

## Question on Notice

No. 305

Asked on 20 March 2024

**MS S BOLTON** ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON Y D'ATH)

### QUESTION:

With reference to the Productivity Commission reporting that last year Queensland courts cleared the lowest number of civil cases within 12 months of any State or Territory—

Will the Attorney-General advise what will be undertaken to improve court decision timeframes to alleviate the anxiety and resulting financial hardships being experienced by Queenslanders?

### ANSWER:

It is difficult to draw comparisons across jurisdictions as case management practices differ between each state and territory. The management of the cases throughout the court process is a matter for the judiciary.

Matters conducted in the civil jurisdiction of Queensland Courts are largely party driven which influences the time in which matters are finalised. It is noted that the finalisation numbers for Magistrates Courts in the Report on Government Services (ROGS) are largely comparable to the rest of Australia.

Every time the parties are required to attend the court for a review, legal costs are incurred and judicial and registry resources are expended. In the case of Supreme and District Court finalisation numbers, the courts have identified which types of matters benefit from close judicial monitoring and ensure they are closely case managed. However, between 40% to 50% of matters in the 2022-23 financial year remained inactive for more than 12 months and then became 'finalised' for statistical purposes. This apparent inactivity is often due to parties commencing a proceeding within the Supreme or District Courts to protect their legal rights and progress negotiations. Many of those cases will have been resolved to the parties' satisfaction through negotiation without any court intervention. If a case is stalling and any party wants it to be resolved by the court, it is a simple matter to bring the matter into active court case management and progress through the court process.

The Government is supporting escalating workloads across Queensland Courts and dedicated resourcing within the District Court of Queensland. The 2023-24 State Budget provided increased funding of \$34 million over four years and \$8.8 million per annum ongoing to address sustained growth on demand in the court system, including for three new District Court judges. The three new positions ensure Queenslanders are able to access the justice system in a timely manner without unreasonable delays and work to address the strong population growth experienced in some areas of Queensland resulting in an increased number of matters before the courts.