

28 October 2026

OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINT ABOUT HER HONOUR MAGISTRATE PRAPAS

The Judicial Commission of Victoria (the **Commission**) received a complaint from Victoria Legal Aid (**VLA**), about the conduct of Her Honour Magistrate Prapas (the **Officer**) during a Melbourne Drug Court rotation, a division of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria.

The Complaint

The complaint alleged that the Officer:

- spoke in an inappropriate manner towards court users, particularly participants¹, including an insensitive comment about a participant from a marginalised group and an unprofessional remark about another judicial officer; and
- suggested that detrimental action might be taken against VLA lawyers for being involved in the making of a complaint.

The complaint provided numerous examples across multiple proceedings to support the allegations.

Investigation of the Complaint

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

Officer's response

The Officer provided a detailed written response to the complaint.

The Officer acknowledged (among other things) that her conduct in some instances had been 'unfiltered and intemperate' and that she would have expressed herself differently with the benefit of hindsight, but referred to the unique jurisdiction of a drug court. In particular that her intention was to promote participant recovery, accountability and community safety within the therapeutic framework of drug court.

The Officer noted that the complaint had delivered a clear message about the significance of her role and led her to refine her communication style. In particular the Officer stated that she had reflected carefully on the matters raised and had taken steps to ensure that her communication remains effective, respectful and less susceptible to misunderstanding.

¹A participant is a person who has been sentenced to a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Order in the Drug Court at the Magistrates' Court

The Commission's findings and assessment

The Commission found that the Officer's conduct in several proceedings infringed the standards of conduct generally expected of judicial officers.

Referred

The Commission acknowledged that the drug court represents a significant departure from the traditional court model. Consistent with its therapeutic objectives, judicial officers may adopt non-adversarial approaches, particularly during confidential case conferences, which are intended to facilitate open and frank discussion.

However, these features do not displace a judicial officer's obligation to afford all court users civility and respect. Those obligations apply regardless of the jurisdiction in which a judicial officer sits.

The Commission found that on three separate occasions, the Officer made comments of an intimidating and threatening nature towards legal practitioner(s) in relation to those practitioners potentially making a complaint or giving information in support of making a complaint about the Officer. The Commission was satisfied that the Officer's conduct amounted to a pattern of victimisation.

Further, the Commission found that the Officer made an unprofessional remark about another member of the judiciary. The Commission considered that the judicial role requires discipline, cooperation and respectful behaviour, and any differences should be settled in house rather than in the public arena.

The Commission found that on several occasions, the Officer used inappropriate (in the sense of it being overly colloquial, intemperate and unwarranted) language towards court users (particularly participants) including phrases such as:

- 'I want to slap you around a bit too';
- 'Do you reckon the substance is screwing up with the way you're thinking and the way you're relating to the team';
- 'This is just crap';
- '[The participant] believes [their] own bullshit' [said in the presence of a school group] and
- Made an offensive and insensitive comments about a participant from a marginalise group.

Additionally, the Commission found that in one instance, the Officer engaged with a participant in an intimidating, combative and frustrated tone for an excessive length of time. The Commission acknowledged that the Officer had been attempting to reprimand the participant for disrespectful behaviour, and noted that had it been a single or isolated instance, the conduct may not have infringed the standards. However, the Commission found that the full extent of the Officer's tone and demeanour was unnecessary having regard to the length of the exchange and its cumulative effect.

Dismissal

The complaint also alleged that the Officer demonstrated cultural insensitivity, drew an inappropriate analogy and made inappropriate, coarse and degrading comments during two hearings.

The Commission dismissed these allegations on the basis that they were not substantiated.

Outcome of the complaint

The Commission acknowledged the challenges described by the Officer (in the drug court jurisdiction) might reasonably be expected to present difficulties for any judicial officer. Further, that the Officer provided significant insight into her conduct and the impact on the parties and lawyers.

Overall, however, it referred the majority of the complaint to the Chief Magistrate (as head of jurisdiction) with recommendations that the Officer:

- be counselled by the head of jurisdiction;
- read and/or refamiliarize herself with the [Commission's Conduct Guidelines](#), including as it relates to victimisation; and
- attend a relevant judicial educational event within 12 months as directed by the head of jurisdiction.