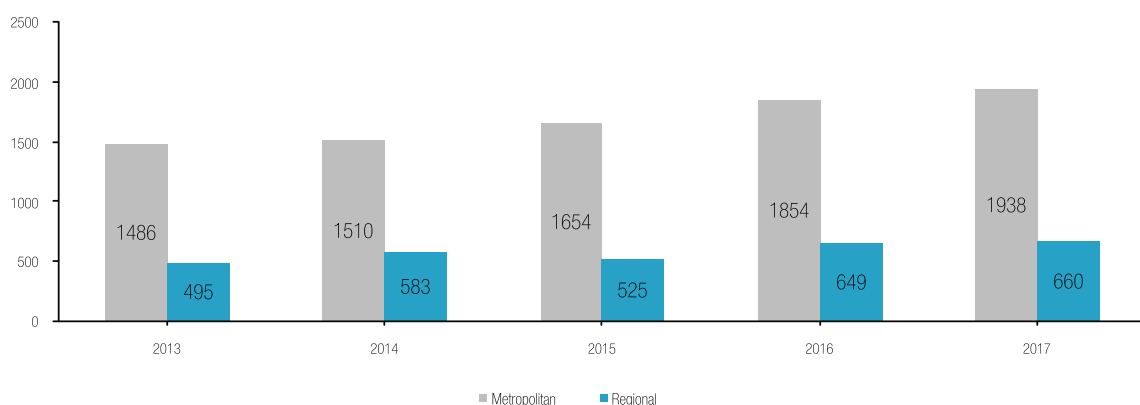
Graph 2 below, illustrates the division in the Court's work between matters committed for trial and those committed for sentence. There were 132 (12%) more committals for trial lodged with the Court in 2017 than in the previous year. There were 37 (3%) fewer committals for sentence lodged with the Court in 2017 than in the previous year.

Graph 3 below, displays the spread of the Court's criminal workload in relation to accused matters lodged, as between the metropolitan area and the 12 regional locations to which the Court circuits. It illustrates an increase in metropolitan (84) and an increase in circuit (11) lodgments, with an overall increase of 95 accused matters lodged.

Graph 2 Accused Lodgments by Committal Reason



Graph 3 Accused Lodgments by Region



FINALISATIONS

There were 2,379 criminal matters finalised in 2017, 131 (6%) more than the 2,248 in 2016.

A greater number of matters were lodged (2,598) than were finalised (2,379) which resulted in the Court achieving a clearance index of 91.6%, a slight increase on the clearance index of 90% achieved in 2016.

The majority of the Court's judicial resource is concentrated in the criminal jurisdiction of the Court, undertaking activities associated with the conduct of criminal trials.

A total of 923 criminal matters were listed for trial state-wide, similar to the 929 listed last year. Of these matters 467 proceeded, being 51% of the matters listed and 2% (9) more than the 458 conducted in 2016.

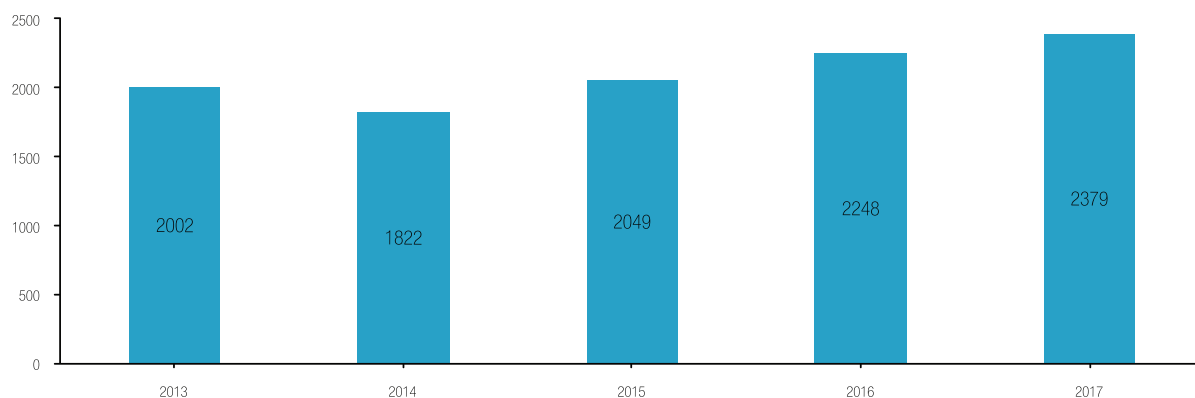
The major reason for trials not proceeding when listed are late pleas of guilty, discontinuances, or adjournments.

It is the Court's practice to list more matters in a month than can actually be heard. This enables the Court to compensate for the high rate of trials that don't proceed for the reasons previously mentioned. Listing in this manner ensures the optimisation of judicial resources and the attendance of jurors is not wasted.

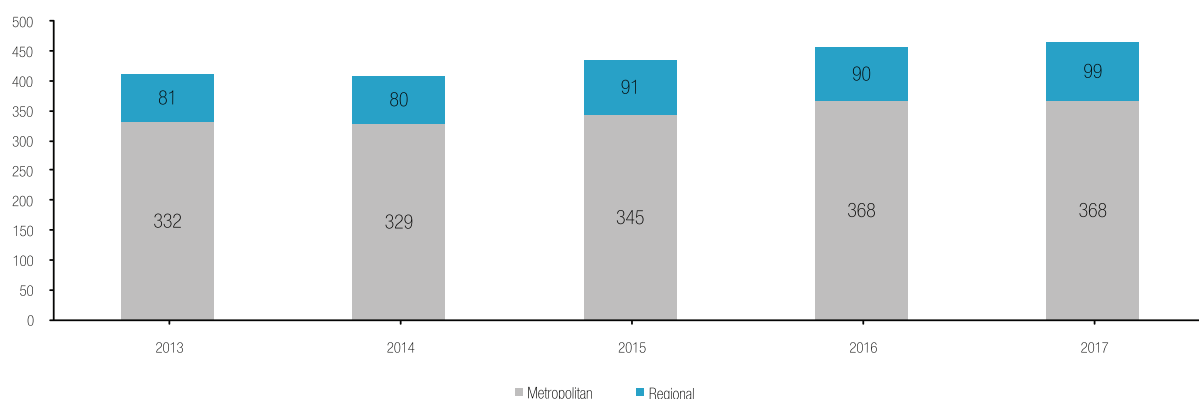
The average length of all trials state-wide is 4.09 days, 0.25 (6%) higher than the 3.84 days in 2016.

The average length of the 368 criminal trials conducted in Perth during 2017 was 4.31 days, 0.37 (9.6%) higher than the 3.93 days in 2016.

Graph 4 Accused Matters Finalised



Graph 5 Criminal Trials Proceeding



NB: The data collection for the compilation of this graph has now been automated. This has resulted in differences to data presented in previous years.

In 2017, there were 137 trials conducted state-wide where the trial duration was 5 days or greater, 30 more than 2016. Accommodating lengthy trials can be resource intensive for the Court, with additional time being taken up with the case management of the many issues that arise in the period leading up to trial.

Graph 6 illustrates the Court's median delay to criminal trial since 2013, with the 12 month moving average recorded as 35 weeks in December 2017. Median trial delay measures the period in which an accused person waits for their first trial date in the District Court, following committal by the Magistrates Court.

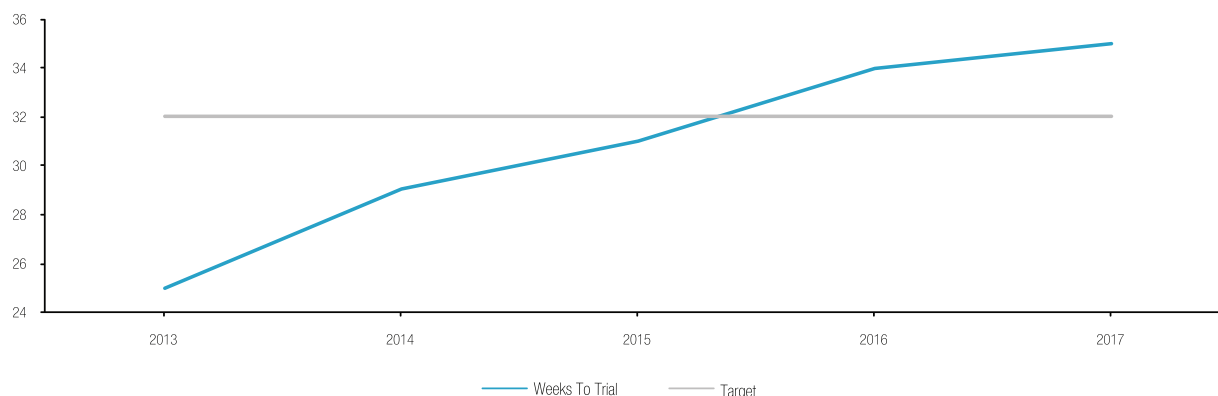
The criminal trial delay target is 32 weeks. The increase above target to 34 weeks in 2016 and 35 weeks in 2017 is primarily due to the growth in committals for trial.

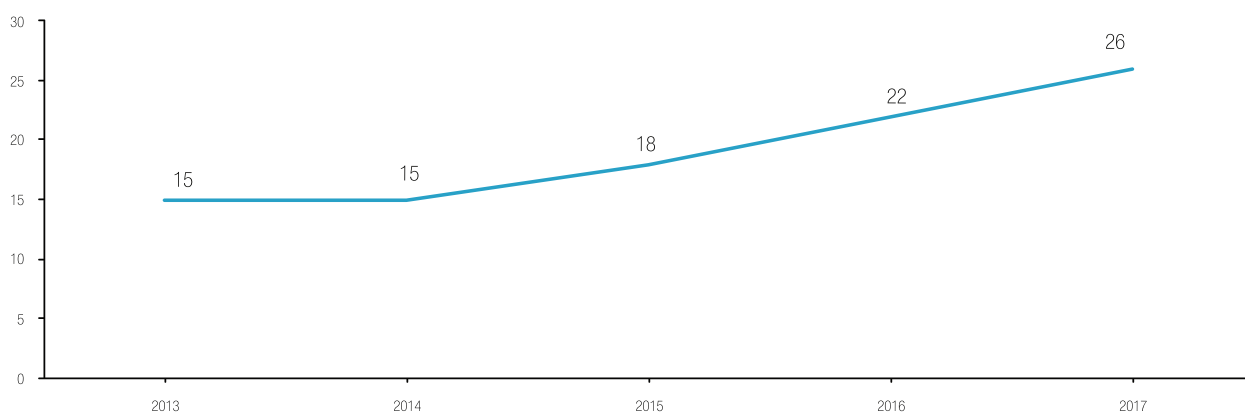
SENTENCING

Of the 2,379 accused matters finalised in 2017, 1,892 resulted in a sentence being handed down. This is an increase of 126, or 7.1%, when compared with the 2016 figures of 1,766 being sentenced.

An accused person, who pleads guilty to an indictable offence/s in the Magistrates Court and is committed to the District Court for sentence, can expect to appear at a sentence mention hearing around eight weeks after the date of their committal. An appearance at a sentence mention hearing is before a Registrar who ensures that the prosecutor has filed an indictment, that a pre-sentence report is available if required (or is in the process of being prepared) and that in all other respects the matter is ready to proceed to a sentencing hearing.

Graph 6 Median Trial Delay Trend



Graph 7 Median Sentence Delay Trend

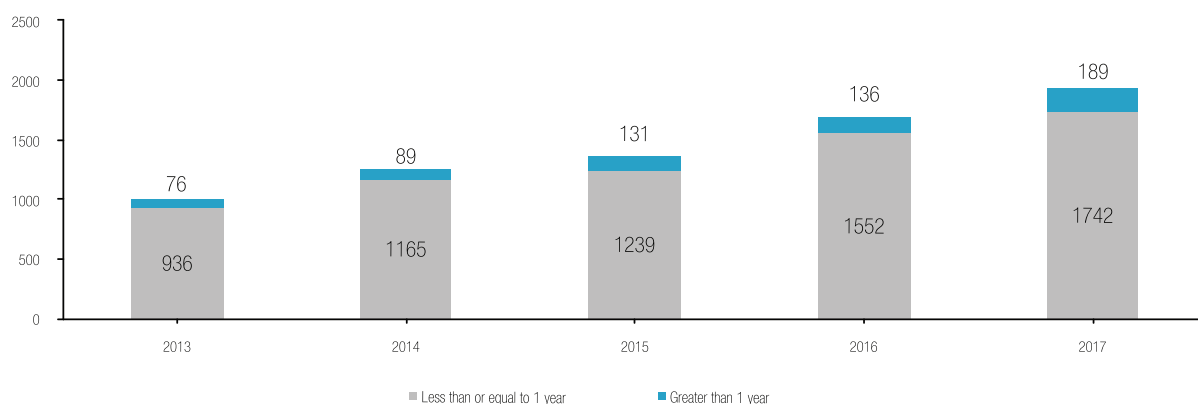
Sentencing matters are listed in dedicated lists before a Judge on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays of each week.

The Court's median delay to sentence is illustrated in Graph 7. It is the measurement in weeks between the date of committal from the Magistrates Court and the first planned sentencing hearing in the District Court.

The median delay for 2017 is 26 weeks, four weeks more than in December 2016.

MATTERS ON HAND

There are 1,931 criminal matters on hand, 243 (14%) more than the 1,688 in 2016. This increase is primarily due to the increase in lodgments as explained earlier. Of the matters on hand as at 31 December 2017, 90% were less than or equal to 12 months in age, similar to the previous year.

Graph 8 Criminal Matters on Hand

THE DISTRICT COURT ON CIRCUIT

The District Court is committed to the delivery of fair, equitable and accessible justice services for all citizens of Western Australia. Therefore, in addition to the main registry of the Court which is located within the Perth central business district, the Court conducts criminal circuits to the regional locations of Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Busselton, Carnarvon, Derby, Esperance, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Kununurra and South Hedland.

Court facilities at these locations vary as to their suitability for the conduct of criminal trials by a judge and jury. Regional court buildings are regularly monitored on behalf of the Department of Justice, as to their utility, by resident staff of the Magistrates Court.

The assistance provided by Magistrates Court staff to Judges and their personal staff when on circuit throughout the State is acknowledged and appreciated by the District Court.

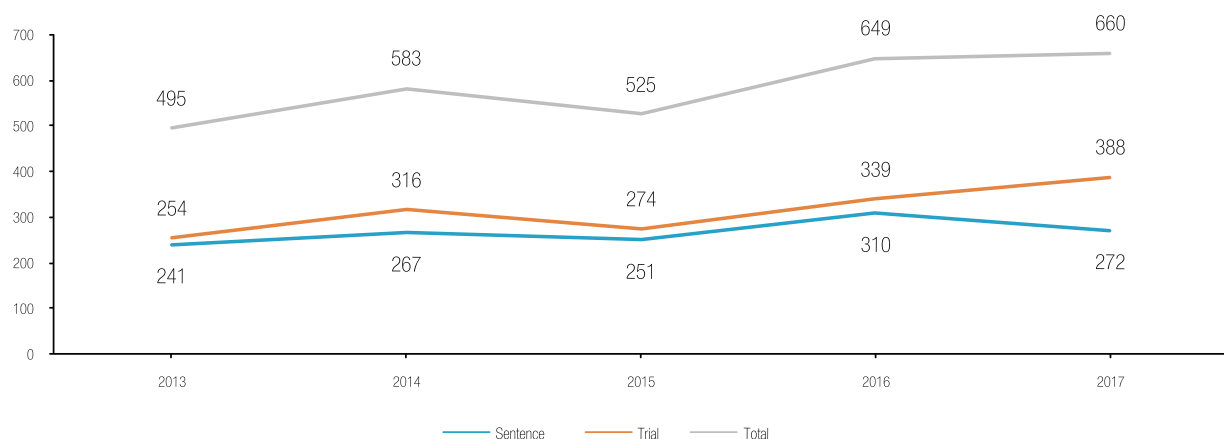
The average length of a criminal trial at circuit locations visited by the Court during 2017 was 3.27 days slightly less than the 3.48 days in 2016.

Trial dates were allocated for 152 circuit trial matters during the year, 7% or 10 matters more than 2016. Ninety-nine of those matters, or 65%, proceeded to a trial. This was 9 matters more than last year.

The median delay to criminal trial at circuit locations is illustrated in Graph 10. The 12 month moving average as at the end of December 2017 was 37 weeks. This is a one week increase on the 36 weeks recorded in December 2016.

Circuit Criminal Lodgments					
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sentence	241	267	251	310	272
Trial	254	316	275	339	388
Total	495	583	525	649	660

Graph 9 Circuit Criminal Lodgments



INITIATIVES

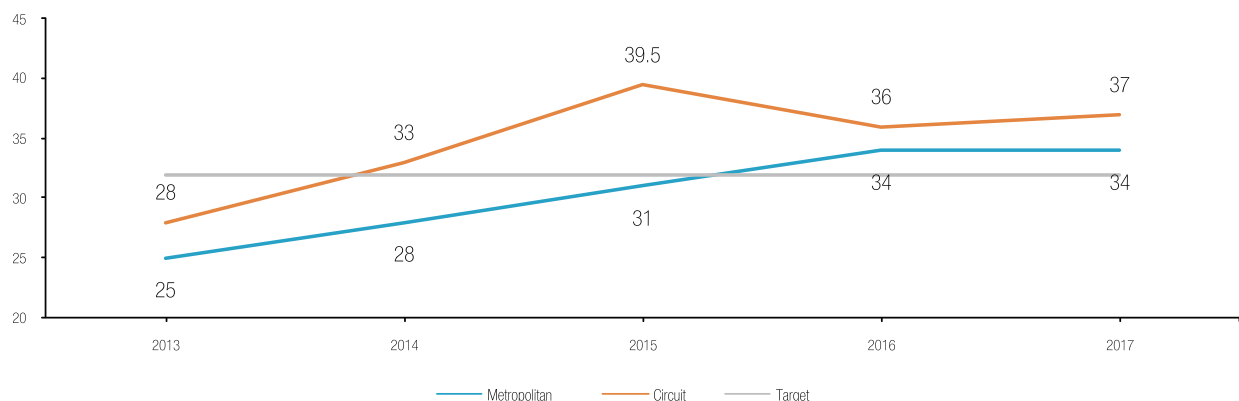
The District Court's Consolidated Practice Directions & Circulars to Practitioners in the Court's criminal jurisdiction were reviewed, updated and published on the District Court website in November 2017. Changes largely related to referencing and reflecting new technology practices.

An upgrade to technology in Karratha Court completes the program which provides for running transcript for all criminal trials in all circuit locations.

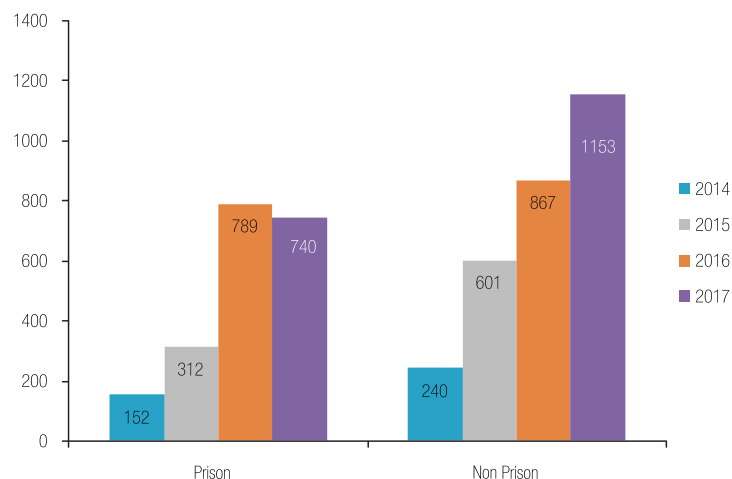
The use of video-conferencing facilities continued. A slight reduction in the number of prison links was more than offset by a significant increase (32%) in non-prison links. This increase was predominantly made up of a 40% increase in the number of court to court links and a 27% increase in the number of interstate links.

A program to convert video signal transmission from analog to digital providing higher quality video-conferencing and evidence playback has commenced. The courts upgraded are Carnarvon Court, Geraldton Court, Kalgoorlie Court, Karratha Court, Kununurra Court and South Hedland Court.

Graph 10 Median Trial Delay Trend Metro -v- Circuit



Graph 11 Number of Video Links – Prison and Non Prison



CIVIL JURISDICTION

The District Court's civil jurisdiction is to hear and determine claims for liquidated sums up to \$750,000. The Court has unlimited jurisdiction in claims for damages for personal injury. In practice it hears all damages claims for injuries sustained in motor vehicle accidents as the Magistrates Court does not have jurisdiction to deal with those claims.

Please note that figures may differ slightly from those previously published due to regular data integrity checks.

CASELOAD

The Court's civil caseload in 2017 continued to be heavily weighted in favour of personal injury claims with the majority arising from workplace accidents and motor vehicle accidents.

Most personal injury cases settled at a pre-trial conference, either following discussions between the parties or with the assistance of a Registrar, acting as a mediator. The Court's aim is to set down a personal injury action for a pre-trial conference within six months of the action commencing.

The remainder of the Court's civil business comprises commercial cases that include debt recovery, disputes over the sale of businesses and the operation of leases. Commercial disputes are case managed by Registrars

of the Court by convening directions hearings, making programming orders and progressing cases towards resolution. It is the Court's aim to ensure that the parties to an action participate in a mediation conference with the aim of settlement, at the earliest possible time after they come into possession of information that will allow for meaningful discussion.

The Court has appellate jurisdiction for appeals from the decisions of other Courts and Tribunals, as follows:

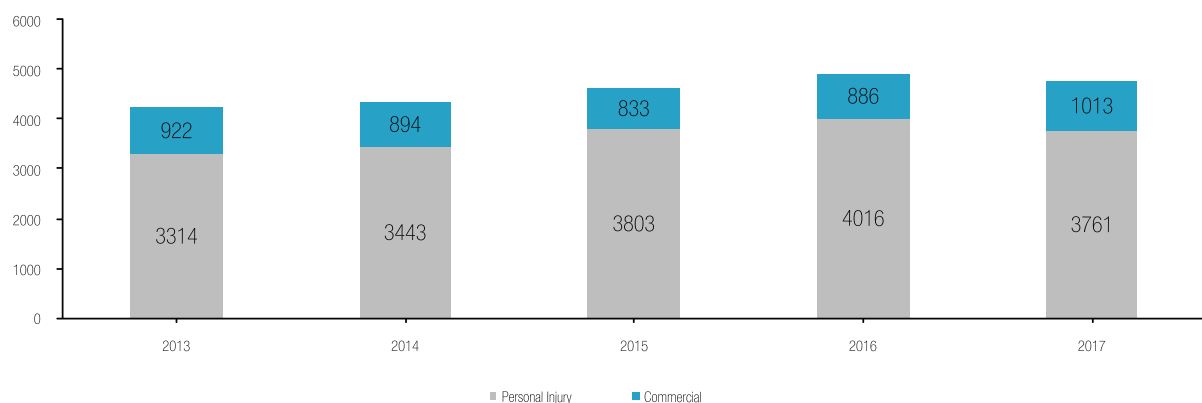
- Appeals from the decisions of Magistrates sitting in the civil jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court (includes appeals against restraining orders, either made or refused);
- Appeals against the decisions of Assessors of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal for awards or non-awards to victims of crime; and
- Appeals from the decisions of arbitrators made under Part XI of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*.

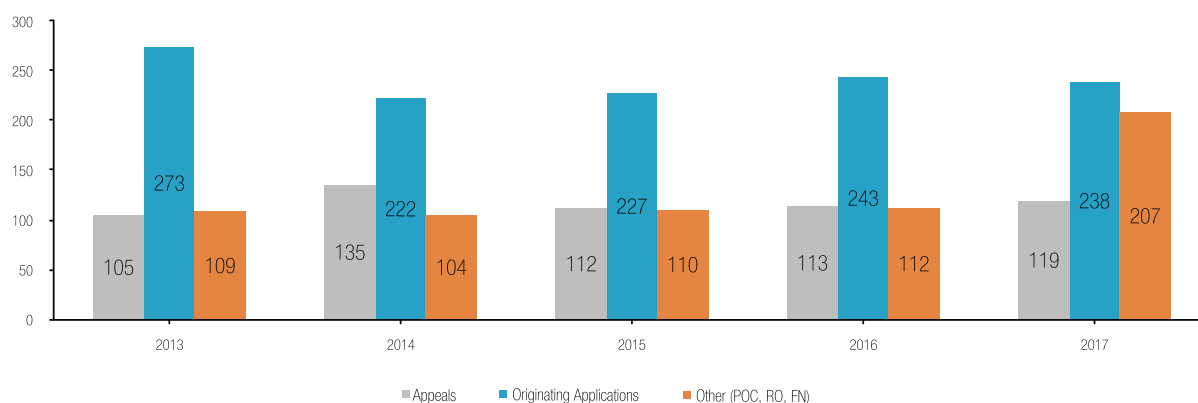
LODGMENTS

There were 5,338 new civil case lodgments including appeals in 2017, 32 or 1% less than the 5,370 in 2016.

New writs lodged decreased by 3% in 2017 with 4,774 new writs lodged compared with 4,902 writs lodged in 2016 (see Graph 12). Personal injury claims accounted for 79% of all new writs lodged in 2017 with the remaining 21% made up of commercial claims. This result is similar to last year.

Graph 12 Civil Lodgments (Writs Only)



Graph 13 Civil Lodgments (Appeals and Originating Summons)

FINALISATIONS

Civil litigation is managed through an extensive programme of case management and alternative dispute resolution.

The success of the programme is measured by the fact that very few civil cases actually proceed to a trial in the District Court. Of the 4,628 Writ of Summons civil cases finalised in 2017, 142 were listed for trial, 8 or 5% fewer than the 150 listed in 2016. Forty-seven cases, or 1% of the total, proceeded to trial, similar to the 49 cases in 2016.

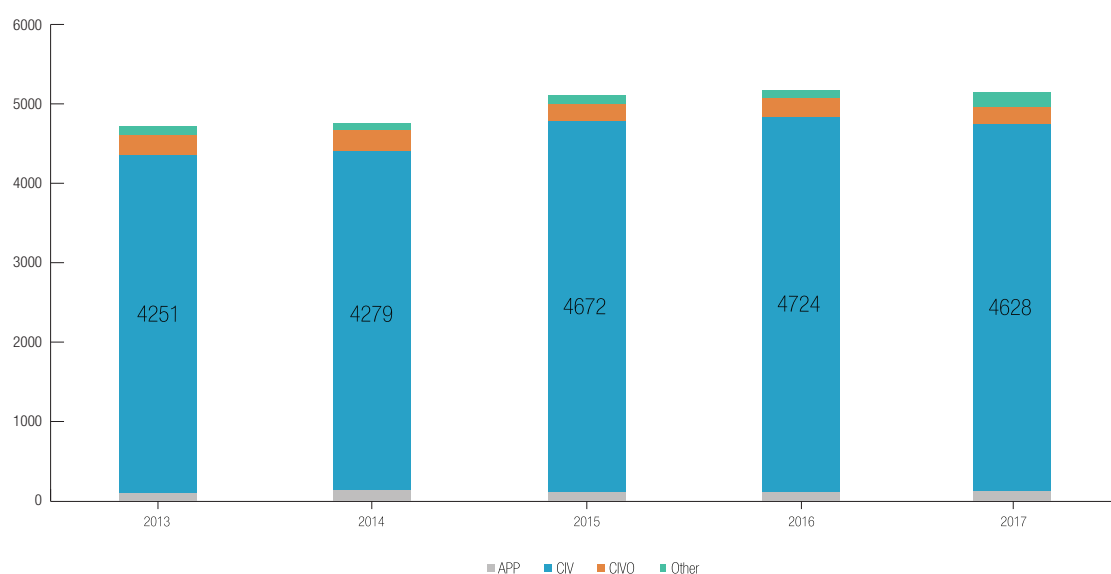
A total of 158 mediation and 1,976 pre-trial conferences giving a total of 2,134 conferences were conducted by the

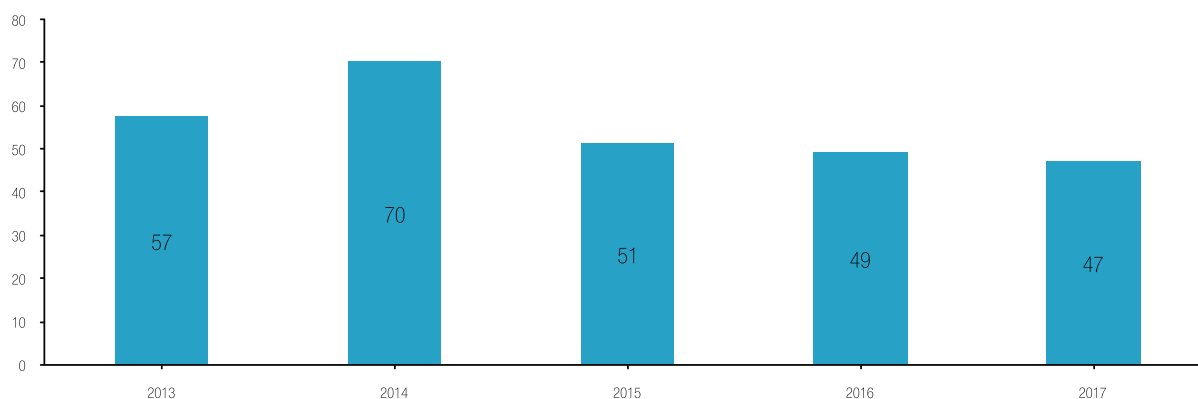
Registrars of the Court in 2017. This represents 19 fewer than 2016 and is likely to be the result of work undertaken by the legal profession to resolve the case before Registrar involvement.

The Court has five Registrars. All are experienced mediators.

The Court's aim is to finalise more cases than are commenced each year. The number of cases finalised in 2017 (5,141) compared favourably with the number of new cases commenced (5,338) resulting in a clearance index of 96%.

The median time to settle a case without trial is 12 weeks, three weeks less than the 15 weeks in 2016.

Graph 14 Civil Finalisations

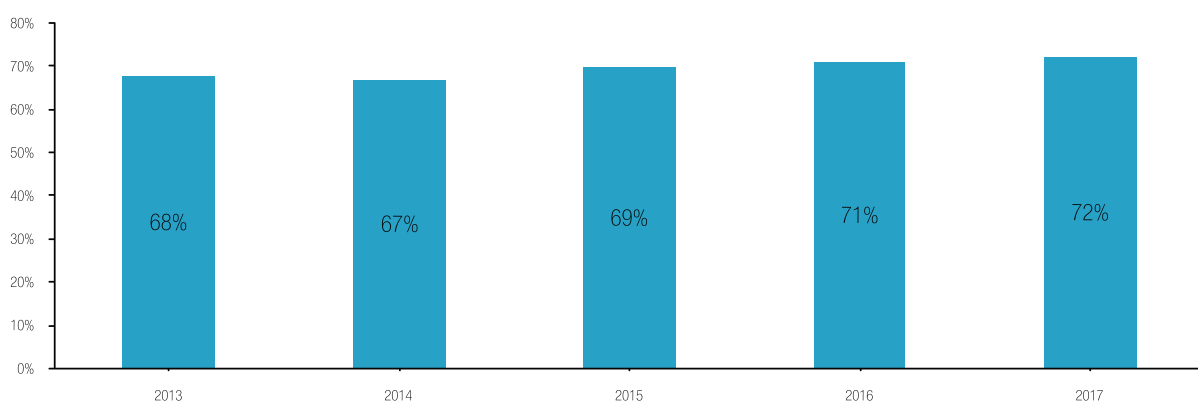
Graph 15 Civil Cases Proceeding to Trial

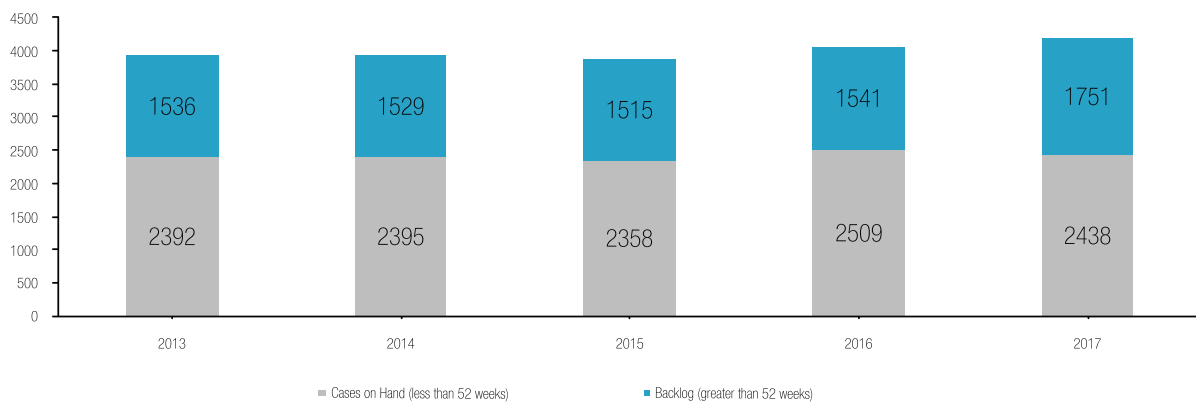
There were 47 civil trials conducted in 2017, 2 less than 2016. Of these cases, 11 proceeded to trial where the duration of the trial was greater than 5 days, 4 more than in 2016.

The average length of a civil trial in 2017 is 4 days. This is a 25% increase on the 2016 (3.2 days) figure. Success in mediation often means it is the more complex cases that proceed to trial and, by their nature, require more time to resolve. Clearing these cases will result in a lower average length of trial.

Approximately 72% of the Court's civil cases were finalised within a period of 52 weeks of their commencement in 2017, a similar result to 2016.

The median time to finalise a civil case by trial increased from 136 weeks in 2016 to 161 weeks in 2017.

Graph 16 Percentage of Civil Cases Finalised within 52 Weeks

Graph 17 Cases on Hand and Backlog

CASES ON HAND

There were 4,189 cases on hand in December 2017, 139 (3%) more than the 4,050 cases on hand in December 2016. Of the cases on hand, 58.2% were less than 52 weeks of age, similar to the 2016 position.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION

There were 119 civil appeals lodged with the Court in 2017. Of these:

- 54 arose from the decisions of Magistrates exercising jurisdiction under the *Magistrates Court (Civil Proceedings) Act 2004* and the *Restraining Orders Act 1997*;

- 40 arose from the decisions of Criminal Injuries Compensation Assessors; and
- 23 arose from the decisions of arbitrators made under Part XI of the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*.

The Court finalised 120 appeals in 2017 with 83% of the appeals being resolved within 12 months of their lodgment. The Court aims to resolve all appeals lodged with the Court within 12 months of their commencement.

Information on appeals and material to assist self-represented persons with the lodgment of an appeal are available on the District Court website.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY

The District Court of Western Australia hosted the 24th Biennial Conference of District and County Court Judges of Australia and New Zealand from 5 – 7 July 2017 at Crown Towers, Perth. The theme was Exploring Diversity and 25 presenters, including keynote, plenary speakers and panellists, covered topics such as Equality in Sentencing, Without Fear or Favour: Cognitive Bias, Children and Vulnerable Witnesses, Cultural Competence and Access to Justice. In total 109 delegates and 64 partners from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and New Zealand attended the three day event. The program included a Welcome Reception and a cocktail function held at Government House, which was hosted by the Attorney General of Western Australia in the presence of the Governor of Western Australia. The conference was considered an overwhelming success with expressions of appreciation of the quality of the conference being received from a number of attendees.

A wellness program for judicial officers was commenced. The program was voluntary and consisted of one-on-one interviews from which issues and themes arose which led to a seminar being conducted providing tailored information.

Once per month a Judge of the Court presents at lunchtime a paper on a recent decision of the Court of Appeal or the High Court of Australia. Judges also attend a number of seminars throughout the year organised by various judicial education bodies.

STAFF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Staff of the Court completed refresher training in a range of compulsory corporate online training modules in 2017.

New employees completed the Department's induction procedures and online training modules covering such topics as:

- Introduction to courts and the justice system;
- Court conduct and ethics policy;
- Court counselling and support services;
- Security in Courts and Tribunals;
- Using department passwords;
- Confidentiality and information privacy;
- Occupational health and safety; and
- Record keeping awareness.

THE COURT'S WEBSITE

The District Court's website continued to be a popular source for accessing case and general information about the operations of the District Court by members of the legal profession, self-represented persons and members of the general public. Information available through the website includes practice directions, circulars to practitioners, fee and form information, general updates on civil and criminal procedure and a procedure manual to assist self-represented persons.

REGISTRY CUSTOMER SERVICE

The District Court registry counter is a key point of customer service delivery for the Court, providing a range of services for members of the general public and law clerks that attend the Court daily with a facility to transact business on behalf of themselves or in the case of law clerks, their legal firm.

Customer service officers attending to the public at the registry counter assist the Court in meeting its customer service delivery objectives.

The workload of the registry was challenged this year with the ongoing transition to and development of procedures and practices to support eLodgment and civil eFiles. This is a work in progress and will continue into 2018.

There were approximately 17,973 customers served in 2017, a 1,826 (11%) increase on 2016. These numbers are estimated by pro-rata to allow for three months of missing data in 2016 and one month of missing data in 2017.

A total of 45,761 documents were lodged in 2017, 2,529 (6%) more than in 2016. Twenty-five percent or 11,447 of these were lodged electronically, an increase of 13%. Prior to implementation of eLodgment in July 2016, eLodgment accounted for only 1,321 or 6% of documents lodged.

Subpoena management is a significant component of registry customer service. In 2017 2,155 subpoenas were lodged, 276 (11%) less than 2016 and 1,803 subpoenaed items produced were received, 205 (10%) less than the previous year.

DISTRICT COURT COMMITTEES

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

Management Council Committee

Chief Judge Sleight (Chair)
Judge Reynolds
Judge Eaton
Judge Stavrianou (until 1 August 2017)
Judge Davis
Judge Derrick
Principal Registrar Melville
S Owen – Executive Manager

Civil Administration Committee

Chief Judge Sleight (Chair)
Judge Eaton
Judge Stavrianou (until 1 August 2017)
Judge O'Neal
Judge Birmingham
Principal Registrar Melville
S Owen – Executive Manager
J Petrovski – Manager Case Management
K Woods – Acting Manager Trials
W Hawley – Manager Customer Support
C Jina – Acting Manager Performance

Criminal Administration Committee

Chief Judge Sleight (Chair)
Judge Bowden
Judge Scott
Judge Derrick
Judge Cock
Principal Registrar Melville
S Owen – Executive Manager
J Petrovski – Manager Case Management
K Woods – Acting Manager Trials
W Hawley – Manager Customer Support
A Skehan – Acting Listings Coordinator
J Howard – Senior Associate
K Trenkovski – Criminal Listings (Circuits)
C Jina – Acting Manager Performance

eCourts Civil Committee

Chief Judge Sleight (Chair)
Judge Eaton
Judge Stavrianou (until 1 August 2017)
Principal Registrar Melville
S Owen – Executive Manager
J Petrovski – Manager Case Management
W Hawley – Manager Customer Support
J Howard – Senior Associate
K Downsborough – Business Representative
M Jackson – Executive Manager Courts Technology Group
A Redpath – Courts Technology Group

Library Committee

Chief Judge Sleight (Chair)
L Lyon – Manager Library & Information Services (DoJ)
W Lei – Librarian
S Owen – Executive Manager

District Court Building Committee

Judge Eaton (Chair)
Judge Stevenson
Principal Registrar Melville
A Stevenson – Executive Manager Business Services
S Owen – Executive Manager
P Smith – Manager Court Services Audio Visual
R Randall – Director Court Risk Assessment Directorate
M Shaw – Operations Manager, Western Liberty Group
B Konrath – Account Manager, BGIS
P Bangs – Regional Manager, DTI
R Smart – Contract Manager, G4S

Technology Committee

Judge Stavrianou (Chair - until 1 August 2017)
Judge Davis
Judge Braddock
Judge Gething (Chair)
Principal Registrar Melville
S Owen – Executive Manager
A Stevenson – Executive Manager Business Services
G Cartwright – Director, Information Services (DoJ)
M Jackson – Executive Manager Court Technology Group (DoJ)
D McLean – Acting Executive Manager Court Technology Group (DoJ)
P Smith – Manager Audio Visual (DoJ)
K Penny – Project Leader AV (DoJ)
L Wood – IT Support
J Howard – Senior Associate
D Raffa – Technology Officer
M Shaw – Operations Manager, Western Liberty Group
B Konrath – Account Manager, BGIS

Judges' Benchbook Committee

Judge McCann
Judge Stavrianou (until 1 August 2017)
Judge Davis

2017 District Court Judges' Conference Committee

Chief Judge Sleight
Judge Wager (Chair)
Judge Schoombee (until retirement 31 December 2017)
Judge Scott
Judge Staude
Judge Levy
J Stampalia – Acting Executive Director Court and Tribunal Services
S Owen – Executive Manager

Continuing Legal Education Program Presenters

Judge Sweeney
Judge Stevenson
Judge O'Neal
Judge Birmingham
Judge Gething

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

His Honour Chief Judge Sleight

Member, Heads of Jurisdiction Committee
Member, Chief Justice's Senior Counsel Committee
Member, Strategic Criminal Justice Forum
Member, Equality Before the Law Bench Book Committee
Chair, Inter-Jurisdictional Education Committee
Chair, Witness Intermediary Project Steering Committee

His Honour Judge Reynolds

President of Totius (from February 2016)

His Honour Judge Eaton

Member, Executive Committee of the Governing Council, Judicial Conference of Australia

Her Honour Judge Wager

Chair, Board of Management Palmerston Association WA Inc.
Member, Inter-Jurisdictional Education Committee
Member, National Judicial College of Australia Council

His Honour Judge Stevenson

Member, Resolution Institute
Committee Member, Schools Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program (SCRAM)
Member, Western Australian Dispute Resolution Association (WADRA)
Member, Courts Jury Advisory Committee
SQNLDR, RAAF Standby Reserve (Legal) (ADF)
Member, Law Society Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee

His Honour Judge Staude

Member, Law School Advisory Board, University of Notre Dame
Member, National Judicial College of Australia National Judicial Orientation Program Steering Committee

Her Honour Judge Braddock

Member, State Committee, Indigenous Justice Issues

His Honour Judge Levy

Member, Chief Justice's Non-Contentious Evidence Sub-Committee
Representative, Acceptance of Electronic Briefs for Prosecution (Commonwealth Prosecutions) Sub Committee

Her Honour Judge Stewart

District Court Representative, Judicial Systems Replacement Working Group

Registrar Kingsley

Member, Law Society Courts Committee
Member, Law Society Family Court Delay Working Group
Legal Member, Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee
Member, Law Society Self Represented Litigants Sub-Committee



**DISTRICT COURT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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