



Drug Court of
New South Wales

Drug Court of New South Wales

Annual Review 2024

June 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Drug Court of New South Wales acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this Annual Review 2024.

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Foreword by Senior Judge of the Drug Court

It was another busy year for the Drug Court of NSW in 2024. In June the Court hosted a Drug Court Practitioners Conference at the Sydney Masonic Centre to celebrate the 'Therapeutic Excellence of 25 years of the Drug Court in NSW'. It was a privilege to have the Attorney General the Honourable Michael Daley MP give the opening address. It was a welcome opportunity to bring our practitioners together after a long break due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The expansion of Sydney Drug Court has continued with the referral pathway for the remaining Local Government Areas opening in March 2024. While there has not been a deluge of referrals, the numbers are steadily increasing as an awareness develops amongst the judiciary and the legal profession concerning the expanded catchment area.



Achieving success for the Sydney cohort has always been challenging. The Court has often accepted referrals for homeless people who identify with their home being in the City of Sydney. Despite having access to the necessary health services, there are significant obstacles concerning access to safe and appropriate housing. This continues to impact upon the capacity of our participants to achieve their program goals. Supporting our participants with access to housing remains a priority. Discussions with Homes NSW have commenced and will be ongoing.

With Sydney expanding to full time sittings, the complement of Judges has been increased. The Sydney expansion together with the retirement of Judge Paul Cloran and Judge Garry Still in 2025, has seen the welcome appointment of Judges Claire Girotto, John Chicken, Les Mabbutt, Susan McIntyre and Jennifer Price. Judge Girotto has been appointed to sit at Parramatta Drug Court, while Judge Chicken will sit at Hunter Drug Court on Judge Cloran's retirement. These Judges bring a wealth of experience. Their diverse backgrounds and judicial experience will equip them well for the demands of their new roles.

In preparation of the judicial education required for each of our new Judges, work was undertaken on creating a Drug Court Resource Manual and Judicial Portal. The manual is akin to a Bench Book for Drug Court Judges. A big thanks to our Project Officer Lauren Aquilina for her efforts in bringing this project to fruition. It is a valuable resource for all our Judges.

The development of a new database continued throughout 2024. This has proven to be an enormous project with work now spanning over 2 years. During the second half of 2024 Filiz Eminov was appointed Subject Matter Expert to assist the Project Team. Kirrily Rush assumed the role of Registrar during Filiz's absence. Work has been commenced to review the practices and procedures of the Registry to ensure consistency across all sites. The Court is very grateful for the work both Kirrily and Tracey Cremming undertook during that time.

Interest in the operation of the court has continued with presentations being delivered to the Criminal Law students at University of Technology Sydney, the students of the Forensic Mental Health Program UNSW and members of the Drug Court team from South Australia.

Discussions have continued with the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) concerning an evaluation of the Drug Court program. With BOCSAR also undertaking a review of the Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre (CDTCC), we look forward to receiving the findings of each review in 2025.

Once again, the Court is disappointed at the low referral rate for participants in the CDTCC program. Discussions have been ongoing concerning an amendment to the *Drug Court Act 1998* relating to eligibility criteria. Those discussions are ongoing with Corrective Services and Policy Reform and Legislation. On a positive note, it was great to see much support for the program through the Community Engagement Day held at the Centre in September. Businesses providing employment opportunities for the participants were invited to visit the Centre and learn more about the program. All could see the importance of their ongoing relationship with the Court in order to support the rehabilitation of the participants.

As 2024 was drawing to a close the NSW Government held a Drug Summit with community meetings in Griffith and Lismore as well as a large meeting in Sydney. I represented the Court at Griffith and Sydney while Tracey Cremming Executive Officer attended at Lismore. This is the first meeting of its type since 1999. The outcomes of the Summit remain of ongoing interest to the Court particularly in relation to any recommendations for expansion.

The Drug Court of NSW was established due to the growing disenchantment with traditional criminal justice responses being unable to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behaviour. As can be seen, the Court continues to fulfil that objective.

Behind the published statistics remains a dedicated group of professional and enthusiastic staff from all our partner agencies. Our participants are fortunate to have access to treatment providers in the community and residential rehabilitation centres. They and the Court also benefit from having access to Community Corrections officers, lawyers from the ODPP and Legal Aid NSW, Police, Aboriginal Casework Co-ordinators, registry & other administrative staff all committed to the delivery of a Highly Suitable Treatment plan.

Thanks must be extended to all those Team members. In particular I extend my appreciation to the Judges of the Court for their ongoing commitment and dedication to improving the health and living outcomes for our participants. I am also grateful for the support each provide to me in my role.

I would also like to thank the Attorney General, the Honourable Michael Daley MP for his ongoing support of the Court. It is greatly appreciated.

Her Honour Judge Jane Mottley AM

Senior Judge, Drug Court of New South Wales

1

Court Profile

1.1 Introduction

The Drug Court of New South Wales is a specialist court that aims to break the cycle of drug dependence and criminal offending. Established in February 1999, the Court has since become a vital part of the justice system in the Hunter Region, Sydney CBD, Parramatta and Dubbo.

The Court plays a crucial role in helping drug-dependant offenders overcome their dependency and reduce their criminal offending. By combining therapeutic jurisprudence with specialised interventions, the Court provides a unique approach to address the underlying issues that contribute to drug dependency. Its jurisdiction covers a wide range of criminal cases, enabling the Court to have a substantial impact on reducing recidivism rates and promoting long-term rehabilitation.

By highlighting the successful outcomes, innovative approaches and the dedication of the Court's staff, this annual review aims to showcase the significant role played by the Drug Court in transforming lives and contributing to the overall justice system.

1.2 Jurisdiction

The Drug Court of NSW is governed by the Drug Court Act 1998 and the Drug Court Regulation 2020. Its mandate extends beyond traditional criminal jurisdiction. The Drug Court Act empowers the Court to handle criminal cases from both the District and Local Court, in addition to any other jurisdiction granted by relevant legislation.

1.3 Judiciary

All proceedings related to the Drug Court, are presided over and resolved by a Judge who serves as the Court's authority.

Judges of the Drug Court

Her Honour Judge Jane Mottley AM, Senior Judge of the Drug Court of New South Wales

His Honour Judge Paul Cloran

His Honour Judge Roger Dive

Her Honour Judge Claire Girotto

His Honour Judge Ian Guy

Her Honour Judge Joanne Keogh

His Honour Judge Leslie Mabbutt

Her Honour Judge Susan McIntyre

Her Honour Judge Jennifer Price

Her Honour Judge Mary Ryan

His Honour Judge Garry Still

Judges Associates

Louisa Carboni

Penny Hooper

Kerri Johnston

Janine Linsley
Ellen Macleay
Angela Mitchell
Didi Rowlatt

1.4 Drug Court Team

The Court operates in close collaboration with several agency organisations, collectively forming what we refer to as the Drug Court Team. The primary responsibility of the Drug Court team is to oversee the progress of participants in the program and collectively develop strategies to support their rehabilitation.

The team comprises the following members:

Judge and Registrar of the Court

Solicitors from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Solicitors from the Legal Aid Commission of NSW

Police Prosecutor

Justice Health NSW Clinician*

Community Corrections Court Coordinator

Aboriginal Casework Coordinator

And/or the alternate delegates for each

*The role of the Justice Health NSW Clinician is performed by a Local Health District Clinician at some Drug Courts.

The Court maintains a vigilant monitoring system for all participants. Local Health Districts have care and clinical governance responsibilities for participants outside of custody, including those in residential rehabilitation.

The Drug Court team convenes prior to each court session to receive reports from treatment providers and Community Correction Officers, as well as to discuss the participants scheduled for appearance that day. Based on these discussions, the Judge engages with each participant individually to assess their progress.

1.5 Court staff

The Court operates with the support of a dedicated team of court staff, including registry staff, associates, court officers, Recording Services Branch (RSB) court monitors and nurses. Working under the guidance of court management, these people play a vital role in ensuring the Court's smooth and efficient functioning.

The registry staff hold a pivotal position in providing crucial administrative and clerical support to the Court. They are responsible for managing various administrative tasks and assisting in the seamless

operation of court proceedings. The management of the Drug Court Registry falls under the joint oversight of the Executive Officer and Registrar of the Court.

As of 31 December 2024, the following people hold positions:

Executive Officer

Tracey Cremming

Registrar

Filiz Eminov

Project Officer

Lauren Aquilina

Deputy Registrars

Charlotte Brander – Dubbo Drug Court

Kirrily Rush – Hunter Drug Court

Jaklin Czajkowski – Parramatta Drug Court

Mamatha Manju – Sydney Drug Court



Court Staff Organisation Chart

2

2024 in Review

2024 in Review

Drug Court Program - 2024

334

Participants on program as of 31 December 2024

16% increase in participants on program compared to 31 December 2023.

619

Successful referrals

32% increase in successful referrals compared to 2023.

338

Participants completed program

24% increase in participants completing program compared to 2023.

191

Non-custody program completion

57% of total program completion resulted in non-custodial outcome in 2024

127

Graduations

38% of total program completion was participant graduation from program.

Graduations were held in all Drug Court locations.

480

Participant capacity as of 31 December 2024

The Drug Court of New South Wales has capacity for up to 480 participants across its four locations.

3

Court Operations

3.1 Overview

The following data is calculated and reported as of 31 December 2024.

Drug Court program

The Drug Court program is a joint justice and health intervention aimed at reducing drug dependency, reducing offending and promoting reintegration into the community. The Local and District Court must refer offenders who appear to be eligible. Once referred, the Drug Court will assess the person’s eligibility and appropriateness. The Court will then determine the outcome of the referral.

Limited program places are available. Where there are more referrals than available places, a randomised ballot is conducted. After a successful referral to the Court, a person must complete detoxification and assessment which is done in-custody at a specialist unit. Justice Health staff and the treating Local Health District develop a personalised treatment plan, and the person is brought to appear before the Court to confirm a plea of guilty. The Court imposes an initial sentence of imprisonment and makes orders for a suspended sentence. The person is then released to undertake their Drug Court program, subject to the conditions imposed by the Court.

Table 1 outlines the Drug Court Program referrals and completion rates across all Drug Court locations as of 31 December 2024.

Table 1 - Program activity overview

Location	Total Referrals	Accepted after ballot ¹	Total participants ²	Total completion ³	Graduates	% Non-custody ⁴
Parramatta	628	316	165	176	61	58.5%
Sydney	233	179	79	71	17	33.8%
Hunter	141	85	66	69	40	73.9%
Dubbo	50	39	24	22	9	59.1%

¹ Total number of participant referrals that were accepted after the randomised ballot was conducted.

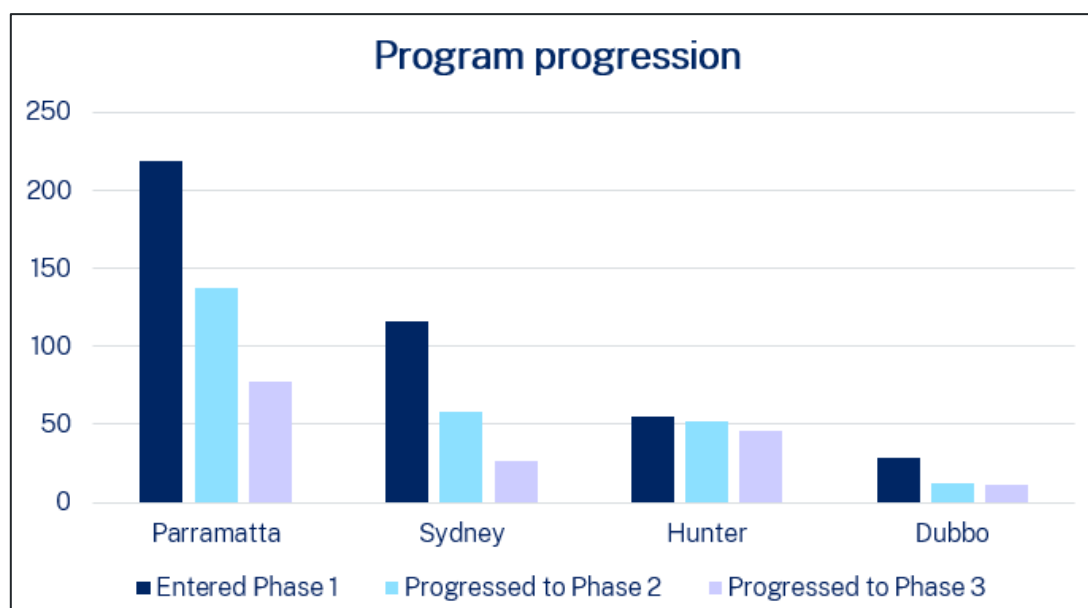
² Total number of participants on the Drug Court program as at 31/12/2024.

³ Total number of sentenced program completers.

⁴ Total non-custody (successful) completions as a percentage of total sentenced program completers.

The Drug Court program has three intensive phases to be completed over a minimum 12-month period. Each phase has distinct goals the participant must achieve to progress to the next phase. Graph 1 provides a snapshot of the program progress of current Drug Court participants as of 31 December 2024.

Graph 1 - Program progression



Program completion

A Drug Court program can be completed when a participant has substantially complied with the program. Certificates of graduation or substantial achievement are awarded to participants who show particularly strong progress while on the program.

A Drug Court program can be terminated when a participant is unlikely to make any further progress on the program, poses an unacceptable risk to the community by remaining on the program or chooses to exit or abandon the program. At program completion or termination, the Court reconsiders the initial sentence and determines the final sentence. The initial sentence can be confirmed, or set aside and another sentence imposed, but it cannot be increased.

Graduation and substantial compliance

Graduation from the Drug Court program is the highest standard for successful program completion. Participants who graduate from the program receive a certificate of graduation and a graduation ceremony is held in the court room where graduates' families are invited to attend along with the Drug Court team and treatment providers.

Another standard of successful program completion is substantial compliance. The Court may recognise participants who have substantially complied with a program by the award of a certificate of achievement. Substantial compliance is awarded in circumstances when a participant may not be able to complete their program to graduation requirements. Reasons may include the participant is re-locating outside of the Drug Court catchment area or the participant may have obtained full-time employment that prevents compliance with graduation requirements. Participants may successfully complete their program and receive a non-custodial sentence, without graduating.

Non-custody and custody completion

Participants who graduate or receive substantial compliance are recorded as successful program completers and will likely serve their final sentence in the community. Participants who do not comply with their program are likely to serve their final sentence in custody.

In line with the aims of the Drug Court program, participants who successfully complete their program will have reduced or overcome their drug dependency and criminal offending and positively re-integrated into the community as an alternative to full-time imprisonment. Therefore, a non-custody sentence is regarded as a successful Drug Court program completion.

Table 2 - Program completion overview

Total completion	Parramatta	Sydney	Hunter	Dubbo
Non-custody	103	24	51	13
Custody	73	47	18	9
Total completions	176	71	69	22

Program termination

Participants who are unable to meet the requirements or fail to comply with the program may face termination. Termination from the program can result in the person serving their sentence in custody. Reasons for termination can include self-termination, no prospects of successful completion, risk to the community and abandonment of the program by the participant. Each reason for termination is carefully assessed to ensure the safety and well-being of the community while upholding the integrity of the Drug Court program.

Table 3 - Program termination overview

Total termination	Parramatta	Sydney	Hunter	Dubbo
Self-terminated ¹	12	2	9	3
10(1)(b) no prospects ²	22	8	6	2
10 (1)(b) risk ³	35	16	1	10
Abandoned ⁴	8	13	10	1
Total	77	39	26	16

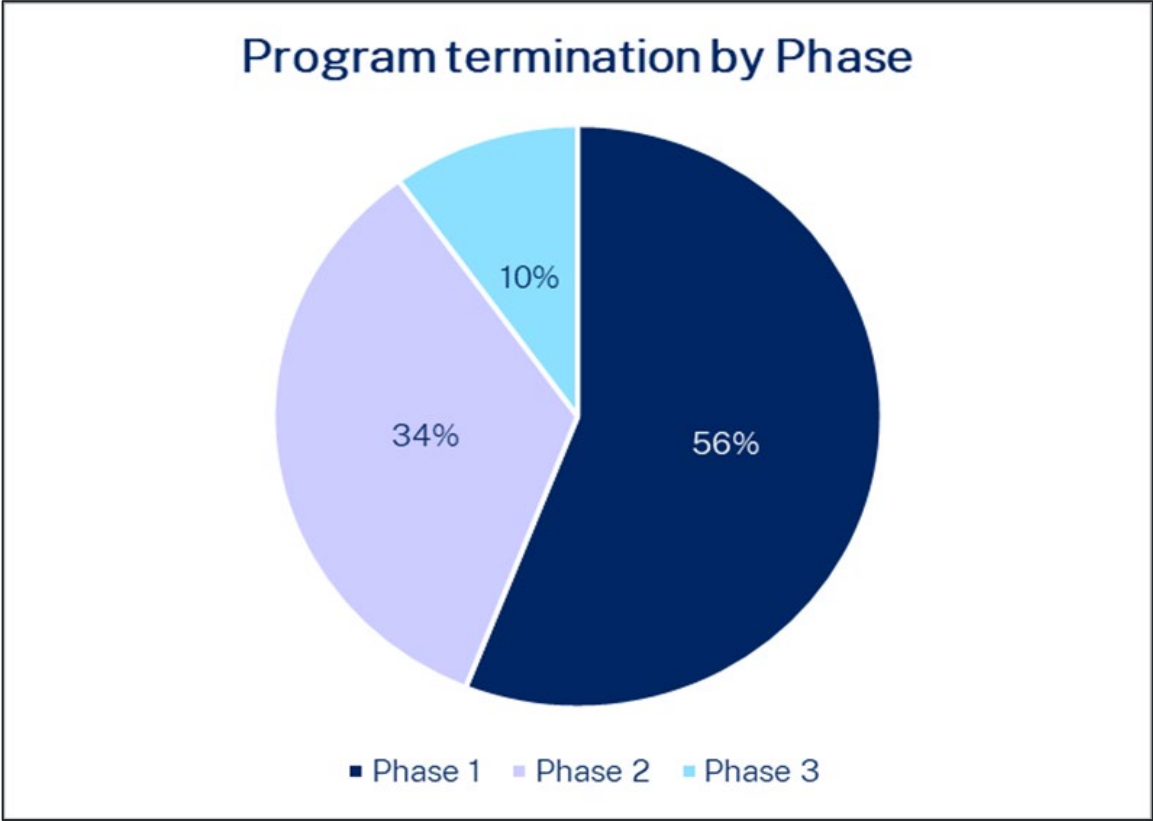
¹ Termination of a program at the participant's request.

² Determination that a participant is unlikely to make any further progress in the program.

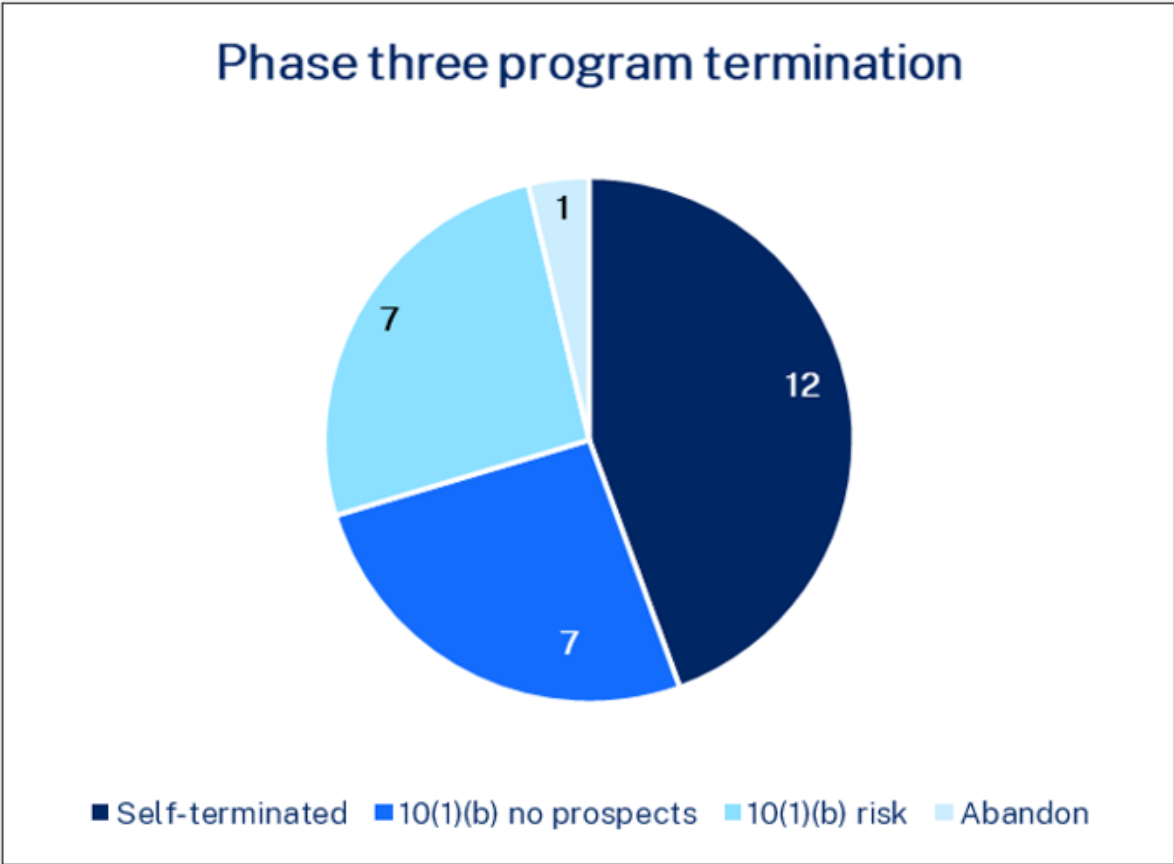
³ Determination that a participant's further participation in the program poses an unacceptable risk to the community.

⁴ Abandonment of program by participant.

Graph 2 - Program termination by Phase



Graph 3 - Phase three program termination



Successfully referred cases and offences on appeal and committal

In 2024, a total of 619 successful referrals were made across all Drug Court locations. These referrals included 172 matters on appeal and 11 matters on committal, demonstrating the Court's capacity to absorb and manage cases that would otherwise contribute to the workload of the referring courts.

By dealing with these matters at the Drug Court, the program not only supports rehabilitation-focused outcomes but also helps to ease pressure on the broader criminal justice system.

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of cases and associated offences referred on appeal and on committal.

Table 4 - Successfully referred matters on appeal and committal

Location	Cases on appeal	Offences on appeal	Cases on committal	Offences on committal
Parramatta	20	126	1	2
Sydney	3	19	1	4
Hunter	0	0	2	5
Dubbo	6	27	0	0
Total	29	172	4	11

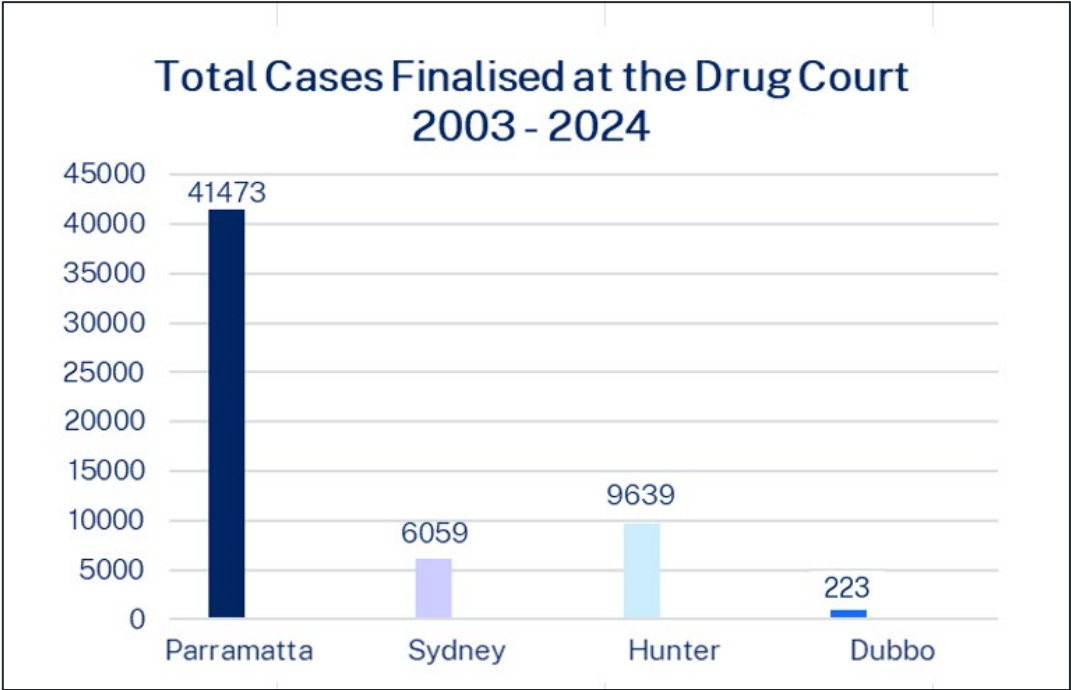
Total cases finalised at the Drug Court by financial year

Since 2003, the Drug Court has processed and finalised 57,394 cases referred by the Local and District Courts of New South Wales. In the financial year ending June 2024, the Drug Court successfully finalised 4,443 cases, enhancing judicial efficiency and delivering broader societal benefits. These outcomes reduced case processing times, eased pressure on the court system, and lowered government expenditure on the corrective system.

Table 5 – Cases finalised at the Drug Court in Financial Year 2023 – 2024

Location	Number of Cases Finalised
Parramatta	2802
Sydney	645
Hunter	779
Dubbo	217
Total	4443

Graph 4 – Cases finalised at the Drug Court from July 2003 to June 2024



3.2 Parramatta Drug Court

Beginning operation in 1999, the Parramatta Drug Court was the first Drug Court to be trialled and evaluated in Australia. In its 25th anniversary year, the Court continued the trend of steady increase and received over 628 referrals with 165 participants on program as of 31 December 2024. The Court continues to receive the support of the Local and District Courts resulting in a 13.6% increase in referrals compared to the previous year.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2024 and is reported as of 31 December 2024.

165

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2024

628

Total participant referrals

in 2023

176

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total

Referrals	52
Successful in ballot	52
On program as at 31/12/2024	39

Total participants

Phase 1	61
Phase 2	56
Phase 3	48
Total	165

Program entry

Total referred	628
Pre-ballot exclusion	307
Placed in ballot	321
Accepted after ballot	316
Returned ineligible*	104

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	219
Participants progress to Phase 2	137
Participants progress to Phase 3	77

Program completion

Graduated	61
Substantial compliance	3
Total Non-custody	103
Custody	73
Total completions	176

3.3 Sydney Drug Court

The Sydney Drug Court expansion continued into 2024 with the Phase 2 legislative amendment again increasing the courts catchment area. The further expansion to an additional ten Local Government Areas, resulted in a 120% increase in total referrals compared to the previous year. In response to this significant increase in referrals, the Court has increased its sitting days to four days a week and has become a full time Drug Court in November 2024. The scale of the expansion is not only reflected by the number of referrals, the participants on program as of 31 December 2024 doubled the number on program the previous year.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2024 and is reported as of 31 December 2024.

79

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2024

233

Total participant referrals

in 2024

71

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total	
Referrals	41
Successful in ballot	41
On program as at 31/12/23	21

Total participants

Phase 1	27
Phase 2	32
Phase 3	20
Total	79

Program entry

Total referred	233
Pre-ballot exclusion	54
Placed in ballot	179
Accepted after ballot	179
Returned ineligible*	38

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	116
Participants progress to Phase 2	58
Participants progress to Phase 3	27

Program completion

Graduated	17
Substantial compliance	2
Total Non-custody	24
Custody	47
Total completions	71

3.4 Hunter Drug Court

The Hunter Drug Court received more than 140 referrals in 2024, slightly less than in the previous year. While the downward trend continued into the number of participants on program as of 31 December 2024 this is reflective of a positive increase in program completions. The Hunter Drug Court experienced a 60% increase in program completions with, 58% of those completing reaching the highest standard of graduation and 74% of those completing the program receiving a non-custodial sentence. Accordingly, the Court held 12 graduation ceremonies to celebrate the success of the 40 graduates.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2024 and is reported as of 31 December 2024.

66

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2024

141

Total participant referrals

in 2024

69

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total	
Referrals	21
Successful in ballot	21
On program as at 31/12/2023	28

Total participants

Phase 1	14
Phase 2	23
Phase 3	29
Total	66

Program entry

Total referred	141
Pre-ballot exclusion	56
Placed in ballot	85
Accepted after ballot	85
Returned ineligible*	57

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	55
Participants progress to Phase 2	52
Participants progress to Phase 3	46

Program completion

Graduated	40
Substantial compliance	1
Total Non-custody	51
Custody	18
Total completions	69

3.5 Dubbo Drug Court

The second year in operation for the Dubbo Drug Court saw its first full year of operations. While referral rates did not increase on those in the first year of operations the participants on program, moved through the three program phases with a more than doubled rate of completion. More noticeably, among those that completed the program, 43% graduated from the Drug Court Program, the success of the graduates was celebrated with 9 graduation ceremonies in 2024.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2024 and is reported as of 31 December 2024.

24

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2024

50

Total participant referrals

in 2024

22

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total	
Referrals	31
Successful in ballot	31
On program as at 31/12/2024	22

Total participants	
Phase 1	13
Phase 2	7
Phase 3	4
Total	24

Program entry	
Total referred	50
Pre-ballot exclusion	11
Placed in ballot	39
Accepted after ballot	39
Returned ineligible*	6

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression	
Participants entered Phase 1	29
Participants progress to Phase 2	12
Participants progress to Phase 3	11

Program completion	
Graduated	9
Substantial compliance	0
Total Non-custody	13
Custody	9
Total completions	22

3.6 Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre (CDTCC)

The Drug Court provides judicial supervision for prisoner participants at the Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre (CDTCC). The CDTCC provides compulsory treatment and rehabilitation of male drug offenders who are housed in a separate facility at Parklea. Prisoners who meet defined criteria are referred to the Drug Court, and the court may make a Compulsory Drug Treatment Order (CDTO), following a comprehensive suitability assessment by a multi-disciplinary team.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2024 and is reported as of 31 December 2024

38

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2024

61

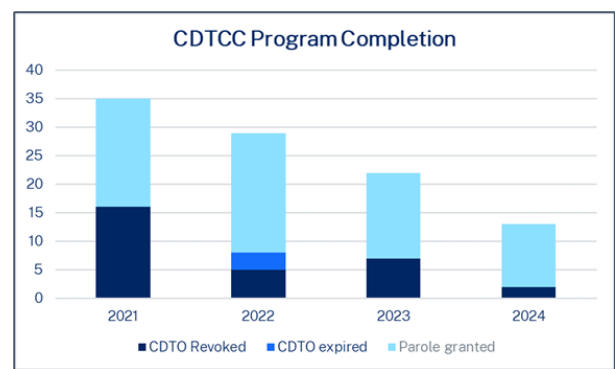
Total CDTCC referrals

in 2024

11

Successful program completions

By way of parole granted.



Total CDTCC participants

Stage 1	12
Stage 2	11
Stage 3	15
Total	38

Total CDTCC referrals

Referral	24
Suitability assessments	21
Ineligible	13
Unsuitable	3
Total	61

Program progression

Participants entered Stage 1	16
Participants progress to Stage 2	17
Participants progress to Stage 3	16

Program completion

CDTO revoked*	2
CDTO expired	0
Parole granted**	11
Total	13

* The revocation of the order usually, but not always, reflects a failure to comply with the program.

** The granting of Parole can be regarded as a successful CDTO.

4

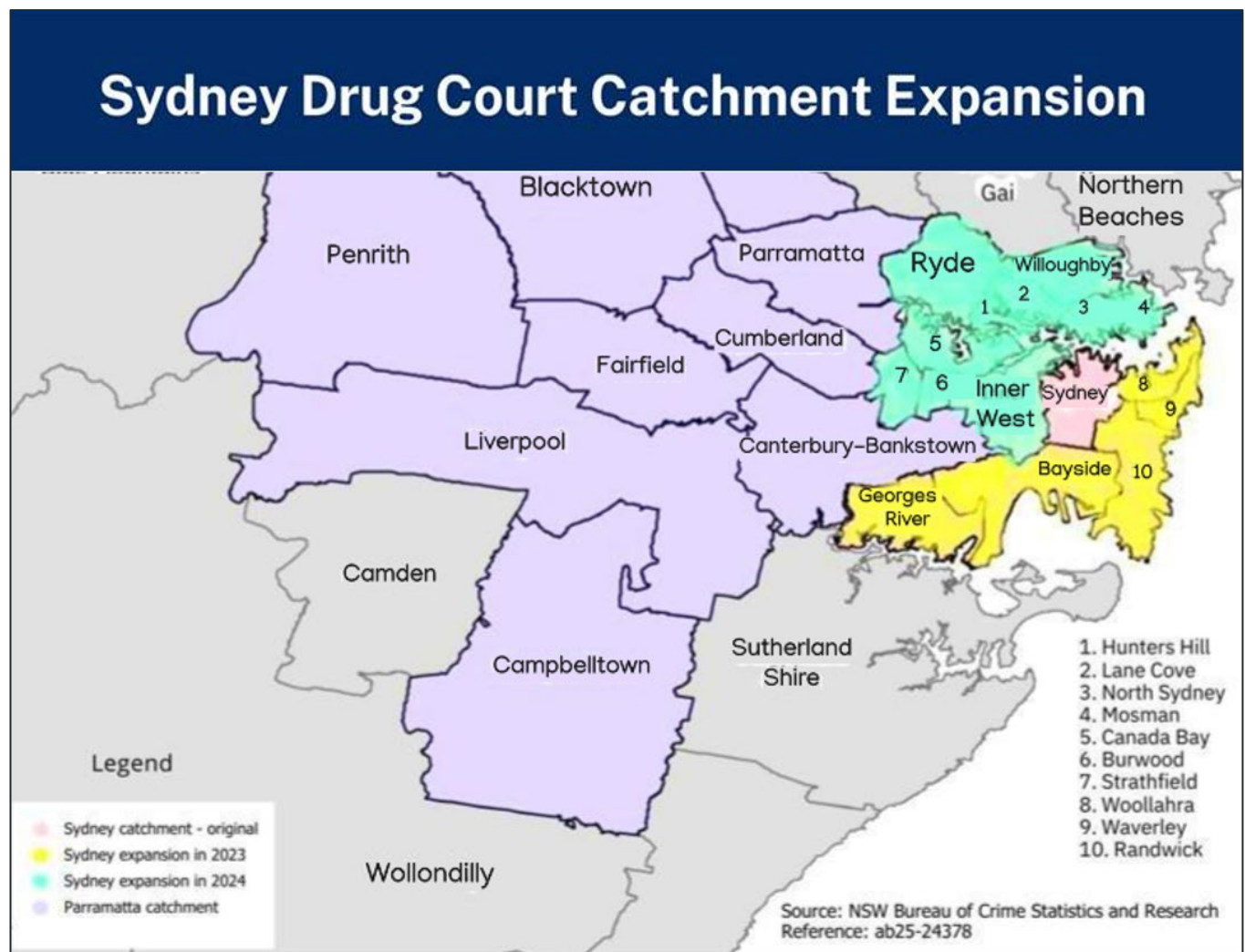
Drug Court Expansion

4.1 Sydney Drug Court becomes full-time

In 2024, the Sydney Drug Court expansion continued. On the 29 March 2024 the Drug Court Regulation 2020 was again amended, increasing the Sydney Drug Court catchment areas to an additional ten eligible Local Government Areas (LGAs). This broadened the total catchment areas to sixteen LGAs, which are: Bayside, Burwood, Canada Bay, City of Sydney, Georges River, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Randwick, Ryde, Strathfield, Waverley, Willoughby, and Woollahra.

The increased catchment areas have seen a significant increase in the number of referrals since the expansion commenced in 2023, and as a result, the Court increased its sitting days to four days a week, from Monday 4 November 2024 and became a full-time Drug Court.

Graph 5 – Expansion of Sydney Drug Court Catchment Areas



4.2 New Judicial appointments

The Drug Court welcomed five new Judges to the jurisdiction in November 2024. Magistrate John Chicken, Magistrate Claire Giroto, Acting Magistrate Leslie Mabbutt, Magistrate Susan McIntyre, and Magistrate Jennifer Price accepted commission as Acting District Court Judges and as Judges of the Drug Court.

Among the five new Judges, Her Honour Judge Giroto is to sit as the full time Judge at the Parramatta Drug Court from Monday 6 January 2025, and His Honour Judge Chicken is to commence sitting two days per week at the Hunter Drug Court in May 2025.

His Honour Judge Mabbutt, Her Honour Judge McIntyre, and Her Honour Judge Price join Judge Roger Dive and Judge Ian Guy as relieving Drug Court Judges, Her Honour Judge McIntyre, and Her Honour Judge Price will remain as full time Magistrates when not relieving in the Drug Court.

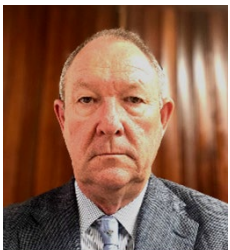


Her Honour
Acting Judge
Claire Giroto

Her Honour Judge Claire Giroto joined the Drug Court bench in November 2024 to commence sitting fulltime at Parramatta Drug Court in January 2025. Judge Giroto also retains her commission as a permanent Magistrate.

During her legal career, Judge Giroto has been the Deputy Solicitor (Operations) of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) for 11 years and served as the managing lawyer of the ODPP's Wollongong regional office.

Subsequently, Her Honour served on the Local Court bench for 10 years.



His Honour
Acting Judge
John Chicken

His Honour Judge John Chicken joins the Drug Court bench after serving on the Magistrate's bench for 15 years.

Prior to his appointment as a Magistrate, His Honour had 25 years' experience in the legal profession, including 15 years as a solicitor specialised in criminal law, and 10 years as a barrister.

His Honour appeared extensively in the Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service, as well as in hearings before the Mental Health Review Tribunal, the State Parole Authority, and statutory commissions.



His Honour
Acting Judge
Leslie Mabbutt

His Honour Judge Leslie Mabbutt has had a diverse background before joining the Drug Court.

His Honour commenced his career as an apprentice chef and then a qualified chef for eight years across a range of restaurant establishments. His Honour later transitioned to law enforcement and joined the NSW Police Force.

Judge Mabbutt subsequently worked as a police prosecutor and as the Executive Officer to the Chief Magistrate before joining the Magistrate's Bench. His Honour has served for 19 years across the Local Court and the Children's Court, including five years as co-ordinating Magistrate of the Central Local Court.

In 2018, His Honour was appointed as the State Coroner of NSW. Following this appointment, Judge Mabbutt returned to the Local Court bench and retired in July 2023. Since then, Judge Mabbutt has continued to contribute to the judiciary in the capacity of Acting Magistrate.



Her Honour
Acting Judge
Susan McIntyre

Her Honour Judge Susan McIntyre began her legal career as a criminal solicitor and advocate with the Legal Aid Commission NSW (1991–2000). Her Honour appeared in all court levels, and represented involuntary patients before the Mental Health Tribunal. From 2000–2008, Her Honour practiced privately, yet remaining active on Legal Aid Criminal Law and Children's Court panels. In 2004, Her Honour completed a Master of Laws from the University of Sydney, with her thesis on the study of therapeutic jurisprudence. Judge McIntyre joined the Magistrate's bench in 2008. Since then, Her Honour has served as a Magistrate at the Children's Court, Local Court, as well as Magistrate for Involuntary Detention Drug and Alcohol Treatment. Her Honour has also served as the Deputy State

Coroner (Gosford Court) and the head of civil law (2018–2021). Judge McIntyre is currently a member of Local Court Education Committee and mentor to new magistrates.



Her Honour
Acting Judge
Jennifer Price

Her Honour Judge Jennifer Price was appointed to the bench of the NSW Local Court in 2016. Judge Price is currently the Coordinating Magistrate of Burwood Local Court, as well as the Regional Coordinator for Eastern Sydney. Before the appointment, Her Honour served as a lawyer at ODPP. Judge Price is also a member of the Women Lawyers Association of NSW.

5

Drug Court Conference

5.1 Drug Court Practitioners' Conference 2024

Drug Court Conferences are held every two years providing professional development for Drug Court Practitioners. Each conference covers a wide range of topics for all practitioners including presentations by experienced speakers and distinguished guests from a variety of professional backgrounds.

On Friday 21 June 2024, the Drug Court Practitioners' Conference 2024 was successfully held at the Sydney Masonic Centre, celebrating the Therapeutic Excellence of 25 years of Drug Courts in NSW.

The conference opened with a welcome to country performed by Michael West from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council along with a traditional dance performance by The Glen for men. The Glen residential rehabilitation services provide support for men and women and is where many Drug Court participants spend the first part of their Drug Court program.

The Honourable Michael Daley, MP, Attorney General of NSW then officially opened the conference with a speech outlining his strong support for the work of the Drug Court.



The Honourable Michael Daley MP, Attorney General of NSW, giving the opening address

The Conference hosted five sessions, covering topics from international trends to cultural care, and included key speakers from different disciplines:

- The opening session of the conference, International Trends, was presented by Joe Coyte, Executive Director of The Glen Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre. Joe shared his learnings following his Churchill fellowship visiting and studying Drug and Alcohol treatment within criminal justice settings overseas

- Dan Howard, Former Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Drug Ice, presented on his findings following the Special Commission of inquiry into the Drug Ice, what has happened since and what more needs to be done.
- Dr Gerald Chew, Dr Quinton Matepi and Dr Peter Tompson of Justice Health NSW presented a valuable overview of the Drug Court Program Assessment and Treatment Planning for participants. The panel drew on their expertise as Drug and Alcohol treatment specialists to provide the audience of Drug Court practitioners with an insight into the development of treatment plans.
- Vanessa Edwige, Clinical Psychologist of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association, presented a paper on Cultural Care, Engagement and Communication. Vanessa was then joined by a panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from the Drug Court to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants on the Drug Court Program.
- The afternoon session, Effective Team Dynamics, led by Sally Ryan, the Director of Human Ethos, was an opportunity for the practitioners to hear practical advice and then put that into practice in a workshop format. This session focused on the unique dynamics of the Drug Court multidisciplinary team which is one of the key pillars of a successful Drug Court. A forum of experienced former and current Drug Court staff including Judge Roger Dive discussed the key benefits and challenges of working across disciplines.

Holding the conference on the 25th year anniversary of the Drug Court, the conference served as a platform to reflect on the progress made in the field of drug dependency treatment over the past twenty-five years, and to envision the future direction of the Drug Court.



Her Honour Judge Jane Mottley AM, Senior Judge of the Drug Court of NSW giving closing remarks

6

Innovation

6.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

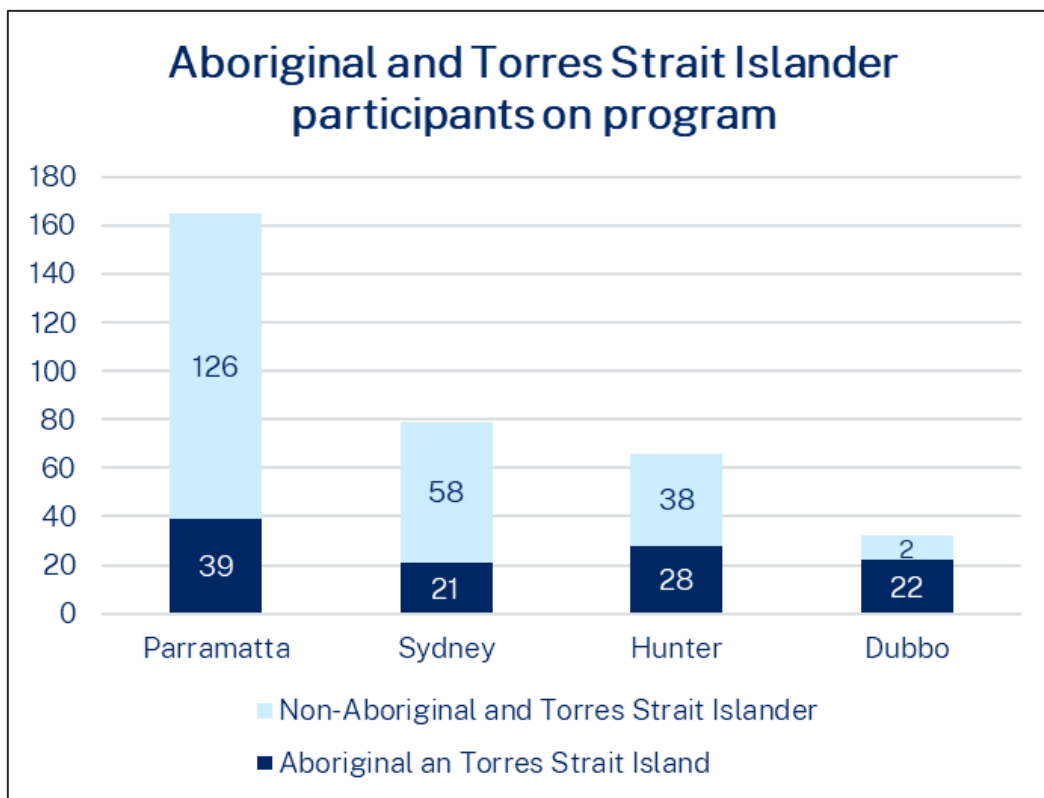
In 2024 the Aboriginal Services Unit (ASU) continued their support for the Drug Court with an increase in Aboriginal Casework Coordinator roles to all Drug Courts. This was a welcome addition to the Drug Court teams and a valuable support to the Aboriginal participants at all locations.

The Aboriginal Casework Coordinator works with members of the Drug Court interagency team in the case management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, facilitating referrals and coordinating service provision on behalf of participants. This role is based in the Court registry and reports to the Aboriginal Services Unit.

A joint review of the Aboriginal Brokerage Procedure was undertaken by ASU and the Drug Court in 2024. A roadshow was delivered by the Executive Officer of the Drug Court and Manager of Specialist Courts, Aboriginal Services Unit. This was to assist the Drug Court team to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities brokerage funding offer for supporting participants on their Drug Court program, while aligning with the Drug Court's therapeutic focus.

Graph 5 provides data for total participants on the Drug Court program as of 31 December 2024, highlighting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participant numbers.

Graph 6 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants on program



6.2 A new database for Drug Court

In 2024 work commenced on the new Drug Court Database: **TRACE (Therapeutic Rehabilitation and Case Ecosystem)**. TRACE represents a significant leap forward in our efforts to support the Drug Court with new technology and streamlined processes.

TRACE

Therapeutic Rehabilitation and Case Ecosystem

Why TRACE?

Therapeutic Focus: TRACE is designed to support the therapeutic journey of participants, ensuring that every step from referral to program exit is supported with the best tools and resources.

Rehabilitation Support: The system will provide support for rehabilitation efforts, integrating seamlessly with services like NSW Forensic & Analytical Science Services (FASS) and NSW Courts case management system JusticeLink.

Comprehensive Case Management: TRACE will offer comprehensive case management capabilities, making it easier for staff and interagency partners to collaborate and manage cases efficiently.

The increased caseload arising from the Drug Court expansions to Dubbo and at Sydney coupled with the age of the current system, known as YDC provided an opportunity for a new system to be implemented that will support the ongoing growth of the Drug Court.

The new solution, TRACE, will be developed to meet the Drug Court's requirements throughout the participant journey, from the moment a participant is referred to the Drug Court to the moment they exit the program¹. Existing functionality, such as results from the Toxicology lab at NSW Forensic & Analytical Science Services (FASS), will continue to be received in TRACE.

¹ The development of TRACE is underway and due for completion in 2025. This will represent a major innovation for the Drug Court.



Drug Court of New South Wales

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