



**STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**JEREMY HANSON CSC MLA (CHAIR), MARISA PATERSON MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JO CLAY MLA**

**Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

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Asked by Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA: To the Attorney-General

In relation to: **Magistrates Courts backlogs**

[Ref: Budget paper D p95 Court backlogs]

1. The Budget Outlook paper [p95] indicates an additional \$310,000 was provided to the Magistrates Court for additional capacity to manage the backlog of court activities resulting from COVID, with funding from the Confiscated Assets Trust.

How and why was that amount chosen and what impact did that funding have on addressing the Court's backlog?

2. What was the backlog at the start of calendar year 2020?
3. What was the backlog after the additional funding was provided?
4. Is additional work planned to address the backlog?
  - a. If so:
    - i. what is the nature of that work?
    - ii. when will it commence?
    - iii. at what cost?
    - iv. by who?
  - b. Please provide copies of any contract or work order if available.

**Shane Rattenbury MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—**

1. Total funding of \$620 000 was been made available to the Magistrates Court in the 2020/21 financial year to assist with the COVID-related backlog: \$310 000 of this was appropriated funding and \$310,000 was funding from the Confiscated Assets Trust.

This level of funding was based on the total cost of one full-time equivalent Magistrate, an Associate for that Magistrate and the additional transcript and recording services associated with the work of that Magistrate. An analysis undertaken of the number of hearing days that had been delayed due to COVID, suggested that this additional capacity should be sufficient to address any COVID backlog.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

JACS No. 63

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To date, the funds have been drawn on mainly to support full-time work by a part-time Magistrate and to support an increase in the work undertaken by a (previously appointed) Special Magistrate.

The COVID impact on the number of pending matters was felt most acutely during the latter part of the 2019-20 financial year. As can be seen from the figures below, there was a sharp increase in pending matters from 2018/19 to 2019/20 with a material reduction in pending matters since then.

Work is ongoing on to ensure that the Court's resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and in a way that tackles the current backlog of pending matters.

2. Below is a table showing the number of pending matters at the end of 2018-19; 2019-20 Financial years; and as at 31 December 2019 and 31 December 2020. 'Pending matters' includes all applications lodged that have not been finalised.

	Magistrates Court Criminal *	Magistrates Court Civil*
<b>2018-19</b>	2641	1042
<b>As at 31 December 2019</b>	3040	1160
<b>2019-20</b>	3462	1422
<b>As at 31 December 2020</b>	3288	1235

\* includes Children's court

3. See above.
4. As indicated, work is ongoing on to ensure that the Court's resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and in a way that tackles the current backlog of pending matters. In addition to the increase in Magistrate resourcing described above, additional staffing to support coronial matters, family violence conferencing and registry services is being provided.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:

Date:

15/3/21

By the Attorney-General, Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA