

28 July 2026

OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINT ABOUT HER HONOUR MAGISTRATE BOLGER

The Judicial Commission of Victoria (the **Commission**) received a complaint from a community legal centre about the conduct of Her Honour Magistrate Bolger (the **Officer**).

The Complaint

The complaint alleged (amongst other things) that the Officer engaged in conduct that a reasonable person would, having regard to all the circumstances, perceive as belittling and humiliating, in particular by:

- using sarcasm to question or respond to participants in a proceeding; and
- making comments or criticisms that amount to a personal attack.

The complaint identified four family violence intervention order proceedings containing specific examples of the conduct complained of.

Investigation of the Complaint

The Commission investigated the complaint in accordance with the *Judicial Commission of Victoria Act 2016*.

Opportunity to Respond

The Commission gave the Officer an opportunity to respond to the complaint. The Officer did not respond.

Findings and assessment

The Commission found that the Officer infringed the standards of conduct generally expected of judicial officers in that the Officer used a condescending, imperious and sarcastic tone when engaging with court participants in three hearings, and on occasion was unjustifiably critical of legal practitioners. However, the Commission did not find the criticism of the legal practitioners amounted to a 'personal attack'.

The Commission was not satisfied that the Officer's conduct amounted to judicial bullying (as also alleged) or that the Officer's conduct created an atmosphere that lacked a sense of safety for court users.

Outcome of the Complaint

Referral

The Commission referred the complaint to the Chief Magistrate (as head of jurisdiction) with the recommendations that the Officer be counselled by the head of jurisdiction; and attend a relevant judicial education event within 12 months as directed by the head of jurisdiction.