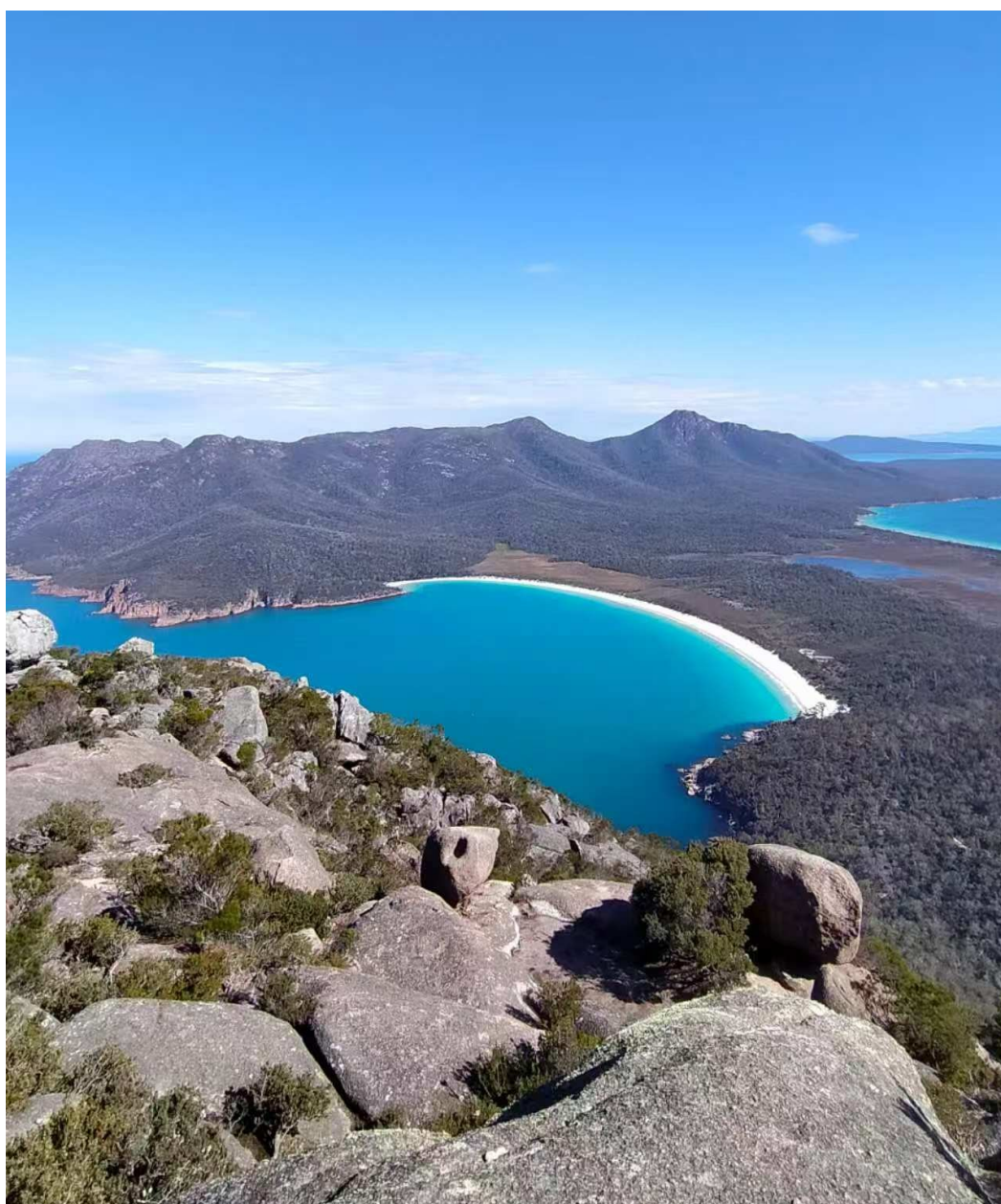


TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF
JUSTICES OF THE PEACE INC



Journal

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TAJPI FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE

*Note: Opinions expressed editorially or by contribution
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Association of Justices of the Peace Inc (TAJPI)*

TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE INC

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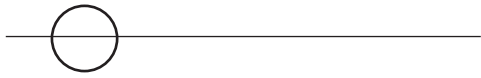
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JP Stories

Two lighthearted and uplifting anecdotes highlight how JPs can bring both humour and humanity to their role — whether calming an overly prepared deponent or offering a moment of kindness that helps someone take an important step forward.



President's Report

Hi all

I'm not quite sure why summer has been delayed by a month?? I always believed it was supposed to commence in December, yet we have only just started to see glimpses of it in January. My family spent Christmas in Hobart, where the weather was not at all favourable (rain for most of the day south of Hobart), although I've heard the north and northwest enjoyed much nicer conditions. Despite this, I sincerely hope everyone had a pleasant festive season and is looking forward to a better 2026.

The NW held a wonderful Christmas dinner at the Ulverstone RSL Club, and it was fantastic to have our State Secretary, David Skegg, and his daughter joined us for the occasion. The full report is included in the NW report.

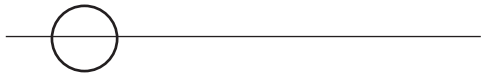
The webinar with Federal Court Judge Marcus Turnbull was held in early December, and it was great to see an excellent number of participants. A couple of webinars are already scheduled for early 2026, with details to be provided in the PD report.

The Association extends a warm welcome to all new JPs. If you are aware of any area within the state that you feel is under-serviced by a JP, please contact a Committee member so this can be followed up with the Department of Justice. The Association is always looking to increase its membership base.

I am very pleased to announce that the Sheffield Signing Centre is about to extend its hours. It currently operates every second Monday and will soon also be open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. This expansion will significantly enhance JP services for the NW.

As we move into 2026, planning for the statewide seminar is well underway. It will be held on 28 March in the south of the state, with the venue to be confirmed shortly. I am also delighted to announce that one of the keynote speakers will be a High Court Judge.

(Continued on next page)



President's

Report — continued

My thanks go to NW JP Deb Hutton, whose connection (old school mates!) made this possible. I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at this event.

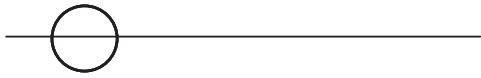
I met with the immediate past president of the NSW JP Association today, who served in the role for eight years. It was fascinating to learn about the similarities and differences between the JP role in NSW and Tasmania. There is a strong emphasis on training in NSW, and I am pleased to have access to this information should we require it.

Interestingly, the Tasmanian JP role is far more diverse than that of the NSW JP. The NSW Association also appears to have a close relationship with their Department of Justice, as we do, which is encouraging. I came away from the meeting with several matters to discuss with the Committee, and I hope to arrange a similar meeting with the Queensland President.

The first Committee meeting for the year will be held on 9 February, and I am looking forward to getting things underway for a productive 2026.

Warm regards

Lorraine Smith JP
President, TAJPI



Attorney General's Update



Happy New Year! It is my pleasure to write to Tasmania's Justices of the Peace at the start of 2026 with an update of the Government's justice agenda.

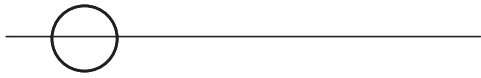
I thank Tasmania's JP community for their work in the past year. I value the contributions of the nearly 800 persons serving as JPs and look forward to continuing to support their work in the year ahead.

Our Government greatly values volunteers in the justice sector and across the community. As part of our support, we have made it cheaper and easier for volunteers to get involved in the community, with the fee for their Registration with Vulnerable People waived from 1 January 2026. This two-year initiative recognises the important work that volunteers carry out in the community by reducing their expenses to do so.

We are continuing to drive a strong legislative agenda to add to the numerous important reforms that were passed in 2025. This includes work in addressing significant areas of law such as community safety, family violence, and access to justice.

In December 2025, we passed the Sentencing Amendment (Aggravating Factors) Bill. The Bill amended the *Sentencing Act 1997* to ensure sentencing takes into account hateful, prejudicial, or targeted offending as aggravating factors. Every single Tasmanian deserves to be treated with respect, no matter who they are or where they come from. This reform makes clear that there is no place in our modern society for any type of crime, let alone crimes motivated by prejudice, bias or hate.

(Continued on next page)



Attorney General's Update — continued

This reform is particularly relevant given the horrendous antisemitic terror act at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. I am continuing to work with colleagues across states and territories in response to this tragedy and ensuring our laws are appropriate and effective in preventing such acts from occurring.

In December 2025, we also passed the Commission for Children and Young People Bill 2025 which seeks to create a new Commission which will strengthen Tasmania's oversight system and be a strong advocate for children and young people. This is a significant reform that responds to multiple recommendations made by the 2021 Commission of Inquiry.

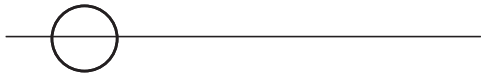
In addition to these measures, we are consulting on various reforms to key legislation, including on the matters of family violence and integrity in the public sector.

The 'Strengthening Our Responses to Family Violence in Tasmania: Family Violence Act 2004 and Related Legislation Discussion Paper', calling for community input to help shape the future of Tasmania's response to family violence, was released for consultation on 17 November 2025.

A consultation draft of the Integrity Commission Amendment Bill 2026 was released on 12 January 2026. The draft Bill includes amendments that will implement 33 recommendations from the Independent Cox Review and makes operational improvements identified by the Integrity Commission. This work also supports the findings of the Independent Weiss Review.

Submissions can be made on these items on the Department of Justice's consultation website until 2 April 2026.

(Continued on next page)



Attorney General's Update — continued

We are working hard to ensure Tasmanians right across the state have the access to justice they deserve. As part of our measures to promote access to justice, we have invested \$4 million in Tasmania Legal Aid over the next two years to assist them in meeting the increasing demand for their critical services, ensuring our legal system continues to serve Tasmanians.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Lloyd Babb SC, Australian Barrister and former Director of Public Prosecutions in New South Wales and in the Northern Territory, to review court backlogs and design a strategy to reduce these backlogs. Access to justice is a cornerstone of our society, and this work will support the operation of the legal system by identifying practical solutions to reduce delays, improve efficiency, and ensure timely outcomes for all court users.

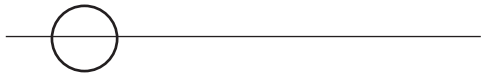
I look forward to continuing to deliver for Tasmanians in 2026 and continuing to work with and support the Justices of the Peace community in the year ahead.

Guy Barnett

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation



Department of Justice

Introducing the Witnessing Checklist: A New Resource for Tasmanian Justices of the Peace

The Department of Justice has released a new [Witnessing Checklist](#), designed to support Justices of the Peace across Tasmania in carrying out their witnessing responsibilities with confidence and consistency. This practical tool offers clear, step-by-step guidance for the documents most commonly witnessed in the state, and serves as a quick reference for JPs who are already familiar with the relevant legislative and procedural frameworks.

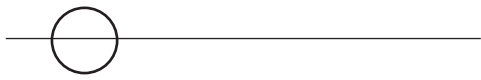
Developed specifically for the Tasmanian context, the checklist has been created with accessibility and ease of use in mind. It functions seamlessly on both desktop and mobile devices, allowing JPs to consult it whether they are working from home, in a service centre, or out in the community. Upon first accessing the resource, users will be prompted to add it to their device's home screen, enabling fast, convenient access whenever required. A QR code is also

provided to streamline navigation to the checklist.

The Department acknowledges the valuable contributions of key stakeholders whose ongoing collaboration has informed the development of the checklist and the updated JP Handbook. In particular, the Department extends its thanks to the Tasmanian Association of Justices of the Peace Inc. (TAJPI), the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and the Supreme and Magistrates Courts of Tasmania. Their insights and support have played an important role in shaping resources that strengthen the work of JPs across the state.

[Witnessing Checklist](#)





Department of Justice

Updates to the JP Handbook: Strengthening Consistency and Practice

In conjunction with the release of the new Witnessing Checklist, the Department of Justice has undertaken a series of updates to the [Justice of the Peace Handbook](#) to ensure alignment between the two resources. These revisions aim to provide JPs with clear, consistent and contemporary guidance that reflects current practice across Tasmania.

Key Areas of Update

Maintaining a Logbook

While keeping a logbook is not a legislative requirement, the updated handbook emphasises its value as a practical record of documents witnessed. Such records can assist if questions later arise about a witnessing event. A sample logbook template is available on the Department's website under Record keeping in the [JP Resources](#) section.

Acceptable forms of Identification

The handbook now includes clarified guidance on the types of identification that may be used to verify a person's identity, supporting JPs in applying a consistent approach.

Administering an Oath

Instructions for administering an oath have

been revised to reflect current practice, including updated wording and procedural steps.

Annexures to Affidavits

New guidance has been added to assist JPs in managing annexures for both general affidavits and those filed in the Supreme Court, ensuring accuracy and compliance with court requirements.

Certifying Copies of Electronic Documents

The handbook now provides advice on certifying documents presented in digital form, an increasingly common scenario as more services transition to electronic formats.

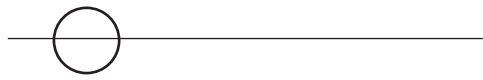
Certifying Photographs

Additional guidance has been included to support JPs when certifying photographs used for identity verification purposes.

Witnessing Voluntary Assisted Dying Forms

New content outlines the procedural requirements for witnessing documentation related to voluntary assisted dying (VAD), ensuring JPs are equipped to meet the specific obligations associated with these forms.

(Continued on next page)



Department of Justice

Updates to the JP Handbook: Strengthening Consistency and Practice — continued

Documents for Use Overseas

The updated handbook offers guidance on witnessing documents intended for use overseas, including the importance of recording any instructions relied upon during the process.

These updates collectively enhance the clarity, consistency and usability of the JP Handbook, ensuring that Tasmanian Justices of the Peace are supported with

accurate and up-to-date information as they carry out their important duties.

[JP Handbook](#)

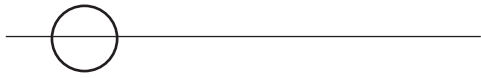


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Southern Report

The final Friday of January marked the **Opening of the Legal Year (OLY)** for 2026, an annual tradition that signals the formal commencement of the judicial and legal professional year in Tasmania.

Although the courts operate continuously, the OLY serves as an important symbolic moment — one that blends history, ceremony and reflection. It offers the judiciary, the legal profession, government representatives and community organisations an opportunity to reaffirm their shared commitment to justice, integrity and the rule of law.

In Tasmania, the OLY is observed through a series of events that bring together members of the legal community. The day begins with an interfaith or ecumenical service at the St David's Cathedral, Hobart, attended by judges, magistrates, practitioners, law students and community representatives. The service is inclusive and non-denominational, focusing on ethical responsibility, fairness and service to the community.

This is followed by the Judges' Breakfast, an informal gathering that provides an opportunity for collegiality and connection among members of the profession, including trainees and new graduates. It is a moment to welcome new practitioners

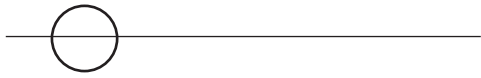
and reflect on the year ahead.

The day concludes with the **Opening of the Legal Year Dinner**, hosted by the Law Society of Tasmania — one of the major social and professional events on the legal calendar. Practitioners, members of the judiciary, academics and students come together to hear keynote speakers address current issues affecting the justice system, professional wellbeing and priorities for the year.

This year's dinner featured an inspiring address from Hayley Fenton, an alumna and ambassador of The Smith Family. Hayley shared her remarkable journey of overcoming significant financial hardship as a young person to ultimately graduate with a double degree in Law and Psychology. Her story resonated deeply with attendees and played a central role in helping raise more than \$6,000 for The Smith Family on the night.

Patricia Dai Wei Wang JP

Editor



Northwest Report

NORTHWEST LIFE MEMBERS:

**Glenn Emmett, Allan Waddle OAM,
Ian Day, Karen Linegar and John
Bloomfield**

NW JPs recently celebrated **Christmas** and welcomed members with a dinner at the RSL Club in Ulverstone. Joining us for the occasion were State Secretary David Skegg and his daughter Karina, who travelled from Hobart, along with two local magistrates, Leanne Topfer and Katie Edwards. A very enjoyable Christmas meal was shared by all.

A raffle and a trivia competition (with the stakes proving very high!) were held, and the night was a great success. One table even had to share both the trivia winnings and the raffle prize — a one-sided affair indeed.

In lieu of holding a separate certificate presentation event, due to only a small number of recipients, the evening provided an opportunity to present a 20 Years of Service certificate to Libby Perkins.



Lorraine Smith (President), David Skegg (Secretary) & Lyn Jackson (Membership support)



Bench Justices and Magistrates

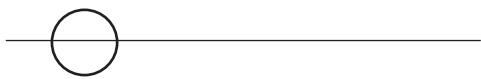


Libby with her Certificate of 20 Years of Service



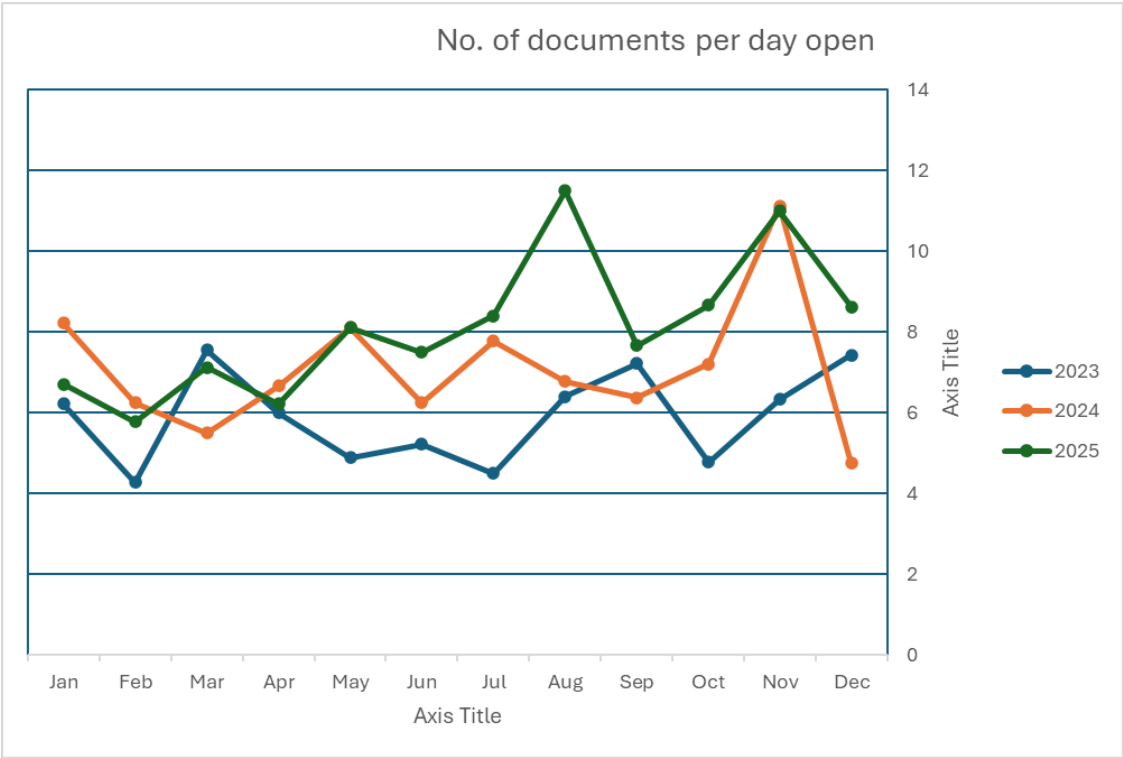
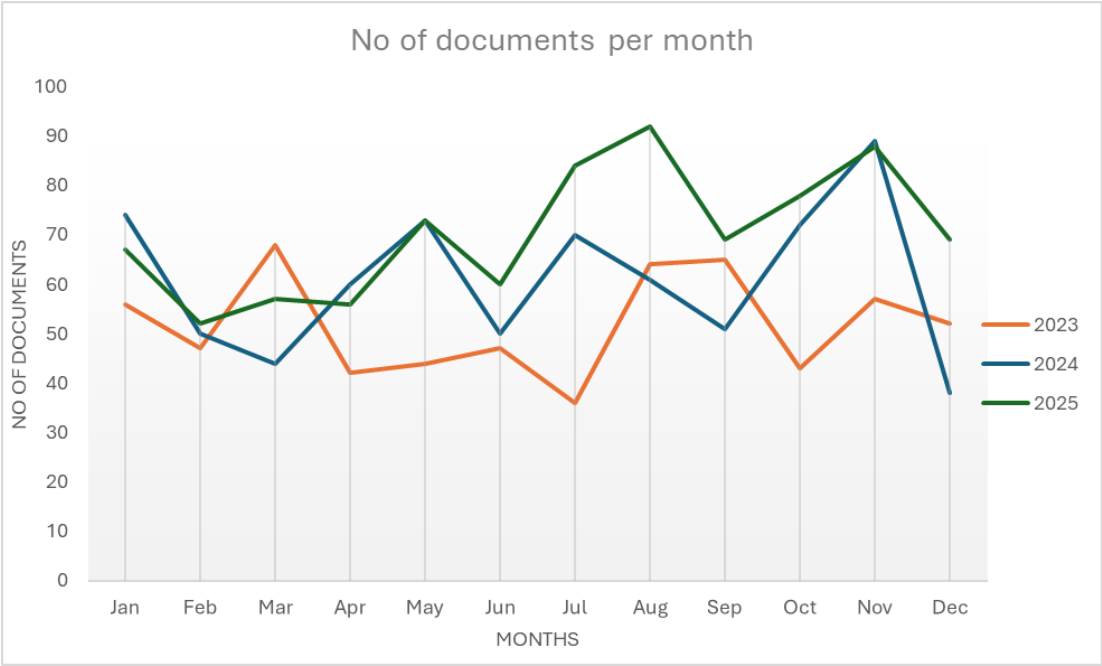
Members and families

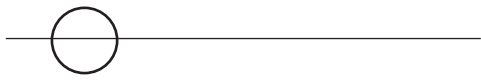




NW Document Signing Centre

Statistics





Case Study: Common Affidavit Errors and How a JP Resolved Them

Background

Affidavits are among the most formal documents witnessed by Justices of the Peace. Errors — whether clerical or procedural — can delay court proceedings, invalidate key evidence, or require parties to re-swear documents under urgent conditions. This case study highlights a real-world style scenario illustrating how affidavit mistakes commonly occur and how a JP can effectively manage them.

Scenario Overview

Maria, a JP with three years' experience, was approached by Daniel, who needed an affidavit sworn for a civil matter in the Magistrates Court. He arrived with a printed affidavit he had prepared himself using an online form.

As Maria began the witnessing process, she identified several issues that required correction before she could proceed.

Identified Errors

1. Missing annexure markings

Daniel had attached screenshots and emails referenced in the affidavit, but none were marked as annexures.

Why this is a problem:

Courts require annexures to be clearly labelled (e.g., "Annexure A") and referenced in the affidavit to maintain clarity and prevent

tampering.

2. Affidavit already signed by the deponent

Daniel had pre-signed the affidavit before arriving.

Why this is a problem:

The JP must see the deponent sign the affidavit — otherwise it cannot be sworn or affirmed.

3. Incorrect Jurat (the statement the JP completes)

The jurat section referred to the document as being sworn in "New South Wales," even though it was being witnessed in Tasmania.

Why this is a problem:

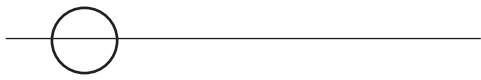
The place of swearing must reflect the actual location, or the affidavit may be rejected by the court.

4. Outdated oath wording

Daniel intended to take an oath, but the wording printed on the form referred to an older version no longer used in Tasmanian courts.

Why this is a problem:

Outdated or incorrect wording invalidates the oath unless corrected.



Case Study: Common Affidavit Errors and How a JP Resolved Them — continued

5. Identification not properly verified

Daniel presented a digital copy of his driver licence on his phone, but Maria knew she needed a clear, viewable form of official ID in accordance with current JP practice guidance.

Why this is a problem:

The JP must be reasonably satisfied of identity before proceeding.

How the JP Resolved the Issues

Step 1: Explain the required corrections

Maria calmly explained that she could not proceed with the affidavit in its current form. She summarised the issues and reassured Daniel that they were common and easily fixed.

Step 2: Annotate annexures correctly

With Daniel's agreement, Maria helped him label each attachment:

"Annexure A"

"Annexure B"

etc.

She also ensured each annexure was signed and dated by her with the appropriate certification wording.

Step 3: Re-signing the Affidavit

Daniel struck a line through the pre-signed

signature, initialled the change, and then re-signed in Maria's presence.

Step 4: Amend the Jurat

Maria neatly corrected "New South Wales" to "Tasmania" and initialled the amendment.

Step 5: Provide Correct Oath Wording

Maria used the current Tasmanian oath wording.

Daniel repeated the oath correctly, and the JP documented this in the jurat.

Step 6: Verify Identity Properly

Daniel returned later that day with his physical driver licence. After verifying his identity, Maria completed the affidavit without further issues.

Outcome

Thanks to the JP's thoroughness:

- The affidavit was accepted by the Magistrates Court on the first submission.
- Daniel avoided delays that might have required adjournments or further legal costs.



Case Study: Common Affidavit Errors and How a JP Resolved Them — continued

- The process reinforced the value of a JP's role in maintaining the integrity of sworn documents.

Key Lessons for JPs

- Never witness a pre-signed affidavit.
- Always check annexure markings and certification wording.
- Verify identity according to current guidelines.
- Ensure oath/affirmation wording is up-to-date.
- Review the jurat carefully for location, date and completeness.

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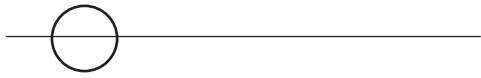
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Lighthearted JP Story

Over-Prepared Deponent

One quiet Tuesday morning, JP Margaret welcomed a gentleman who needed a statutory declaration witnessed. He arrived with a bulging folder, three pens, a clipboard and – most curiously – a high-visibility vest.

Margaret smiled and asked, “Big day ahead?”

He replied solemnly, “I read online that witnessing can be serious business, so I came prepared.”

She opened the folder and found:

- Five printed copies of the same form
- A page titled “Backup Signatures: Just in Case”
- A printed map of Tasmania “in case you need to record where we are,” he explained
- A checklist titled “Witnessing Survival Kit”

Margaret gently reassured him that only one form was needed, and no protective equipment or backup signatures were required.

Relieved, he relaxed and joked, “So I didn’t need to dress like I’m attending an OH&S conference?”

“Not unless you plan on certifying those documents at a construction site,” she smiled.

The witnessing took less than two minutes.

As he left, he said, “Next time, I’ll just bring the form. Maybe the vest. It’s comfy.”

More Than a Stamp

JP *Rita* was finishing her shift at the signing centre when the door opened and an elderly man stepped in, slightly out of breath. He apologised for arriving so late and asked if she could witness a simple statutory declaration.

Rita could have rushed – it was a small form, the centre was about to close – but something in his expression made her slow down and give him her full attention.

As they talked, he shared that the declaration was for a volunteer application at a local school.

“I’m retired now,” he said softly, “and I just want to feel useful again.”

Rita completed the witnessing with care, listening as he spoke about his hope to read with children who needed extra support. When she handed the signed document back, he held it carefully, as though it meant more than paper.

“You’ve helped me do something I’ve wanted to do for years,” he said. “Thank you for taking the time.”

Rita watched him leave with a lighter step than when he arrived.

It struck her then: sometimes the most meaningful thing a JP can give isn’t a stamp – it’s a moment of human kindness that helps someone move forward.



the ACADEMY NEWS

from Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy of Australia

FEB 2026



吉祥如意

福氣臨門



The Spring Festival or Lunar New Year is one of the most important period on the Lunar Calendar. On the first day of the year, local folks would typically visit Buddhist temples to sound the bell, which is believed to bring in good fortune and blessings from Buddha. On 21 February 2026, Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy of Australia will let community members ring the Peace Bell at Jin-Gang-Dhyana Temple at Campania, Tasmania, to carry on this tradition.

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on WeChat



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