

Parole Board | Queensland
Annual Report 2021–22



Queensland
Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The Parole Board Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Queensland and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to the Elders—past, present and emerging—for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

Contact Us

Parole Board Queensland
Published by the Parole Board Queensland
September 2022
© 2022
ISSN: 2653-1348 (Online)
Parole Board Queensland
Address: GPO Box 1054 Brisbane Qld 4001
Phone: 07 3565 7567
Website: www.pbq.qld.gov.au

Interpreter Service



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this annual report, you can contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and request to be transferred to Multicultural Affairs Queensland on 13 QGOV (13 74 68).



Parole Board Queensland
GPO Box 1054
Brisbane Queensland 4001
07 35657567
ParoleBoardQLD@pbq.qld.gov.au

26 September 2022

The Honourable Mark Furner MP
Acting Minister for Police and Corrective
Services and Acting Minister for Fire and
Emergency Services
Member for Ferny Grove
GPO Box 46
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of section 242F of the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, I am pleased to present the Parole Board Queensland Annual Report 2021–22, detailing its operations and activities.

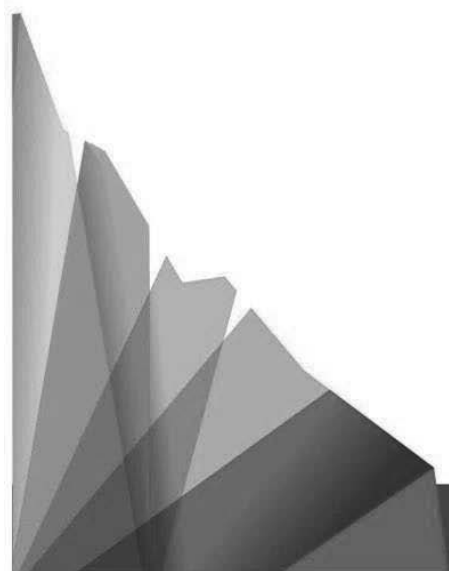
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Sharp'.

Julie Sharp
Acting President
Parole Board Queensland

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| President’s Foreword | 6 |
| Our people and functions..... | 9 |
| Mission Statement | 9 |
| Our People..... | 9 |
| Functions of the Board..... | 10 |
| Spotlight: Notable Activities and Achievements 2021-22 | 12 |
| Commitment to criminal justice system improvement..... | 12 |
| Commitment to addressing the epidemic of domestic and family violence | 12 |
| Commitment to improving the parole system for First Nations people..... | 14 |
| Commitment to ongoing stakeholder engagement | 16 |
| Commitment to a healthy workplace | 16 |
| Congratulations | 17 |
| The Year in review: In Numbers | 18 |



President's foreword

This year marks the end of the first five years for Parole Board Queensland (the Board), and I am pleased to present a report reflecting significant achievements.

I take this opportunity to publicly thank Michelle Moore, who left the position of Executive Director this year to pursue other opportunities. Ms Moore was instrumental in the efficient and successful establishment of the Board in 2017, and over the last five years, she remained a dedicated member of the executive team. I am indebted to her counsel and tireless work. She will be missed.

The workload of the Board has increased significantly since its commencement on 1 July 2017. In the year prior, the three superseded Boards considered 2409 applications for parole. This financial year (as at 14 June 2022), the Board had received 3216 new parole applications and 4700 applications to suspend parole orders, a function first given to the Board in 2017.

Last financial year, this report focused on the critical point the Board had reached, receiving more applications for parole than it could consider in any given month. Predictably, that resulted in a backlog of undecided parole matters that led to dire ripple effects across the criminal justice system.

Those effects were numerous and wide-reaching. They provided stark demonstration that a properly funded parole board is essential for a fair and efficient criminal justice system in Queensland.

In the Supreme Court Annual Report for 2020–21, the former Chief Justice noted two significant ramifications on the criminal justice system—the impact on the sentencing process, and the increase in

applications for judicial review of the Board's failure to decide within statutory timeframes.

Impact was also felt personally by prisoners, and their families, who were left waiting for their applications to be decided. No doubt, victims and their families also faced distress during the delays.

The increase in judicial review applications led to a crippling workload for the Board's Legal Services Unit. During the months July to November 2021, as many as 70 to 100 applications for judicial review were being received by the Board each month. By January 2022, that number had reduced to 37, and in May 2022, only four applications were received.

Similarly, the Parole Board Secretariat and Board members shouldered extraordinary pressure in working through the backlog while maintaining an unwavering commitment to making objective, evidence-based and transparent decisions.

In July 2021, the Board had a backlog of just over 4510 outstanding parole matters (2202 parole applications and 2308 deferred suspension matters), in addition to the influx of a high volume of new matters. The Board had the capacity to consider between 230 and 240 new parole applications per month but was receiving about 300 per month.

As of 14 June 2022, there were 3263 outstanding parole matters (1324 parole applications and 1939 deferred suspension matters)—a total reduction of 1247 matters.

What those numbers do not immediately reflect is the significant achievement in the Board regaining compliance with statutory timeframes. New applications for parole are now being considered well within time and, with that, the adverse impacts on the criminal justice system are reduced, if not eradicated.

The Board has also been able to

demonstrate the significant role it has to play in reducing prisoner numbers by the timely release to parole for those who have demonstrated suitability for safe community-based supervision.

That has the important outcome of reducing overcrowding in prisons, with the attendant impacts on officer and prisoner safety, and the capacity for rehabilitation of prisoners. It also has an enormous cost benefit to the community, given the high cost of incarceration, which is more than 20 times that of community supervision.

The results achieved this year are a testament to the hard work and professionalism of all at the Board, and they were made possible by an increase in resources, for which the Senior Board Members had long advocated.

Government funding for a temporary fourth operating team, which commenced operation in April 2021, allowed the Board to keep up with the increasing demand to consider new parole applications and suspension of parole matters. It did not, however, allow the Board to reduce the backlog.

With funding for a temporary fifth operating team, commencing in October 2021, the Board was able to achieve the remarkable results already detailed. The Board was also assisted by the enactment of provisions that allowed the temporary extension of legislative timeframes for decision-making from 150 days to 180 days for new applications, and from 180 days to 210 days for deferred applications.

Operating teams are comprised of a Professional Board Member, Public Service Representative, Queensland Police Service Representative, Community Board Member, and necessary support staff. Each team can constitute various forms of quorums, under the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, to decide parole matters. The more operating teams, the greater the capacity for the Board to

perform its decision-making functions. Those functions continue to increase in both volume and complexity.

Significantly, as to complexity, this year saw the introduction of legislation conferring power to the President, and in some cases the Deputy Presidents, to declare a restricted prisoner ineligible to apply for parole for up to 10 years after their parole eligibility date. Restricted prisoners are those who have killed a child or more than two people.

The potential consequences to the families and friends of victims make the exercise of this power a heavy burden. Its execution requires significant preparatory work and careful consideration. I am diligently supported in this work by other members of the Board (my thanks especially to Professional Board Member Valentina McKenzie) and legal and administrative staff.

In this increasingly challenging landscape, the Board welcomes the support of Government in allocating \$20.2 million over four years ‘to enhance Parole Board Queensland operations to enhance efficient consideration of parole matters’ (2022–23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements: Queensland Corrective Services). That critical funding will allow, among other improvements, the continued operation of the fourth and fifth operating teams for two years, and the commencement of a sixth team for one year.

That support recognises the central role the Board plays in the criminal justice system and in enhancing the safety of the Queensland community. To highlight the importance of that role and the significance of appropriate resources, I return to the Queensland Government Response in supporting the establishment of the Parole Board Queensland in 2017:

The Palaszczuk Government’s vision is to deliver a world-class probation and parole system, one that effectively manages,

supervises and rehabilitates offenders both while in custody and when released on parole into the community.

Led by a properly resourced, professional and independent parole board, such a system will lessen the likelihood of re-offending by parolees, thereby enhancing community safety ...

I am confident that this coming year, and those to follow, will see the Board in a better position to meet increasing demands to perform its core decision-making functions in a way that steadfastly maintains community safety as its highest priority. The Board will also have the opportunity to address process improvements and realise efficiencies that have proved challenging over the last five years. Those challenges have been, in large part, due to scarce resources and deficiencies in support (for example, in Business Operations, Human Resources, and Information Technology services).

I am grateful to Queensland Corrective Services for allowing Assistant Commissioner Kim Papalia to join the Board this year to assist meeting some of those challenges. Assistant Commissioner Papalia has commenced the important work of developing Service Level Agreements and process improvements.

The increase in resourcing for 2022–23 coincides with my reappointment by the Government as President, and of my Deputy Presidents, Julie Sharp and Peter Shields, for a further five-year term. We are honoured and excited to have the opportunity to lead the Board through this next stage of continuous improvement and maturation and acknowledge the unfailing support of Commissioner Paul Stewart APM and the Hon. Mark Ryan MP, and his staff, in furthering the Board's endeavours.

Finally, since this report marks five years since the establishment of the Board, it is timely to compare the situation in 2017 to

now:

1. In 2017—three operating Board teams held six meetings per week, while in 2022—five operating Board teams held at least 13 meetings per week.
2. Since our inception, applications for board-ordered parole have increased by 86 per cent with 19,474 applications considered over the last five years.
3. In addition, some 22,353 requests to suspend parole orders have been considered over the last five years.

The Board has held 2500 meetings since inception.

Despite some commentary to the contrary—we definitely have been busy.

Our people and functions

Mission statement

Parole is not a privilege or an entitlement. It is a method developed to prevent re-offending and plays an integral part in the criminal justice system. When making parole decisions, the Board's highest priority will always be the safety of the community.

Our people

The Board is comprised of the following members as at 30 June 2022:

- 1 x President
- 2 x Deputy Presidents
- 5 x Professional Board Members (PBM)
- 30 x Community Board Members (CBM)
- 3 x Police Representatives
- 3 x Public Service Representatives (PSR)

These numbers do not include acting Professional Members and temporary Public Service and Queensland Police Service members currently serving to enable the operation of the fourth and fifth operating teams.

The President, Deputy Presidents, Professional Board Members and Community Board Members are 'appointed' Board Members under the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (the Act). On the recommendation of the Minister, they are appointed for fixed terms by the Governor-in-Council.

The President and Deputy Presidents hold office for five years, and they may be reappointed, but they cannot hold office for more than 10 years.

Professional Board Members hold office for a three-year term and may be

reappointed. They must have a university or professional qualification that is relevant to the functions of the Board, such as a legal or health qualification.

Community Board Members hold office for a three-year term and may be reappointed. They do not require a formal qualification and are part-time roles. They represent the diversity of the Queensland community, in their knowledge, expertise and experience.

Of the 38 appointed Board members, there are 17 men (45 per cent) and 21 women (55 per cent); and of those people, 13 are descended from Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islander peoples (34 per cent), and six are located in regional Queensland locations (16 per cent).

The Police Representatives and the Public Service Representatives are 'nominated' Board members, under the Act. They are nominated for transfer to the Board by the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services, respectively. Both Commissioners continue to provide the Board access to skilled and dedicated officers who play a crucial role in the evidence-based decision-making process. Significantly, these officers can provide the Board with contemporaneous information from their respective databases.

Secretariat and Legal Services Unit

The Board is supported by a Secretariat, which is subject to the direction of the President and led by the Executive Director, Secretariat Operations and Manager, Secretariat.

Members of the secretariat work tirelessly 'behind the scenes'—preparing files for consideration, taking minutes during Board meetings, assembling huge volumes of correspondence, and dealing with equally

voluminous incoming correspondence and other communications—to ensure the Board can properly perform its functions.

In the absence of dedicated information technology support, this team also ably attends to constant issues in this Covid-19 era when technology is critical to connecting people working away from the office.

Business services—for example, rostering and payroll functions—fall to only two officers. They are to be commended for the support they provide, with such limited resources, to the Board.

The Legal Services Unit (LSU), led by Director Lisa Hendy, also operates with limited resources. It is hoped that in 2022–23, the long-overdue procurement of an appropriate case-management system, as well as additional resources will relieve the pressure felt by this small unit of dedicated people.

The Unit is comprised of a paralegal, lawyers, and Associates to the Senior Board Members. The Legal Services Unit deals with a large volume of work, including:

- liaising with legal representatives
- preparing applications for judicial review to be heard in the Supreme Court of Queensland
- preparing Statements of Reasons
- preparing briefs for No Body No Parole matters and instructing Counsel Assisting at hearings
- preparing briefs for Restricted Prisoner matters
- preparing legal police submissions
- responding to Right to Information applications
- preparing affidavits and material for *Dangerous Prisoner (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* matters.

Functions of the Board

Parole Board Queensland was established under section 216 of the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, and it commenced operation on 3 July 2017. It is an independent statutory authority.

The Board's independence requires that its decisions are made in accordance with relevant legislation, common law principles, and the Guidelines issued by the relevant Minister (under section 242E of the Act), without influence or pressure from external sources.

The functions of the Board, provided by section 217 of the Act, are:

- (a) to decide applications for parole orders, other than court-ordered parole orders
- (b) to perform other functions given to it under this Act or another Act.

Those other statutory functions include:

- for the President and Deputy Presidents—deciding whether to make a restricted prisoner declaration
- deciding if satisfactory cooperation has been given by a No Body No Parole prisoner
- deciding applications for parole made by prisoners with links to terrorism
- deciding applications for exceptional circumstances parole
- for Prescribed Board Members, including Professional Board Members and Deputy Presidents—a 24/7 function to decide requests by the chief executive for immediate suspension of parole order (including court-ordered parole orders)
- the Board considering whether to confirm those decisions, set them aside or cancel the parole order within two

business days

- making decisions to amend, suspend or cancel parole orders (including court-ordered parole orders)
- making decisions about requests by parolees to travel interstate or overseas
- making parole orders for parolees transferred to Queensland from another State.

In order to perform those functions, the Board conducts 13 meetings per week, as well as additional meetings, to consider Restricted Prisoner and No Body No Parole applications, CERIP program matters, and any urgent matters.

No Body No Parole hearings are heard in public (where permitted in accordance with Covid-19 protocols) to provide the public—including most importantly, victims' family and loved ones—an opportunity to see the Board at work. These hearings also aim to ensure a most rigorous process for parole applicants who sometimes face spending the rest of their lives in prison, as an outcome of the Board's decision.

The composition of the Board depends on the types of parole matters being decided, and greater flexibility is now possible due to legislative changes to the quorum requirements and additional Board members comprising the temporary fourth and fifth operating teams. For the most serious matters, the President (life-sentenced prisoners, prisoners with links to terrorism, No Body No Parole prisoners and applications for exceptional circumstances parole) or a Deputy President (serious violent offences and No Body No Parole prisoners) Chair the Board.

Parole Board Queensland has a Code of Conduct, which can be located on the Board's website at www.pbq.qld.gov.au. Education and training about public sector ethics and the *Human Rights Act 2019* is incorporated into our staff meeting and

training schedule, including presentations by external facilitators and online training programs. Proper regard is had to the *Public Service Ethics Act 1994* and the Board's Code of Conduct in our administrative procedures and management practices, including in recruitment processes, the management of information and our people, and in our engagement with external stakeholders.

The internal audit function for the Board is delivered by the QCS Audit and Assessment Group.

Detailed information regarding the way the Board performs its functions, including matters considered in deciding parole matters and the types of conditions imposed on parole orders, is available on the Board's website. Decisions of the Board in relation to No Body No Parole applications are also published there. This is part of the Board's ongoing efforts to perform its important functions in a way that is transparent.

Spotlight: notable activities and achievements 2021–22

In addition to the extraordinary achievement in addressing the backlog of parole matters facing the Board in July 2021, the Board has continued to be involved in a range of activities to continuously improve as a modern and professional parole board. The Board also considers that it has an important role to play in contributing to the improvement of the criminal justice system more broadly, given its unique perspective within that system.

Commitment to criminal justice system improvement

Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce

As foreshadowed last year, the Board was keen to be involved in consultation in this wide-ranging review led by the Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC.

The Senior Board Members have now been involved in that consultation in relation to both the examination of coercive control—which ultimately led to the recommendation (accepted by Government) that such conduct be criminalised—and the experience of women in the criminal justice system more broadly.

Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and the Streamlining Criminal Justice Committee

Deputy President Peter Shields is the Board’s representative on these reform bodies. In addition to his regular involvement, in August 2021, Mr Shields presented a paper ‘Parole, the vital but often misunderstood

third limb of the criminal justice system in Queensland: The observations of a Deputy President of the Parole Board’ at the Queensland Law Society: Modern Advocate Lecture Series.

Promoting diversity and inclusion

Professional Board Member Dean Clifford-Jones is the founder and Chairperson of Pride in Law, Australia’s National LGBTIQ+ Law Association. In that capacity, Mr Clifford-Jones has delivered a range of presentations, including with the Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG, former Justice of the High Court of Australia, and to the College of Law, on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Mr Clifford-Jones actively promotes the values of Pride in Law at the Board; values we embrace.

Deputy President Julie Sharp was invited to present as a keynote speaker at the Department of Justice and Attorney General International Women’s Day event in March 2022. Ms Sharp is another, of many, champion of diversity and inclusion at the Board.

The Board is committed to the Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2022–24, with actions to be reported in 2022–23.

Engagement with the judiciary

The President Michael Byrne QC and the Deputy Presidents have continued to be engaged directly with his counterparts, with regular meetings of the heads of jurisdiction. Those meetings are an important mechanism to identify and address issues arising across the criminal justice system.

Commitment to addressing the epidemic of domestic and family violence

As part of a streamlining of roles and responsibilities, Deputy President Shields takes on the role of leading the Board’s work in this critical area.

It is also noteworthy that our Professional Board Member Dean Clifford-Jones is a member of the Queensland Law Society's Domestic and Family Violence Committee.

The Board continues to see alarming numbers of domestic violence offenders often committing acts of disturbing viciousness and persistence, including by communication from prison with victims.

The continuing rise in domestic and family violence seen by the Board is consistent with recent statistics showing a 213.6 per cent increase in breaches of domestic violence orders over the past decade, and a 17 per cent increase in domestic violence offences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Board has shared its experiences with the Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC during the consultative phases of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, described as a wide-ranging review of the experience of women across the criminal justice system. The taskforce found what the Board suspected in respect of the backgrounds of female parole applicants:

Abuse and trauma is a common experience for many women and girls. Queensland Corrective Services reported in 2019 that 87 per cent of women in custody have been victims of childhood sexual abuse, physical violence or domestic violence. Sixty-six per cent of those women have been victims of all three types of abuse (citation excluded): Hear Her Voice Report, Volume Two, page 407.

The Board also provided a submission to the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence. As to the commission of domestic and family violence by perpetrators in prison, the Board submitted:

The Board frequently receives information relating to the perpetration of domestic violence by prisoners while they are incarcerated. Acts of domestic violence by prisoners

are usually carried out by means of the Prisoner Telephone System (PTS).

Examples of domestic violence committed by prisoners includes:

- *contact with aggrieved and named persons in contravention of domestic violence orders, usually by PTS*
- *threats made directly or indirectly to victims by a prisoner, usually by PTS*
- *coercive and manipulative behaviour—including, for example, pressure on a victim to allow a prisoner to reside with a victim or to send money to a prisoner*
- *using family or associates in the community to contact and or surveil victims*
- *making degrading comments about a victim*
- *other information which raises concerns regarding the safety of a victim.*

Information about a prisoner's domestic violence behaviour is essential to the Board's assessment of a prisoner's suitability for release on parole (or, in the case of parole suspensions, re-release) and any conditions which may reduce the risk that the prisoner will commit domestic violence upon release.

While the Board acknowledges that prisoners are occasionally prosecuted for committing domestic violence offences from custody, the Board is concerned with the apparently low rate of prisoners being charged in relation to committing domestic violence from custody.

The Board continues to engage with the

Queensland Police Service and Queensland Corrective Services to improve the Board's access to information, including intelligence, relevant to deciding parole matters on the best evidence.

Without this up-to-date information, the Board is unable to make properly informed, evidence-based decisions.

The Board has also worked with Queensland Corrective Services to implement a process to fulfill the intention of recommendation 84 of the Queensland Parole System Review, which is to inform the victims of domestic and family violence of a prisoner's imminent release. That process will allow the Board to notify the Queensland Police Service if it intends to release an offender who was subject to a Domestic Violence Order at the time of sentence.

The Board understands the commencement of the Domestic and Family Violence Project will enable prison authorities to have up-to-date and complete information on inmates who are subject to domestic violence orders.

Finally, the Board is hopeful that a digital solution may be found and implemented by Queensland Corrective Services to reduce the ability of a prisoner to commit domestic violence over the Prisoner Telephone System.

To that end, the Board will continue to advocate for process improvements across agencies, as well as access to appropriate programs for offenders, and sufficient resources to reduce the risk and instances of domestic and family violence.

Commitment to improving the parole system for First Nations people

Deputy President Julie Sharp has taken on the lead role in developing and implementing these improvements.

The Board is committed to the concept of Makarrata, which is central to the Uluru

Statement from the Heart; the Federal Government recently gave this its full support.

Makarrata is a Yolgnu word with a complex meaning—including, importantly, coming together and working together to make peace after a dispute.

The Board also embraces the challenge of this year's National Reconciliation Week theme: Be Brave. Make Change.

As the Honourable Craig Crawford, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, said in his recent Statement (26 May 2022): *'This is our opportunity to recognise the past, respect one another and reset the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders toward a fair, just and united future'*.

Culturally Engaged Release for Indigenous Parolees (CERIP)

This calendar year has seen the reinvigoration of the Culturally Engaged Release for Indigenous Prisoners (CERIP) pilot program detailed in last year's Annual Report. Broadly:

The initiative is founded on principles consistent with the Indigenous Sentencing Courts in Australia. That is, it recognises the powerful impact and insight that can be gained from the inclusion of Elders and respected community members in decision-making processes regarding First Nations peoples.

The CERIP initiative aims to strengthen the relationship between a prisoner, their community, and the Board with the goal of formulating practical, actionable parole conditions that are adaptable for First Nations prisoners who are returning to country, and to promote their ongoing rehabilitation with a focus on connection to culture

and the relevant Community Justice Group and/or Elders in their community.

The Board recognises that the relationship between First Nations individuals, their community, Elders and their Country is unique. The lived experiences and depth of knowledge that our First Nations CBMs bring to parole hearings enables a connection, in particular cases, that is simply unable to be achieved by non-Indigenous members alone, and it is one that the entire Board appreciates and continues to learn from.

The CERIP program has been expanded so that all First Nations prisoners who intend returning to a community with an active Community Justice Group are eligible, and it is not currently funded. The success of the program therefore relies on the work, above and beyond, of Board staff (led by CERIP founder, Sabbina Furlan-Johns, Legal Officer) and members. Demand for the program is likely to grow as it becomes known by stakeholders and its successes can be measured.

The work is time-consuming and sometimes traumatising, particularly for our First Nations Community Board Members who confront the truth of trauma and racism when talking with their people as part of this valuable process.

That process involves the Board holding a video conference with the prisoner prior to making a parole decision. A representative of the prisoner's community (usually a member of the relevant Community Justice Group) and sometimes a Cultural Liaison Officer are also involved. While only four CERIP meetings have been able to be facilitated since January 2022, the anecdotal evidence is very positive.

For example, in one matter, an Elder with the Aurukun Community Justice Group was able

to communicate with the parole applicant in his first language, yielding powerful results by effective communication and connection to culture. In fact, in almost all CERIP matters, the involvement of an Indigenous Community Board Member, together with community engagement, has demonstrated the significance of appropriate communication to the motivation of the applicant and genuine engagement in pre-release planning.

It is hoped that with additional resources, the CERIP program can be properly evaluated, expanded, and become a permanent feature of the Board's commitment to improving the parole system for First Nations people, thereby enhancing community safety.

Other initiatives

Parole Board Secretariat staff, led by Patricia Wagner, have made inspiring efforts to promote reconciliation within our workplace.

National Reconciliation Week 2022 saw the creation of weekly newsletters showcasing Indigenous businesses, film, television, art, music and food. A bake sale to raise money for a First Nations children's charity encouraged bakers to use bush foods in their creations.

Truth-telling was also a significant feature during the week, with Sabbina Furlan-Johns delivering a powerful speech about white privilege. Her speech has since been published in the Queensland Law Society's publication Proctor: June 2022.

Finally, Deputy President Julie Sharp attended the National Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Conference in June 2022, as part of the development of the Board's RAP, which is to be implemented in 2022–23.

Commitment to ongoing stakeholder engagement

The Board continues to foster important stakeholder relationships, and some of that engagement has already been mentioned.

The implementation of processes to support the President's, and Deputy Presidents' responsibilities under the new Restricted Prisoner legislation required liaison with the QCS Victims' Register and Queensland Health.

The Legal Services Unit and Professional Board Member Valentina McKenzie are to be commended for their work in this area.

Agreement has been reached with Queensland Health to engage the current Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the provision of health information necessary to properly inform Restricted Prisoner decisions. Further, engagement continues with the Victims' Register to ensure processes are appropriate to best serve those whose interests are at the heart of the legislation's objectives.

Deputy President Julie Sharp continues to lead the Board's stakeholder relationship with Queensland Health. That relationship has strengthened over past years, with regular communication and collaboration aimed to ensure the Board has all necessary information to make properly informed, evidence-based parole decisions.

It is hoped that in the coming year(s), a similar relationship can be built with the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) for information sharing regarding the potential impact of parole decisions on the children of applicants. The lack of information available to the Board regarding such significant potential impacts is seen as a gap requiring urgent attention.

The Board continues to welcome transparency and communication with members of the legal profession, advocacy groups and QCS.

The Director of Legal Services, Lisa Hendy, leads her team in continuing to foster positive relationships to that end. Ms Hendy was also responsible for preparing the Board's submissions to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council (QSAC) regarding questions relating to the Serious Violent Offence scheme in the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* and the potential for reform. The QSAC consulted Senior Board Members by interview as part of that process.

Further, legal and other representatives have been welcomed to join Board meetings to advocate for, and observe video-conferences held with, their clients.

Officers from Community Corrections have also recently been engaged in a program allowing them to observe Board meetings. That will no doubt generate a greater understanding of the work we do, a better appreciation of the impact of that work on Community Corrections and promote discussions to improve processes.

Commitment to a healthy workplace

All Board members and secretariat staff, particularly those in the Legal Services Unit, are exposed to a constant volume of material that is often distressing. Each week, Board members are required to read and digest thousands of pages of material containing the details of terrible crimes and tragic personal circumstances, for both victims and offenders.

Undertaking that task, week after week, is necessary to perform the Board's vital functions, but it takes its toll.

The day-to-day impact on mental health and psychological safety is heightened by public and, unnecessarily, personal criticism.

The Board continues to develop ways to promote a healthy workplace, which currently includes access to counselling

and vicarious trauma training, as well as support to take leave, and working to ensure appropriate resourcing. This year, the Board also welcomed Wellbeing Education for Senior Board Members, Professional Board Members, and legal staff, delivered by a well-qualified external provider with a legal background.

There are plans for early 2022–23 to look more closely at improvements that can be made for Board members and legal staff to improve wellbeing and ensure a psychologically safe workplace.

Congratulations

Colin Dillon AM APM, Community Board Member, was honoured as the Senior Queenslander of the Year, and a finalist in the category in the Australian of the Year Awards. Mr Dillon was Australia's first Indigenous police officer and is a valuable member of the Board. We are inspired by Mr Dillon's achievements and grateful for his contributions in regular Board meetings, including CERIP meetings.

Lincoln Crowley QC, as his Honour then was, resigned his appointment as a Community Board Member to take up appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Justice Crowley is the first Indigenous person in Australia to be appointed to the Supreme Court.

The year in review: in numbers

| 2021–22 Financial Year | |
|--|-------|
| Conduct of Business (s230) | |
| Meetings ¹ | 790 |
| Average Matters | 20 |
| Considered Matters | 15841 |
| Video Conferences | 113 |
| Open Hearings | 3 |
| Application for Parole s176 (Exceptional Circumstances) and s193 (Parole Order) | |
| Received | 3586 |
| Considered | 6247 |
| Decided | 3585 |
| Released to Parole | 2820 |
| Application for a Parole Order – No Body No Parole (s193A) | |
| Received | 2 |
| Withdrawn | 0 |
| Decided | 2 |
| Released | 1 |
| Amendment, Suspension and Cancellation (s205) | |
| Request to Amend | 673 |
| Amend Parole Order | 1916 |
| Suspend Parole Order | 20 |
| Cancel Parole Order | 1260 |
| Request for Immediate Suspension (s208) | |
| Request to Immediately Suspend | 5075 |
| Immediately Suspend Parole Order | 5031 |
| Confirm Suspension of Parole Order | 4703 |
| Interstate and Overseas Travel Requests (s212; s213) | |
| Interstate | 83 |
| Overseas | 12 |
| Interstate Registrations | |
| Parole Orders registered in Queensland from interstate | 65 |
| Judicial Review | |
| Filed | 616 |
| Discontinued | 260 |
| Decided | 339 |

¹Data includes scheduled meetings and urgent out-of-session matters.

