

PRESS RELEASE

RELEASE OF THE BABB REPORT

The Supreme Court of Tasmania welcomes today's release of the report by Lloyd Babb SC. The Court acknowledges that the report is the product of the Justice Forums initiated and facilitated by the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, the Hon Guy Barnett, during 2025, and that it is a tribute to the work of the many participants who contributed to that process.

In the Court's 2024-25 Annual Report, cited by Mr Babb in his "Executive Summary", the Chief Justice stated that "The Court continues to face increasing workloads, backlogs and delays across all elements of its jurisdiction". Pleasingly, Mr Babb acknowledges the established timeliness and efficiency of this Court when he observes that, "Compared to the Australian average the Tasmanian Supreme Court uses fewer full time equivalent judges to finalise each thousand matters".

The Babb Report makes a series of important recommendations emerging from his review of the Tasmanian criminal justice system. Mr Babb states that to deal with delay, Tasmania "should discourage slow, late stage matter finalisations and strategically position policy, effort and resources to prompt consistent good quality early stage finalisations".

Many of the recommendations Mr Babb makes, which deal with the progress of criminal matters prior to their arrival in the Supreme Court of Tasmania, go to that object. That suggests that these issues are properly to be understood as systemic "delay", rather than characterised as a "backlog" in any court.

Of Mr Babb's 20 recommendations, the Government has today indicated that it accepts 16 recommendations, it accepts three in principle and one which requires further consideration. Of those recommendations the recommendations 13-16 significantly affect this Court, and they include (showing the Government response in bold):

13. repealing or amending s 2 of the *Supreme Court Act* 1887 to allow for the appointment of additional Supreme Court judges, and which would allow for an overlap in the appointment of new judges when retiring judges take accumulated leave maintaining current judicial numbers during those periods **(supported in principle)**;
14. the introduction of a system of reserve judges to replace the current use of acting judges **(supported in principle)**;
15. funding of an additional Supreme Court judge **(requires further consideration)**, and
16. tailored information technology solutions to support the Court's work **(supported)**.

The Court welcomes the timeliness of the Government's response, and understands that the Government intends to consult upon its implementation of the Babb Report. The Chief Justice said that "the judges of this Court remain committed to their role within the criminal justice system and the improvement and growth of this Court in their continuing service to the people of Tasmania".