

The National Judicial Orientation Program has been presented every year since 1994. The program has been developed by a steering committee of experienced judges, drawn from courts throughout Australia.

Purpose of the program?

The primary objective of the program is to assist newly appointed judicial officers with their transition to judicial office by facilitating the development and refinement of the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective judging. The program is designed to offer insights into the role and responsibilities of a member of the judiciary, provide the opportunity for new appointees to benefit from the knowledge and experience of senior judges who attend the program as speakers, and to provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experiences among participants.

What previous participants said

Judges who participated in recent programs have commented:

“I am very privileged to attend this most practical and useful programme.”

“I found the week very interesting and useful. The quality of presenters made an important contribution..”

“Most useful program I have attended since becoming a judge.”

“An excellent course which I will not hesitate to recommend.”

“Very reassuring to know that almost all other participants had similar experiences, no matter what level of court.”

“All of the speakers well chosen. I found the topics and the balance very good but it was also easy going, friendly and feels like a holiday.”

What style of program?

The Program is a residential program starting Sunday evening 3 August with a familiarisation session and ending on Friday 8 August. Prior to the program participants are asked to read some pre-reading material. Many of the sessions are interactive, relying on discussion by participants of practical case scenarios.



National Judicial Orientation Program

3 to 8 August 2008



The program is a joint presentation of the National Judicial College of Australia, the Judicial Commission of New South Wales and the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (and with the support of the Judicial College of Victoria).

Program

Monday 4 August 2008

9.00 Session 2 — Judicial conduct in and out of court

This session is intended to identify ethical and conflict of interest issues which confront judges and to provide guidance in dealing with them. There are no specific answers to many of the questions which arise in this session; rather the session looks at options for dealing with the problems raised.

12:30 Lunch

1.30 Session 3 – Expert evidence in civil proceedings

Expert evidence is often crucial in litigation and expensive to obtain. This session will look at moves to use single experts in civil proceedings, assessing expert evidence and the role and duties of experts.

4.30 Close

Tuesday 5 August 2008

9.00 CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session 4a — Sentencing

Whilst the principles of sentencing are reasonably well understood, their application in each case is a fine one. Professor Freiberg will speak about general principles of sentencing and the exercise of judicial discretion. Justice Buddin will lead a discussion of a sentencing case scenario.

Session 4b — Case management

This session will look at the role of judges dealing with busy application lists, the identification of cases requiring management and the referral of cases for alternative dispute resolution.

11.15 Session 5 — Communication in the court room

A judge's ability to control a court is a fundamental aspect of his or her work. This session will look at skills for communicating in the court room, dealing with tension and emotion and handling difficult counsel, witnesses and litigants.

12:45 Lunch

1:45 Session 6 — Maintaining psychological and physical health

Judges are confronted with numerous demands on a daily basis - through the hearing of cases, administrative duties and the giving of judgments. The psychological and physical health of any person will impact upon their work and their productivity. This session is designed to reinforce ideas which may assist them to maintain physical and psychological well-being in a busy schedule.

4.30 Close

Wednesday 6 August 2008

9:00 Session 7 — Judgment Writing

This session is designed to introduce judges to the skill of good judgment writing. There will be a brief introduction to basic pointers on judgment writing and then participants will work in smaller groups on the analysis of specific judgments and matters of particular concern to them.

1:00 Lunch

Thursday 7 August 2008

9:00 Session 8 — Assessing the Credibility of Witnesses

This session is designed to provide participants with assistance in relation to forming judgments on the credibility of witnesses. Credibility can be the decisive question in many trials. Dr Shea has specialised in the assessment of the credibility of witnesses. Mr Wood will provide a commentary on his presentation.

11:00 Session 9 — Interpreters and Ethnicity

This session will focus on the work of interpreters in the court room. It will firstly describe the intricacies of language and its importance in the adversarial courtroom. It will then describe the complexities of the interpreting process and the difficulties encountered by interpreters in achieving accuracy of interpretation. It will conclude by providing tips on how to help interpreters perform their work to the best of their skill and ability.

12:30 Lunch

1.30 Session 10 — Court Craft – The trial from hell

Every judge will at some stage experience the “trial from hell”. This session is concerned with trial management. It is designed to identify the problems which can arise in a trial and to suggest ways in which they may be dealt with. It is hoped that this session will assist participants in heading off the problems before they arise. Judicial control of proceedings will be emphasised.

4:30 pm Close

Friday 8 August 2008

9.00 Session 11 — Contempt (panel discussion)

This session will be conducted as a panel session by three experienced judges and will be based around a discussion with participants of scenarios (contempt in the face of the court situations involving litigants, witnesses or counsel).

10.30 Session 12 — Litigants in Person

This session is intended to identify legal and practical issues which commonly confront judicial officers in dealing with litigants in person and to suggest strategies for dealing with them. The session will also consider abnormal and querulous litigants from a psychiatric perspective.

12:00 Closing Remarks
