



Drug Court of
New South Wales

Drug Court of New South Wales

Annual Review 2023

June 2024

Contents

- Foreward by the Senior Judge of the Drug Court 3**
- Court Profile..... 5**
- 2023 in Review 8**
- Court Operations 9**
 - Overview..... 9
 - Parramatta Drug Court..... 13
 - Sydney Drug Court..... 14
 - Hunter Drug Court..... 15
 - Dubbo Drug Court..... 16
 - Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre (CDTCC) 17
- Drug Court Expands18**
- Innovation.....21**
- Field Visit.....23**

Acknowledgment of Country

The Drug Court of New South Wales acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Foreword by the Senior Judge of the Drug Court

The Drug Court of New South Wales has experienced another exciting year with the expansion of sittings to Dubbo and an increase in sittings at Sydney. Changes made to the Drug Court regulations to facilitate the expansion at Dubbo also permitted referrals to be made from all Local and District Courts. As a consequence, the court has enjoyed an increase in both referrals and participants completing their program throughout 2023.

The commencement of sittings at Dubbo marked the culmination of years of lobbying by the Dubbo community and former Senior Judge Roger Dive. It was most fitting that Judge Dive, along with Judge Joanne Keogh and myself, presided over the ceremonial sitting of the Court held on 20 February. The arrival of the Court was clearly welcomed by that community.

Following the former government's announcement of the expansion of the Sydney Drug Court, sitting days have increased at that location, along with the number of referrals. These developments have been pleasing. The upcoming amendments to the Drug Court Regulation in 2024, which will capture additional Local Government areas, will see further increases in sitting days as the referrals and participant numbers increase.

With the ongoing increase in the overall sittings of the Court, we have welcomed the appointment of Judge Mary Ryan. Judge Ryan recently retired as a Local Court Magistrate and brings a wealth of experience to her new role. Judge Ryan's diverse background equips her well for the demands of her new role.

In 2023 we also saw the expansion of the administrative positions within the Court. Filiz Eminov had previously held the dual role of Registrar and Executive Officer. As an acknowledgment of the increased demands of both roles, the responsibilities have been separated. Filiz has remained as Registrar and Tracey Cremming has been appointed to the role of Executive Officer. Tracey has an extensive background in courts and previously worked on the expansion of the Drug Court to both Sydney and Hunter. She is an invaluable asset and has worked tirelessly since her appointment on a variety of initiatives. Lauren Aquilina has joined the team as Project Officer. A sample of her hard work is in the preparation of this report, for which I am very grateful.

With the expansion of the court, some major capital works for Corrections have been required. In May 2023, the expanded Drug Court unit at Silverwater Correctional Centre opened. This resulted in an increase in bed capacity from 17 to 239 for those requiring detoxification, the preparation of a Highly Suitable Treatment plan or a treatment review. With the increase in capacity, those required to serve custodial sanctions are now able to do so in the Drug Court unit rather than other correctional centres.



**Her Honour
Senior Judge
Jane Mottley
AM**



Dubbo Courthouse

On a disappointing note, the number of Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre (CDTCC) participants remains in decline. Despite the statutory duty for a court to refer eligible convicted offenders to the Drug Court, regrettably, those referrals are not being made. Throughout the year, there have been discussions with Policy, Reform and Legislation regarding alternate referral pathways, aimed at increasing numbers.

In October, the Attorney General for NSW, the Hon. Michael Daley, visited the Court at Parramatta. The Attorney General not only spent time observing the court proceedings, but also took time to meet with some of the participants. His interest and support of the Court is greatly appreciated.

As evident in this report, the Court is thriving. Behind the published statistics is a group of dedicated, professional and enthusiastic staff from our partner agencies. The success of participants cannot be attributed to a single individual. Rather, it is the collaborative efforts of treatment providers in the community and in residential rehabilitation, Community Corrections officers, lawyers, police, Aboriginal Casework Coordinators, registry, and other administrative staff who support the participants in achieving their program goals.

The role of the Judge is also an important one and I extend my appreciation to Judges Cloran, Dive, Guy, Keogh, Still and Ryan for their ongoing commitment and dedication to improving the health and living outcomes for our participants. I am also grateful for the support I have received from them in my role.

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

Court Profile

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.

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.

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

His Honour Judge Ian Guy

Her Honour Judge Joanne Keogh

Her Honour Judge Mary Ryan

His Honour Judge Garry Still

Judges Associates

Louisa Carboni

Penny Hooper

Angela Mitchell

Janine Linsley

Ellen Macleay

Didi Rowlatt

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.

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 2023, 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 Czajkewski – Parramatta Drug Court

Mamatha Manju – Sydney Drug Court



Court Staff Organisation Chart

2023 in Review

Drug Court Program - 2023

289

Participants on program as at 31 December 2023

9% increase in participants on program compared to 31 December 2022.

469

Successful referrals

1% decrease in successful referrals compared to 2022.

273

Participants completed program

3% increase in participants completing program compared to 2022.

145

Non-custody program completion

53% of total program completion resulted in non-custodial outcome in 2023.

95

Graduations

35% of total program completion was participant graduation from program.

Graduations were held in all Drug Court locations.

440

Participant capacity as at 31 December 2023

The Drug Court of New South Wales has capacity for up to 440 participants across its four locations.

Court Operations

Overview

The following data is calculated and reported as of 31 December 2023.

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 2023.

Table 1 - Program activity overview

Location	Total Referrals	Accepted after ballot ¹	Total participants ²	Total completion ³	Graduates	% Non-custody ⁴
Parramatta	553	241	149	183	61	47.5%
Sydney	106	82	36	37	14	56.7%
Hunter	151	97	81	43	19	76.7%
Dubbo	59	49	23	10	1	40%

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

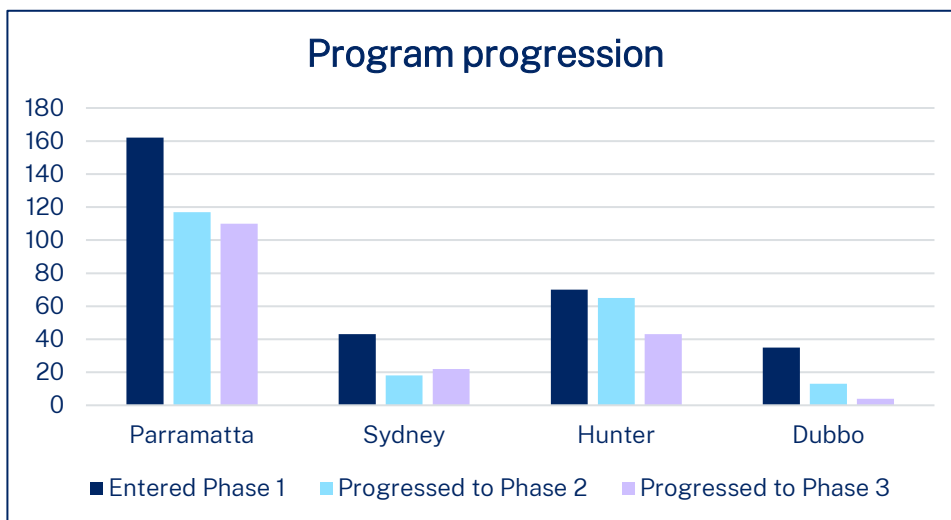
² Total number of participants on the Drug Court program as at 31/12/2023.

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 2023.

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	87	21	33	4
Custody	96	16	10	6
Total completions	183	37	43	10

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	19	6	8	2
10(1)(b) no prospects ²	37	2	9	0
10 (1)(b) risk ³	14	5	2	6
Abandoned ⁴	25	5	7	3
Total	95	18	26	11

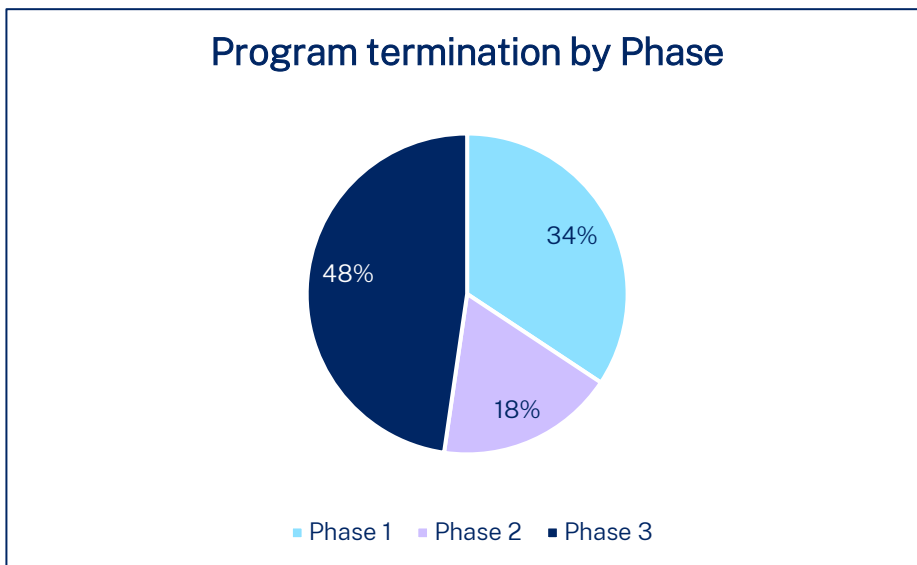
¹ Termination of a program at the participant's request.

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

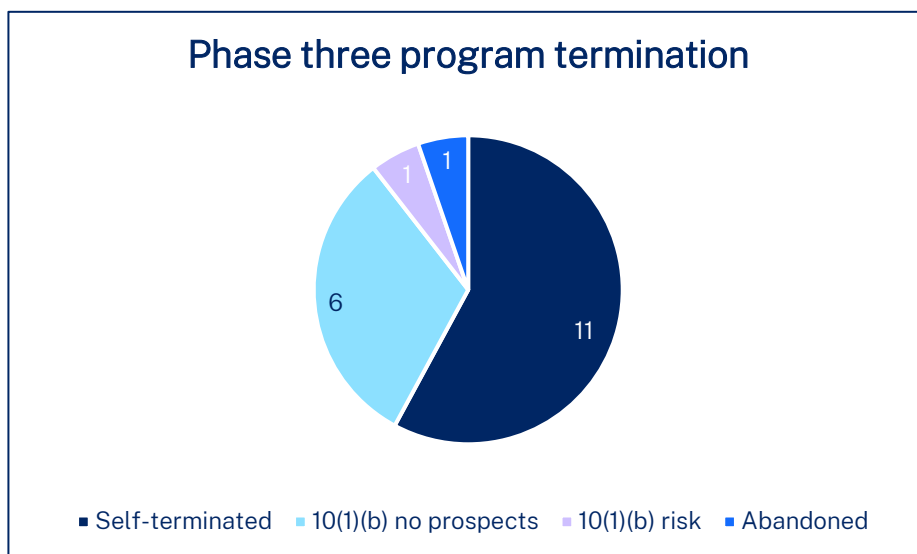
³ Determination that a participant's further participation in the program poses an unacceptable risk to the community.

⁴ Abandonment of program by participant.

Graph 2 - Program termination by Phase



Graph 3 - Phase three program termination



Parramatta Drug Court

Beginning operation in 1999, the Parramatta Drug Court was the first Drug Court to be trialled and evaluated in Australia. Twenty-four years on, the Court welcomed over 550 referrals with 149 participants on program as of 31 December 2023. With over 180 program completions, the Court has increased 23.2% in referrals compared to the previous year.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2023 and is reported as of 31 December 2023.

149

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2023

553

Total participant referrals

in 2023

183

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total

Referrals	59
Successful in ballot	54
On program as at 31/12/23	47

Total participants

Phase 1	56
Phase 2	33
Phase 3	60
Total	149

Program entry

Total referred	553
Pre-ballot exclusion	257
Placed in ballot	296
Accepted after ballot	241
Returned ineligible*	53

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	162
Participants progress to Phase 2	117
Participants progress to Phase 3	110

Program completion

Graduated	61
Substantial compliance	7
Total Non-custody	87
Custody	96
Total completions	183

Sydney Drug Court

The expansion of Sydney Drug Court in September 2023, saw a 22% increase in total referrals compared to the previous year. The increase of an additional sitting day alongside a 9% increase in participants on program (compared to 2022), is only the first phase of the Court’s expansion with phase two expected in 2024. It is hoped this level of enthusiasm for the program continues in 2024.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2023 and is reported as of 31 December 2023.

36

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2023

106

Total participant referrals

in 2023

37

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 31/12/23	13

Total participants

Phase 1	19
Phase 2	4
Phase 3	13
Total	36

Program entry

Total referred	106
Pre-ballot exclusion	24
Placed in ballot	82
Accepted after ballot	82
Returned ineligible*	17

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	43
Participants progress to Phase 2	18
Participants progress to Phase 3	22

Program completion

Graduated	14
Substantial compliance	1
Total Non-custody	21
Custody	16
Total completions	37

Hunter Drug Court

Located within Toronto Court House and operating since 2011, Hunter Drug Court received over 150 referrals in 2023. Holding six graduation ceremonies in 2023, program completions at Hunter had a 76.7% total non-custody rate. Compared to the previous year, the Court program has increased 2% in referrals and 35% in participants on program.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2023 and is reported as of 31 December 2023.

81

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2023

151

Total participant referrals

in 2023

43

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total

Referrals	20
Successful in ballot	20
On program as at 31/12/2023	24

Total participants

Phase 1	25
Phase 2	26
Phase 3	30
Total	81

Program entry

Total referred	151
Pre-ballot exclusion	54
Placed in ballot	97
Accepted after ballot	97
Returned ineligible*	39

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	70
Participants progress to Phase 2	65
Participants progress to Phase 3	43

Program completion

Graduated	19
Substantial compliance	2
Total Non-custody	33
Custody	10
Total completions	43

Dubbo Drug Court

Since commencing sitting on 20 February 2023, the Dubbo Drug Court has welcomed nearly 60 referrals from Local and District Courts. Accepting participants from the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area, the Court also saw it's very first graduation ceremony in October with one participant, who commenced their program at Hunter Drug Court, successfully graduating.

Key statistics

The following data is calculated for the calendar year of 2023 and is reported as of 31 December 2023.

23

Participants on program

as at 31/12/2023

59

Total participant referrals

in 2023

10

Program completions

Includes non-custody and custody program completion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Total

Referrals	36
Successful in ballot	36
On program as at 31/12/2023	18

Total participants

Phase 1	11
Phase 2	9
Phase 3	3
Total	23

Program entry

Total referred	59
Pre-ballot exclusion	10
Placed in ballot	49
Accepted after ballot	49
Returned ineligible*	5

* Also includes returned not appropriate/unwilling/withdrawn.

Program progression

Participants entered Phase 1	35
Participants progress to Phase 2	13
Participants progress to Phase 3	4

Program completion

Graduated	1
Substantial compliance	0
Total Non-custody	4
Custody	6
Total completions	10

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 2023 and is reported as of 31 December 2023.

34

Participants on program
as at 31/12/2023

84

Total CDTCC referrals
in 2023

15

Successful program completions
by way of parole granted.

Total CDTCC participants

Stage 1	13
Stage 2	10
Stage 3	11
Total	34

Total CDTCC referrals

Referral	42
Suitability assessments	20
Ineligible	22
Total	84

Program progression

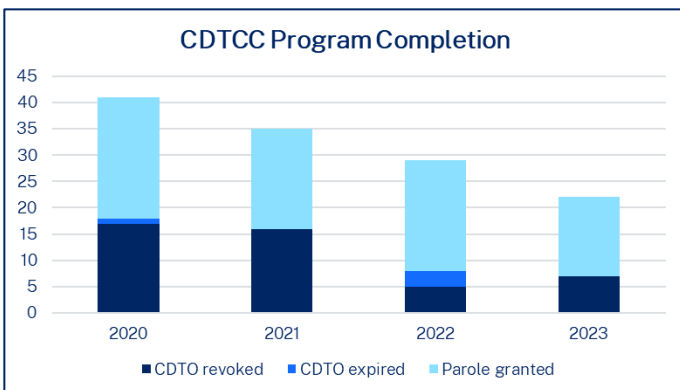
Participants entered Stage 1	18
Participants progress to Stage 2	11
Participants progress to Stage 3	12

Program completion

CDTO revoked*	7
CDTO expired	0
Parole granted**	15
Total	22

* 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.



Drug Court Expands

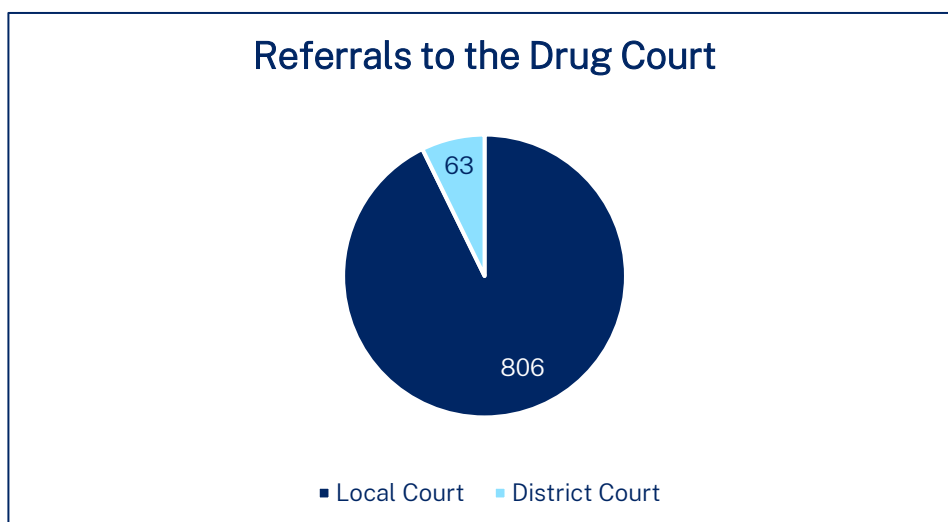
Referrals permitted from all Local and District Court's

From 12 January 2023, the power to make referrals to the Drug Court was extended to all Local Courts and District Courts in New South Wales. This is a significant change to the previous approach, which restricted referrals to specified courts sitting in and around the catchment areas for existing Drug Court locations. The Drug Court Amendment (Court Expansion) Regulation 2022 omits this list of specified courts and allows the District Court and the Local Court, regardless of where the court is sitting in New South Wales, to refer eligible persons to the Drug Court.

In seeking this change, the Court's intention was to ensure its program be available as a therapeutic intervention in communities characterised by high levels of drug dependency and associated offending behaviour.

Graph 4 indicates the source of all referrals made to the Drug Court across all locations, for the calendar year of 2023, reported as at 31 December 2023.

Graph 4 – Referrals to the Drug Court





Judge Keogh (left), Senior Judge Mottley AM and Judge Dive in Dubbo for its first sitting.

Drug Court expands to Dubbo

The Drug Court Amendment (Court Expansion) Regulation 2022 commenced on 12 January 2023, allowing referrals to the new Dubbo Drug Court. The Court commenced sitting on 20 February 2023, marking the expansion of an historically metropolitan-based program to its first remote regional location in New South Wales.

The expansion forms part of the NSW Government response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the drug “Ice” (the Ice Inquiry). The funding provided permits the court to sit up to two days per week in Dubbo, creating an opportunity for up to 80 eligible persons to undertake the program at any one time.

Sydney Drug Court expansion

The NSW Government committed ongoing funding to expand the Drug Court at Sydney, which was originally a one day per week Court, to a full-time Court. The expansion has been delivered as a two-phase process, enabling the Court to increase the number of participants from 40 up to 160 per year.

The Drug Court Amendment Regulation 2023 commenced on 21 August 2023, allowing referrals to the Drug Court program from new Local Government Areas (LGAs). The amendment increased the catchment area of the Sydney Court by including the Local Government Areas of Bayside, Georges River, City of Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra.

From 20 September 2023, the Court at Sydney commenced sitting two days a week on a Wednesday and Thursday at the Downing Centre.

Phase 2 of the Drug Court at Sydney expansion is to commence in 2024. The expansion will continue with further amendments to the Drug Court Regulation taking effect on Friday 29 March 2024.

The amendments will further increase the Drug Court at Sydney catchment to the LGAs of Burwood, Canada Bay, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, Strathfield and Willoughby. The sitting days at the Court will increase in line with the referrals.

New Judicial appointment

The Drug Court welcomed a new Judge to the jurisdiction in July 2023. Acting Magistrate Mary Ryan accepted commission as Acting District Court Judge and as Judge of the Drug Court.

Her Honour Judge Ryan joined the Drug Court bench, after retiring in February 2022 as a Magistrate.

In the course of her legal career, Judge Ryan was the solicitor in charge of the Legal Aid Commission's Dubbo regional office and has worked for the Commission at Penrith, Mt Druitt and Manly. Her Honour has also held positions at the Western Aboriginal Legal Service at Walgett and Bourke and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency in the Northern Territory. Her Honour served on the Local Court bench for 12 years.



**Her Honour
Acting Judge
Mary Ryan**

A legacy of dedication and compassion

The Court bid a fond farewell to Susan Jefferies, a cherished member of our team, who retired in July 2023 after years of dedicated service as a Clinical Nurse Consultant with Justice Health NSW. Since inception of the Drug Court at Parramatta in 1999, Sue has been a guiding light, providing unparalleled healthcare services and heartfelt compassion to all Court participants.

Throughout her esteemed career at the Drug Court, Sue has impacted the lives of both Court participants and team members. Her expertise and kindness have left a lasting impact on all those with whom she has worked. Sue's willingness to continue supporting the Drug Court team even after retirement is a testament to her dedication and genuine care for the well-being of others.

As one of the pioneering members of the Court team, Sue's influence has been profound. Her commitment to excellence and her boundless empathy have set a standard that will endure long after her retirement. Sue leaves behind a legacy of professionalism, kindness, and unwavering dedication that will continue to shape the future of the Drug Court.



**Sue Jefferies in
Parramatta Drug
Court on her
retirement day.**

Innovation

Governance framework

In 2023, the Drug Court governance framework was introduced. This framework established a two-layer governance strategy with the creation of a new oversight group and a repurposed use of the review and management team meetings (as outlined in [Drug Court Policy 1 – Team meetings and participant review](#)).

In July 2023, the Court established the Senior Officers Interagency Group (SOIG). This group comprises representatives from each of the interagency team organisations with sufficient knowledge of Drug Court practice and seniority to allow for informed discussions with decision-making authority.

The aim of the group is to consider issues impacting all Drug Courts and any major policy/procedure proposals that may require senior decision makers agreement/commitment to implement. The key aims of the SOIG are to oversee and monitor the systemic issues impacting the Court and create a consultation and decision-making process for change.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

The beginning of 2023 saw the introduction of the new Aboriginal Casework Coordinator roles at the Court. These specialised roles were introduced to ensure culturally sensitive and appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants navigating the Court program.

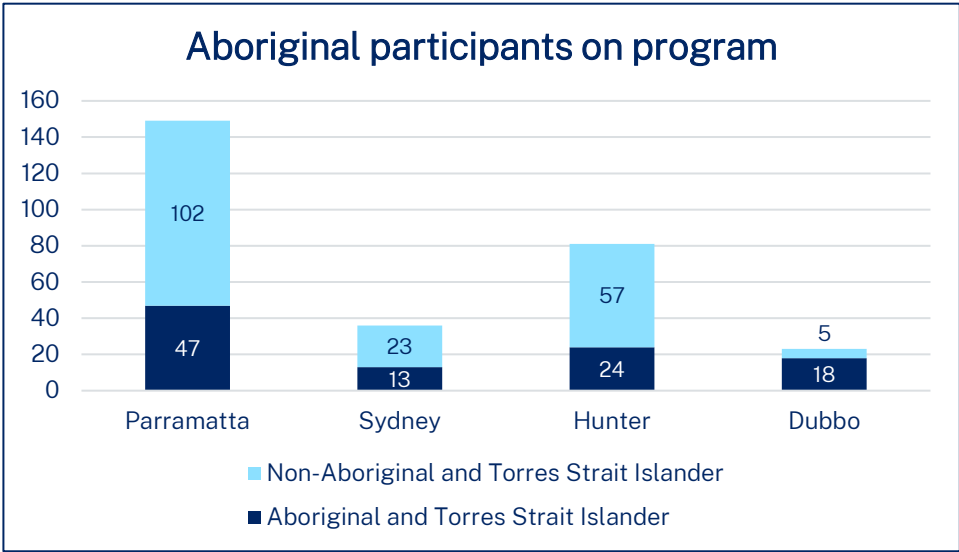
The Aboriginal Casework Coordinator work with members of the Drug Court interagency team in case management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, facilitating referrals and coordinating service provision on behalf of participants. This role is based in the Court registry and reports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

Recognising the importance of cultural consideration in the rehabilitation and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, the Court implemented dedicated specialist list days. These specifically designed court days aim to cater to the cultural needs and sensitivities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, providing a platform for open dialogue and having a yarn.

Drug Court participants attend the court to report back to the Judge and team. On these list days, the Judge and team sit at the bar table with the participant. By creating a space that respects and acknowledges the cultural heritage and context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, the Court aims to foster a more inclusive and effective rehabilitation process.

Graph 5 provides data for total participants on the Drug Court program as at 31 December 2023, highlighting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participant numbers.

Graph 5 – Aboriginal participants on program



Data is recorded as at 31 December 2023.

Field Visit



Shanmugam Banukumar, Laboratory Manager, Drug Toxicology Unit, Macquarie Hospital.

Laboratory visits

In April 2023, members of the Drug Court staff and interagency team had the opportunity to visit the Drug Toxicology Unit (DTU) at NSW Health Pathology. Housed in the Cameron Building at Macquarie Hospital, the DTU plays a crucial role in ensuring the compliance of Drug Court participants through rapid urine testing. With the implementation of new technology and updated procedures for urine drug testing, the DTU has successfully kept up with the growth of the Court's program.

In October 2023, the Drug Court Judges also visited the DTU, where they spent the day gaining valuable insights and a fresh perspective on the vital work conducted by the DTU. They observed firsthand the advanced equipment and techniques used for accurate and timely drug testing. The judges were particularly impressed by the DTU's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the testing process. It was an informative and eye-opening experience for the Judges, who praised the dedication and professionalism of the DTU staff.

The laboratory visits served as a reminder of the importance of collaboration between the Court and the DTU in achieving successful outcomes for participants.



Drug Court of New South Wales

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New South Wales

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