

LAW COURTS LIBRARY

The Law Courts Library is one of the premier law libraries in Australia; elements of its collection predate the formation of the Supreme Court in 1824. The library is a legal resource and information centre for all judicial officers, court staff and registrars of the various courts in the Law Courts Building.

Legal authorities and accurate information are provided to support the timely and effective decision-making of the courts. In 2023, librarians answered over 1,075 requests from the Supreme Court, and 2,282 legal resources were borrowed. Law Courts Library reader services librarians continued to provide support for court use of online resources and e-publications on iPads and other mobile devices.

In addition, 2,266 Supreme Court (including Court of Appeal and Court of Criminal Appeal) decisions were published during 2023 on the NSW Caselaw website, which is managed and supported by the library. A total of 540 support requests were received, and 30 training sessions were provided for Supreme Court staff.

The Law Courts Library faced significant challenges in 2023 with a major flooding event in September when a broken pipe on level 19 affected all floors below in the building. The library on level 15 appeared to sustain more extensive damage than most court rooms, chambers, and registry facilities on lower levels. Furniture, fittings, and carpets on the eastern side of the floor were damaged beyond repair.

Fortunately, the damage to the print collection was not extensive, although some volumes did receive water damage and required remediation. As the library was uninhabitable for over two weeks following the flood, library services to the Supreme Court continued to be provided by library staff working offsite. New carpet and replacement joinery/furniture was installed in late December.

Law Courts Library staff have participated in preparations for the Bicentenary of the Supreme Court in 2024, which include a bicentenary history of the court edited by Larissa Reid, Reader Services Manager, and the Hon Keith Mason AC KC, entitled *Constant Guardian: Changing Times: The Supreme Court of New South Wales 1824-2024*.

Regrettably, in August 2023, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court gave notice that it would no longer contribute to the Law Courts Library which had been jointly funded and administered by the Supreme Court of New South Wales and the Federal Court of Australia since the latter's creation in 1977. This is a most regrettable development.