

# Mental Health Court – attending the hearing

## Introduction

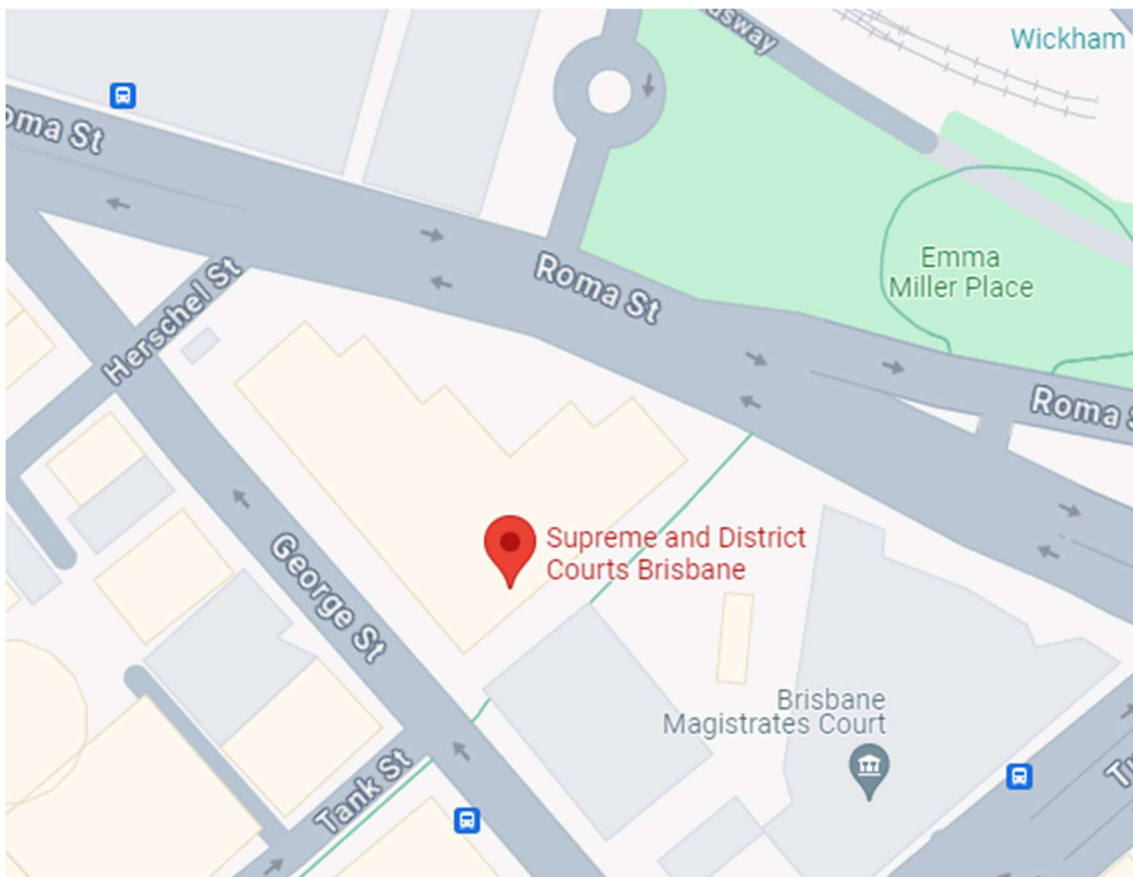
The Mental Health Court is constituted by a Supreme Court Judge assisted by two assisting clinicians. The Supreme Court is a very formal place and there is an expectation of respectful behaviour by anyone attending the Court. Everyone in court must conduct themselves according to the court's rules and procedures.

Information about the Court can be found at <https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/courts/mental-health-court/about-the-mental-health-court>

## Court location

The Mental Health Court is in the QEII Law Courts Building located at 415 George Street, Brisbane. You can access this building from either Roma Street or George Street. Mental Health Court usually sits in courtroom 13 which is located on level 5. The Court sits once a month for a week at a time, however this can be subject to change.

The Court commences hearings at 10am, however this can also vary depending on several factors. If you are unsure about the Court's location or its commencement time, information is available on the Daily Law List at <https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/daily-law-lists/daily-law-lists>



## Parking/Public Transport

The nearest train station to the court is Roma Street Train Station.

Various bus stops are close to the court.

Please refer to [Translink](#) for further information on public transport in Brisbane.

The nearest parking is located at King George Square car park.

If you are concerned about finding the court, please organise to meet your QHVSS worker at the train/bus station.

## Who can accompany me to court?

You are welcome to bring any support person to court with you. Your QHVSS worker can also attend to support you if you wish.

Mental Health Court is usually an open court, which means anyone can attend, although most often there are very few people who are present at Court.

## Arriving at Court

It's encouraged to arrive at court about 20 minutes prior to the scheduled hearing time.

When you arrive at the ground level of the Court building, you will be greeted by security staff. They will scan any items you are taking into the court, similar to security at an airport. You may need to take off anything metal.

You will then approach the lifts on ground floor and take the lifts to level 5 (or whatever floor your hearing is located on).

## Facilities

There are bathrooms located on each level of the court building. On level 5, the bathrooms are located to the right of the courtroom 13. There are also waiting areas outside each court room. You are welcome to wait here prior to the hearing.

If you are unsure or have questions about where to go in the building, please see the administration staff located on the ground floor to the left of the lift area.

## What to bring to Court

It is recommended to bring a bottle of water. There are also water taps of level 13. Some people also like to have a notebook for writing notes, but your QHVSS worker will also take notes and can give you a summary for your record if you wish.

If there is anything that you think would assist you to feel more settled and less stressed or anxious at Court, please discuss this with your QHVSS worker. For some people, it can be useful to have stress reduction items with you, such as a fidget toy, lollies, stress balls, small, weighted items.

## Court etiquette

Whether you are attending the Court via videoconference, or in person, remember you are attending the Supreme Court and appropriate attire should be worn i.e., your clothes should be neat and tidy and enclosed shoes are encouraged. It can be cold in the courtroom, so a jacket or cardigan is recommended.

It is recommended to turn your mobile off prior to Court. It is recommended you don't chew gum. Please remove hats and sunglasses.

It's customary to bow your head to acknowledge the Judge every time they enter or leave the courtroom.

## Teleconference attendance

If you cannot attend in person or do not wish to attend in person, it can be facilitated to attend via telephone. The same Court etiquette applies to all appearances, whether in person, or not. You can advise your QHVSS worker that you wish to listen to the hearing via telephone. You will be provided with the phone number of the Court and a pin code for accessing the teleconference.

To ensure that you cannot be heard during the hearing, it is essential to ensure your call is muted.

Please note that there are some instances where you may call into the Court while a previous matter is still being finalised. If this occurs, you may be asked to call back later or remain on mute until the previous matter is completed. Please ensure that you follow any instructions provided by the Judge or the bailiff.

## Liaising with the prosecution

If the matter being heard at Mental Health Court is particularly serious, you are entitled to have a meeting with prosecutor before or after the hearing. It may be appropriate to receive an update from the prosecutor during the court breaks. Please contact your QHVSS worker to make plans around this.

## Victim Impact Statement

When appropriate, the Prosecution may submit your Victim Impact Statement to the court. The Victim Impact Statement will not be read out in full but is likely to be read by the Judge, the assisting clinicians, and on rare occasions, the legal parties to the proceedings. The Court is required to have regard to the statement in deciding matters such as the type of order to make and to inform the conditions of the order. Sometimes the Judge will acknowledge the Victim Impact Statement and the impact of the offence.

## QHVSS role in Court support

QHVSS workers are there to support you physically and emotionally. We can take notes of the discussion and type them up for you if you want to look at them later. If you need to leave the Court during the hearing for any reason, we can stay in the Court room or come with you. Your QHVSS worker will discuss this with you prior to the hearing.

You are also encouraged to bring a support person with you to assist with your wellbeing on the day.

## Length of hearing

Some hearings may be scheduled for a brief period, or a number of hours or a full day. This can change on the day for a number of reasons. Therefore, some hearings may go for longer, or shorter than originally expected.

## Final decision

The Judge hearing the case may make their decision at the end of the Hearing, or they may reserve their decision to another date to give their decision and reason for the decision after further consideration. Court decisions are not generally published, although in rare circumstances they may be.