

COURT ADMINISTRATION (CHAPTER 6)

- The focus of this chapter is on the administration of State and Territory magistrates', district/county, supreme and coroners' courts, the Federal Court, the Federal Magistrates Court, the Family Court of Australia and the Family Court of Western Australia. Data are presented in the Report for the Australian courts and for each State and Territory.

Selection of results

- The court administration chapter has introduced a new performance indicator framework this year. New indicators in this framework are: 'backlog index' (p. 6.36); 'attendance index' (p. 6.41); 'judicial officers' (p. 6.43); and 'clearance index' (p. 6.48). The indicators 'fees paid by applicants' (p. 6.23) and 'cost per finalisation' (p. 6.52) have been refined for inclusion in the new framework.
- As part of the transition to the new performance indicator framework, the court administration chapter also reports against two indicators from the old performance indicator framework: 'case duration' (pp. 6.26–36); and 'court locations and registries' (p. 6.46).
- Total court administration recurrent expenditure less income (excluding fines) by Australian, State and Territory court authorities (excluding the High Court) was approximately \$818 million in 2002-03. Nationally, the aggregate court administration recurrent expenditure less income for magistrates', district/county and supreme courts was higher in the criminal jurisdiction (\$456 million) than in the civil jurisdiction (\$212 million), and was around \$105 million for the Family Court of Australia and \$27 million for coroners' courts. Across Australia, both electronic courts and probate registries had income which was greater than expenditure (by \$57 million and \$20 million respectively) (pp. 6.10–12). Expenditure by jurisdiction and court level is shown in tables 6A.9–14.
- Nationally, in 2002-03, there were approximately 860 500 defendants in the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrates', district/county and supreme courts. These same courts had 680 900 civil cases lodged. In the Australian court jurisdiction there were approximately 65 000 forms lodged in the Family Court of Australia, 4 800 cases lodged in the Federal Court, and 59 700 forms and cases lodged in the Federal Magistrates Court (pp. 6.14–18). Court lodgments by jurisdiction and court level, are shown on pp. 6.17–18.
- In 2002-03, there were 790 700 finalisations in the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrates', district/county and supreme courts. These same courts had 439 200 civil finalisations (p. 6.19). Finalisations by jurisdiction and court level are contained on pp. 6.19–20. In the Australian court jurisdiction, the Federal Court of Australia finalised 5100 cases and the Federal Magistrates Court finalised around 52 800 matters (a combination of family law forms and federal law cases) (p. 6.19).

[MORE]

Progress since the 2003 Report

The Review this year has implemented its new performance indicator framework. Work continues on improving data quality and comparability across jurisdictions.

[END]

Background information: Robyn Sheen, Head of Secretariat 03 9653 2184/0419 637 068

Other information: Clair Angel, Media and Publications 02 6240 3239/0417 665 443

Please do not approach other parties for comment before Thursday, 29 January 2004.

Media copies of this report are available from Clair Angel on 02 6240 3239.

Hard copies of this publication are available from Pirion/J.S. McMillan (ph: 02 9795 1200 or email custserv@jismcmillan.com.au). The report can also be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.pc.gov.au/> on the morning of release.