



Parole Board Queensland

Annual Report 2024-25

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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.

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Parole Board Queensland

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30 September 2025

The Honourable Laura Gerber MP

Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services

1 William Street

Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2024–2025 for the Parole Board Queensland.

I certify this Annual Report complies with section 242F of the *Corrective Services Act 2006*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Woodford".

Michael Woodford

President



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01 | President's Report

Since my commencement in February 2025, the Parole Board Queensland (PBQ) has remained firmly focussed on our statutory purpose: making lawful, evidence-based parole decisions that place the safety of the community as the highest priority, while supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners who are granted parole. As President, I am proud to lead a Board that is deeply committed to delivering lawful, transparent, and accountable outcomes that reflect the values and expectations of the Queensland community.

This year saw the expansion of the Board's membership to strengthen its decision-making capacity. For much of the financial year, the Board operated with reduced membership following the resignation of the former President in July 2024 and subsequent movements leaving vacancies of office, which placed considerable pressure on operations. Through a targeted recruitment process, the PBQ welcomed eight acting professional board members and initiated the appointment of four professional board members. This brings the PBQ to its strongest complement in recent years, significantly increasing the Boards' decision-making capacity and enabling us to address delays in the processing of parole applications. Furthermore, new appointments provide an opportunity to embed new practices and strengthen consistency in decision-making.

The PBQ Secretariat continues to provide exceptional support to the Board, working alongside systems and processes to ensure board members are well-equipped to make informed decisions that promote community safety. Their professionalism and dedication have been vital to our success, and I extend my sincere thanks for their ongoing commitment.

Operationally, the Board is modernising its practices. The development of the Parole Electronic Record System Interface (PERSI), a purpose-built case management system, will streamline how we manage parole matters. PERSI will enhance scheduling, streamline information sharing, and support more efficient decision-making. Enhanced rostering practices have further improved our operational efficiency, allowing us to better respond to emerging priorities.

Our new Governance and Risk team has already made a difference, commencing the journey to set strong compliance and oversight frameworks, ensuring the PBQ operates with integrity and accountability upholding community expectations.

Victims of crime remain central to our considerations, ensuring their voices are heard in the parole process. Domestic and family violence continues to be a critical consideration in our decision-making, and we are committed to upholding protections for victims. In June 2025, the Queensland Government announced an independent review of the PBQ, led by Peter Hastie KC, to assess whether the Board's operations are effective in keeping Queenslanders safe, and support the rights, participation and treatment of victims within the parole process, including engagement with the Victims Register. The PBQ welcomes this review as an opportunity to further strengthen the rights of victims in the parole process.

The commitment to victims has also been strengthened in legislation. In June 2025 the Queensland Parliament passed the *Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025*, which ensures that any decision made by a professional board member to suspend or not suspend a parole order—following a request from Queensland Corrective Services (QCS)—is reviewed by the full Board within two business days. This amendment reinforces our commitment to community safety and supports the integrity of our decision-making processes.

Looking ahead, the PBQ will continue to build on the strong foundations laid this year. We will maintain our focus on consistency in decision-making, support the onboarding of new members with rigorous professional development, and work collaboratively with stakeholders to implement reforms arising from the Hastie Review. Above all, we remain committed to our purpose: making parole decisions that are lawful and prioritise the safety of the community. With a clear strategic direction and a dedicated team, the PBQ is well-positioned to deliver meaningful outcomes that enhance public confidence in the parole system.

Michael Woodford
President Parole Board Queensland

02 | Function and Membership

Function

The Parole Board Queensland (PBQ) is a statutory authority established in 2017 under section 216 of the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (the Act). Ministerial Guidelines issued under section 242E of the Act guide its decision-making.

The PBQ plays a vital role in Queensland's criminal justice system through risk and evidence-based parole decisions that aim to reduce reoffending and enhance community safety.

The primary function of the PBQ is to decide parole applications, excluding court-ordered parole. Additional responsibilities include:

- determining cooperation in No Body, No Parole matters;
- deciding parole order applications for prisoners with terrorism links;
- considering exceptional circumstances parole order applications;
- operating a 24/7 function to assess urgent parole order suspension requests;
- reviewing and confirming or overturning parole order suspension decisions;
- amending, suspending, or cancelling parole orders;
- assessing travel requests from parolees; and
- issuing parole orders for interstate transfers.

The President also holds statutory responsibilities, including making restricted prisoner declarations, making reconsideration decisions (following No Cooperation declarations), managing the performance of the PBQ members and issuing directions to ensure the effective operations of the PBQ.

The PBQ is committed to consistent and fair decision-making that prioritises community safety and is guided by the rule of law and the requirements of procedural fairness.

Membership

As at 30 June 2025, membership to the PBQ comprised the following:

- 1 x President, engaged on a full-time basis;
- 2 x Deputy Presidents, engaged on a full-time basis;
- 4 x Professional PBQ Members (PBM), engaged on a full-time basis;
- 8 x Acting PBMs, engaged as required;
- 38 x Community PBQ Members (CBM), engaged on a sessional basis;
- 6 x Queensland Police Service Representatives (QPSR), nominated by the Commissioner of Police; and
- 7 x Public Service Representatives (PSR), nominated by QCS.

The President, Deputy Presidents, PBMs and CBMs are appointed PBQ Members in accordance with the Act and are appointed for fixed terms by the Governor-in-Council.

The President and Deputy Presidents hold office for five years, and may be re-appointed, but cannot hold office for more than 10 years. PBMs hold office for up to three years and may be reappointed. CBMs hold office for up to three years and may be re-appointed. They are sessional members and represent the diversity of the Queensland community, bringing a wealth of knowledge, expertise and lived experience to the PBQ.

The QPSR and PSR are Board members and play a crucial role in providing justice-sector experience to the Board to assist in making evidence-based decisions.

Significant recruitment activity occurred in 2025 to strengthen the leadership and decision-making capacity of the Board. Mr Michael Woodford commenced as the Parole Board President on 3 February 2025. Mr Woodford has more than 25 years of experience as a barrister, with a distinguished career in criminal and administrative law. His previous roles include serving as a member of the Southern Queensland Regional Parole Board and serving as the Queensland Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner.

Prior to Mr Woodford's appointment, Deputy President Julie Sharp, acted in the role of President for seven months following the resignation of former President Michael Byrne KC, effective 4 July 2024.

The membership of the Board was bolstered by the appointment of eight acting professional board members on 20 June 2025, marking a substantial expansion of the Board's decision-

making capability. Additionally, recruitment to appoint four professional board members for a 12-month term, closed on 29 June 2025. Appointments to these offices are expected to be made later in the 2025 calendar year.

Appointments to the membership of the Board will bring leadership and strengthen lawful decision-making to assist in addressing persistent backlogs and improve the efficiency of the Board's functions.

Secretariat

The PBQ is provided with secretariat support from Queensland Corrective Services through a dedicated Secretariat, which plays a critical role in enabling the PBQ to carry out its statutory responsibilities. The Secretariat provides both administrative and legal support, including the collation and preparation of information for the Board.

All Secretariat staff are public service employees under the *Public Sector Act 2022* and are employed by QCS. The Secretariat is led by the Chief Administrative Officer and is supported by the Executive Director, Operations and the Executive Director, Governance and Risk. The Chief Administrative Officer oversees key operational functions such as human resources, finance, governance, and risk management, ensuring the PBQ receives the support it needs to function effectively and lawfully.

To further strengthen the Board's compliance framework, two temporary positions were established during the reporting period. These roles are focused on reviewing and embedding a robust governance and risk management structure to meet statutory obligations and support the President in setting excellence in legal administration practice. Both roles serve as a key interface between the Secretariat and the Board, and contribute to the continuous improvement of decision-making practices.

The Secretariat Operations Team delivers administrative and legal support to the Board. Often referred to as the "engine room" of the Board, the team ensures that the PBQ members are well-prepared and supported in their decision-making roles.

The Legal Services Unit provides specialist legal support and is comprised of a team of lawyers with expertise in administrative and criminal law. The Unit represents the PBQ in court and tribunal proceedings for matters, including judicial review applications and complaints to the Queensland Human Rights Commission. It also responds to legal and information requests, and advises the PBQ on statutory interpretation, legal compliance, and procedural matters.

To strengthen the Board's capacity to make timely, consistent and evidence-based decisions and drive efficiencies within the operations of the Board, the Secretariat delivered the below significant initiatives during the reporting period:

- Implementation of the Parole Electronic Record System Interface (PERSI) which replaces paper-based systems and provides electronic case management.
- Establishment of the Governance and Risk unit which sets the structures to support the integrity of the Board's operations, administrative compliance and active management of risk.
- Delivery of Secretariat training programs to build technical skills, resilience, cohesion and shared purpose to provide better connected professional services to the Board.

Collaboration between parole board members and Secretariat staff is essential to maintaining an efficient and collegial working environment. Many Secretariat staff bring valuable frontline experience from within QCS and are well-positioned to apply practical insights into parole processes.

03 | Operation and Activities

Community safety and victims of crime

In June 2025, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Corrective Services (Parole Board) Amendment Bill 2025*, to strengthen the Parole Board's ability to prioritise community safety and victims of crime. The amendments prescribe that any decision by a professional board member to suspend or not suspend parole, following a request from QCS, is reviewed by a full Board within two business days. This change creates an additional safeguard so that decisions which could allow an offender to remain in the community are subject to the highest level of scrutiny.

For victims of crime, this reform strengthens their right to feel protected and informed. For the broader community, it reinforces confidence that the parole system promotes public safety. The amendments ensure decisions are subject to the highest level of oversight, reinforcing the Board's commitment to transparent, accountable, and safety-focused parole decision-making.

Decision-Making Enhancements

In 2024–25, the PBQ strengthened its governance and decision-making practices under the leadership of the new President. A key focus was on improving the consistency and efficiency of Board practices, ensuring these are grounded in statutory purpose. The President has emphasised the importance of structured reasoning—assigning appropriate weight to relevant factors and clearly articulating the rationale behind each decision. This approach supports fair, lawful, and accountable outcomes.

Key initiatives delivered include the update of the PBQ decision-making manual, which now provides a comprehensive guide to the statutory framework, decision-making matrices, and required materials for each decision type. Rigorous onboarding processes for new PBQ members have also been introduced to ensure a strong foundation in governance and decision-making expectations.

A significant procedural enhancement was the shift from the “Consider Not Grant” approach to the “Procedural Fairness Defer” model to ensure the PBQ only makes decisions when it is satisfied that all relevant information has been received. The Procedural Fairness Defer model better promotes procedural fairness. Supporting tools, including templates and a Practice Note for Chairs, have been developed to guide consistent application of the model.

These reforms collectively strengthen the PBQ's governance framework and reinforce its commitment to fair, transparent, and accountable decision-making.

Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Compliance

A PID is a formal report made by a public official (or in some cases, a member of the public) about suspected wrongdoing within the public sector. In Queensland, these disclosures are protected under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (PIC Act) for Queensland agencies. PID are essential for promoting integrity, protecting whistleblowers, enabling early issue detection, and supporting transparency in the public sector.

In June 2025, the PBQ conducted a self-assessment audit to evaluate its compliance with the PID Act and associated Standards. The audit identified opportunities to strengthen the PBQ's PID framework. In response, the PBQ Secretariat led a series of enhancements, including the development of a revised joint PID policy and procedure aligned with the Office of the Ombudsman's model, amending key roles to be held within the PBQ to reflect the PBQ's statutory authority status, and improvements to the PID Management Program.

Legal Proceedings

In 2025, the PBQ responded to two significant legal challenges. In *Cherry v State of Queensland*, the High Court dismissed a constitutional challenge brought by a life-sentenced prisoner against the restricted prisoner and No Body, No Parole provisions of the *Corrective Services Act 2006*. The Court upheld the validity of the legislation, affirming its alignment with judicial power and reinforcing the framework under which the PBQ operates.

Separately, in *Anderson v President, PBQ*, the Supreme Court found that the former President had failed to give genuine and proper consideration to the applicant's human rights—particularly the applicant's medical conditions—when determining the duration of a restricted prisoner declaration. The Court emphasised that even without relying on the *Human Rights Act 2019*, the statutory framework requires consideration of human dignity and a broad interpretation of public interest. Although the decision is currently under appeal, the PBQ has used this opportunity to review and strengthen its approach to human rights generally.

04 | Operating Environment

Victims

In Queensland, the QCS Victims Register works to support victims of crime by ensuring registered victims are informed and can participate in the parole application process. Victims can make submissions to the PBQ via the Victims Register about an offender's parole application, outlining the impact of the crime and any safety concerns. The QCS Victims Register facilitates this process, providing information and support to registered victims.

In June 2025, the Queensland Government commissioned an independent review of the PBQ, led by barrister Peter Hastie KC, to examine how the efficiency of the Board's operations, including the engagement of victims of crime with the parole process.

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)

DFV continues to be a critical consideration in parole matters and is a key factor in assessing whether a prisoner can be safely managed in the community. The Board recognises that the decisions it makes can have a direct impact on the safety of victim-survivors, and we take that responsibility incredibly seriously.

When parole matters involve DFV, strict safeguards can be applied to protect victims. Where non-contact Domestic Violence Orders are in place, prisoners subject to parole orders are prohibited from residing with or contacting, the aggrieved party. The PBQ remains committed to ensuring parole decisions uphold community safety and comply with legal protections for victims.

05 | Performance

Statutory Measures

Under the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, the PBQ has a statutory obligation to report to the Minister on two prescribed measures:

- The number of persons released on parole, other than under a court ordered parole order; and
- The number of persons returned to prison after their parole order, including a court ordered parole order, was suspended or cancelled.

This reporting requirement has been in place since the establishment of the Board in July 2017. However, these measures have not previously been reported in the Annual Report. The Board acknowledges this gap and, in the interests of transparency and accountability, is committed to reporting on the measures prescribed in legislation.

These measures reflect the PBQ's primary statutory purpose and are of direct relevance to community safety. They provide transparency about the Board's role in granting parole where it is safe to do so, and in returning offenders to custody where there is an unacceptable risk to the community or victims of crime.

Measure	Notes	2024-25
Number of persons who were released on parole, other than under a court parole order.	1	3,030
Number of persons who were returned to prison after their parole order, including a court ordered parole order, was suspended or cancelled.	2	4,805
<p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This measure counts distinct people who were discharged from custody onto a new Board Ordered Parole - that is, parole granted by the Parole Board during the custodial period leading to their release. It does not include releases to Court Ordered Parole.2. This measure counts admissions to custody (distinct people) from community corrections where a person's parole was suspended or cancelled by the Parole Board before they were admitted. It includes both Board Ordered Parole and Court Ordered Parole.		

Activity Measures

Activity measures provide information as to the outputs of the Board for the financial year. For the 2024-25 reporting period, the PBQ continues to rely on manual systems to prepare these measures and maintains practices and associated caveats in preparing the activity measures with previous reporting periods.

Measure	2024-25
Conduct of business	
PBQ meetings conducted ¹	808
Average matters considered per meeting	27
Total number of matters considered by the PBQ ^{2,3}	23,899
Video conferences held	117
Applications for Parole Orders⁴	
Total applications received	4,964
Total parole applications considered ³	8,557
Total applications decided ^{5, 6}	3,805
Parole orders granted	2,975
Parole applications decided within statutory timeframes ⁷	65%
Application for a Parole Order - Restricted Prisoners	
Received	6
Decided ⁵	3
Declarations made ⁸	1
Application for a Parole Order - No Body, No Parole	
Received	0
Decided ⁵	1
Declarations made	0
Released	0
Request for Immediate Suspension of Parole Order	
Request to immediately suspend a parole order ⁹	5,235
Parole orders immediately suspended by the Board ¹⁰	4,894
Initial suspension decisions confirmed by the Board	4,635
Amendment, Suspension and Cancellation	
Request to amend a parole order ⁹	1,223
Parole orders amended	1,393
Total parole orders suspended by the Board ¹¹	4,753
Parole orders cancelled	1,084
Interstate and Overseas Travel Requests	
Interstate requests received ¹²	136
Overseas requests received ¹²	35

Measure	2024-25
Interstate Registration	
Interstate parole orders registered in Queensland	36
Judicial Reviews	
Applications filed	33
Applications discontinued	33
Applications decided	39
PBQ decisions overturned ¹³	6

Notes:

1. Excludes section 208B single professional board member decisions. Includes urgent out-of-session meetings. Decline in meetings held in 2024-25 is due to limited capacity of the Board through vacancy of office.
2. Includes parole applications and suspensions. Excludes section 208B single professional board member decisions; however, includes the subsequent board meeting to validate that decision.
3. Matters may be considered by the PBQ multiple times prior to finalisation.
4. Includes applications under sections 176 and 193.
5. Unfinalised matters are carried over into the subsequent financial year and will be included in the financial year when the matter is decided.
6. Matters may be closed due to withdrawal, a prisoner reaching their custodial end date or the application may be automatically cancelled under section 191.
7. Section 193 requires a final decision to be made on applications for parole orders within 120 days, or 150 days if the matter is deferred to obtain further information. Board decision-making capacity in 2024-25 was limited due to vacancy of office causing delays to decisions.
8. Where a restricted prisoner declaration is not made the PBQ considers the application for parole order under general processes.
9. Includes board and court ordered parole orders.
10. A number of factors including change in process and what entity (Board or single PBM) makes the decision have impacted the number of immediate suspension decisions by the Board.
11. Not all parole orders that come in front of the Board are suspended, some may be autocancelled by the Courts prior to Board sitting, set aside on the basis of new information before the Board or cancelled.
12. Includes requests cancelled or withdrawn after receipt.
13. The Supreme Court retains the power of review of all government decisions and ensures that administrative decisions are lawful. The Judicial review process ensures that the community retains confidence in government decision-making.

Achievements

During the reporting period the PBQ delivered the below significant achievements:

- The Board operationalised the *Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025*, which amends the Act to ensure that any decision by a prescribed board member to suspend or not suspend parole (following a request from Queensland Corrective Services) is reviewed by the full Board within a strict timeframe.
- The Parole Electronic Record System Interface (PERSI) was successfully developed to transition the PBQ to a fully digital case management system.
- The PBQ decision-making manual was comprehensively updated to guide members through statutory frameworks and decision-making processes.
- A new Human Rights Guide was developed to support compatibility with and consistent application of the *Human Rights Act 2019* in parole decisions.
- The PBQ introduced the Procedural Fairness Defer model, improving procedural fairness and decision quality.
- Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* was enhanced through completion of a self-assessment audit and commencement of responsive actions.
- The PBQ led the response to two significant legal matters—*Cherry v State of Queensland* and *Anderson v President, PBQ*—reinforcing its leadership in legal and human rights developments.

06 | Strategic Outlook

In 2025-26, the PBQ will remain focused on making lawful, evidence-based parole decisions that put the safety of victims and the community first. This focus reflects our commitment to fair and accountable parole outcomes that uphold public safety and respect the rights of all stakeholders. A key enabler of this work will be the increased membership of the Board, bringing the PBQ to its largest complement since its establishment. The expanded membership will significantly enhance our capacity to reduce the backlog of applications.

The PBQ will also review the investment in professional development for board members through prescribing mandatory and topical training so that members are familiar with contemporaneous decision-making practices.

The implementation of the Parole Electronic Record System Interface (PERSI), from 1 July 2025 will optimise the PBQ's processes across file management and the recording and reporting of board decisions. This will enhance accuracy, transparency and efficiency, supporting faster, more consistent decisions.

Stronger governance and risk functions will improve internal administration practices ensuring robust compliance and oversight mechanisms are in place to support the PBQ's decision-making integrity. These developments will be complemented by the embedding of new practices and decision-making tools, which will drive standardised and consistent outcomes within an established framework.

The independent review of the PBQ led by Mr Peter Hastie KC is expected to deliver recommendations aimed at strengthening legislative provisions and operational practices. This review reflects the Government's and PBQ's commitment to ensuring victims' voices are central to the parole process and that the system operates in a way that prioritises safety.

Supporting victims of crime remains a key priority across the justice system. The PBQ will continue to engage with the Victims Register to enhance communication and provide victims with the information they need to feel supported in the parole process. This work reflects our broader commitment to balancing the rights of prisoners with the safety and dignity of victims and the community.

The program of reform in 2025-26 will support the PBQ in delivering fair, transparent, and accountable parole decisions while placing the rights of victims and the safety of Queenslanders at the centre of its work. It presents an opportunity to drive towards excellence in Queensland's parole system and contribute to a stronger justice system.

Glossary

CBM	Community Board Member
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
KC	King's Counsel
PBM	Professional Board Member
PBQ	Parole Board Queensland
PERSI	Parole Electronic Record System Interface
PID	Public Interest Disclosure
PSR	Public Sector Representatives
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
QPSR	Queensland Police Service Representatives

