

Judicial Council on Diversity & Inclusion | Meeting Communiqué | 14 June 2024

The Judicial Council on Diversity and Inclusion (JCDI) met in Canberra on 14 June 2024, a meeting coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the Council.

The Chair welcomed new members to the Council, Justice Elizabeth Raper (Federal Court of Australia) and Mr Malcom Schyvens (Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Council of Australasian Tribunals), and acknowledged the retirement of Anne Britton (Council of Australasian Tribunals).

The Council heard from three speakers. Julie Tongs discussed access to justice for Indigenous Australians, emphasising the importance of judicial officers understanding the life experiences of Indigenous people, particularly addiction and illiteracy. She highlighted the need for sentencing to consider clinical care. Professor Meredith Rossner discussed the use of virtual technology in the justice system. Associate Professor Garner Clancy spoke about youth crime, with overrepresentation of Indigenous youth highlighting a need for a coordinated approach to address this issue.

The Council heard updates on several ongoing projects. In relation to the *Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals*, the Council discussed the implementation of the *Standards* and practical methods to ensure the adherence of judicial officers to the recommendations. The Council also discussed the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) report, which provides feedback on how Judicial Officers are implementing the *Standards*. Resistance to implementation and challenges such as remote interpretation and costs were discussed, and the Council resolved to draft a script for judicial officers to read at the beginning of interpreter hearings.

The Judicial Diversity Working Group provided an update on their work. The Chair noted that gathering statistics could be better suited for other organisations, and the JCDI should seek to support the work of organisations like the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA).

The Chair noted that the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General had funded a pilot of the QR Code Website in the Queensland Magistrates Court. The content for the website had been drafted and was currently being translated. Data collected throughout the pilot project would be presented at the next Council meeting.

The Council heard an update from the Youth Justice Working Group, which highlighted the lack of understanding by young people of Court processes. Upon finalisation of a literature review, the Working Group would meet to progress the project. The JCDI Secretariat was tasked to finalise the literature review and reconvene the Working Group. The Council also noted plans to implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the JCDI and RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice, with a view to developing a framework for access to justice for people with cognitive disability.

The group also noted other positive ongoing work, such as the Language Badge program in Queensland Courts, which enabled multilingual support from court staff.

The JCDI will meet next in Hobart in late 2024.