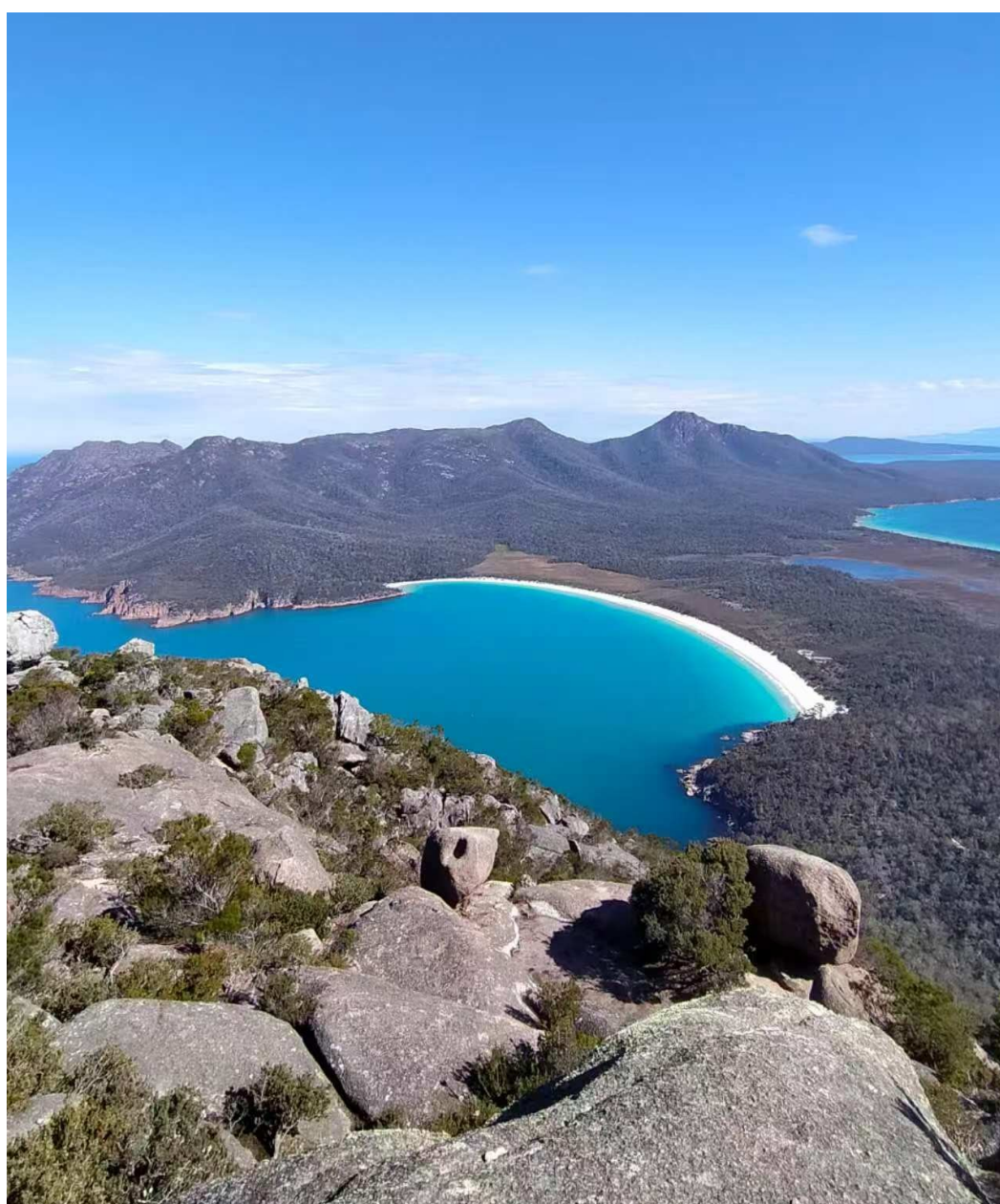


TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF
JUSTICES OF THE PEACE INC



Journal

VOL 5 | APRIL 2026 ISSUE



TAJPI APRIL 2026 ISSUE

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

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The Association has had a strong first year with well-attended professional development, a successful statewide seminar, upcoming events, and a continued focus on growing and engaging its membership.

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13 AHD matters

The excerpt highlights the importance of JPs carefully assessing capacity and ensuring a doctor has properly discussed and validly signed an Advanced Health Directive, with JPs erring on the side of caution and declining to witness where these safeguards are not clearly met.



President's Report

I hope that all members had a wonderful Easter break and that some were lucky enough to receive a visit from the Easter Bunny.

The Association has now been fully functional for a little over 12 months, and I personally feel that things are progressing well. I would really like our membership to be stronger than it is currently tracking. I think it is very important that we are able to reach out to as many JPs as possible so that we can deliver the best possible professional development (PD) and support.

PD has been tracking well, and the sessions thus far have been very well attended. I am looking forward to the first statewide seminar (by the time this goes to print, it will be all over). Thanks go to our PD Coordinator, John, for his wonderful effort in putting together an exciting program. I look forward to meeting as many members as possible and am also very much looking forward to hearing the keynote address from Tasmania's only High Court Judge.

The seminar was a great success, with all speakers delivering interesting and informative talks. John has sent out a feedback email, and I would encourage all attendees to respond. The Police Academy proved to be an excellent venue. Planning will now begin for next year's seminar, which will be held either in the north or northwest of the state.

A reminder that there is another webinar on search warrants coming up this month, and for northwest members, there will be a meeting on April 17.

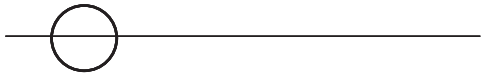
The Membership Coordinator has emailed all members regarding a second round of membership badges. Anyone wishing to obtain a badge should please contact Lyn or reply to the email with the requested details.

Please find the link below to the presentation given by His Honour Justice Robert Beech-Jones at the recent statewide seminar.

<https://www.hcourt.gov.au/resources-and-publications/speeches/the-hon-justice-robert-beech-jones>

A short report this time.

Lorraine Smith JP
President, TAJPI



Attorney General's Update



It is my pleasure to write to Tasmania's Justices of the Peace with a March update of the Government's justice agenda.

I plan on attending the Tasmanian Association of the Justices of the Peace Inc 2026 State Seminar on 28 March in support of the thriving community of JPs in our State, and I thank the Association for organising this event.

Our Government is continuing to deliver reforms that align with community expectations for justice. This includes work to support victims of crime, ensuring the law is clear and fair, and improving access to justice.

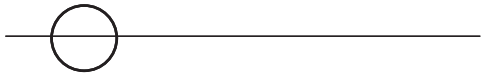
Our Government will legislate to ensure that people convicted of serious crimes cannot present 'good character' references to mitigate their sentence. I have met with, and will continue to meet with, advocacy groups and survivors on this issue, and thank them for their ongoing support and advocacy for this reform. It is our position that victims of crime should not have to sit in court and hear how the person that caused them harm is of "good character".

While our Government has already reformed sentencing laws relating to the use of 'good character' references in sexual offences previously, we are now working to further reform these laws in line with community expectations.

On 3 March 2026, the interim redress scheme for historical forced adoption practices opened. We are working on finalising the nation-leading full redress scheme for mother who were subjected to these historic practices.

Recognising that some mothers may be facing urgent or exceptional needs and cannot wait for the full scheme to commence mid-year, the interim scheme has been established to ensure timely support for affected mothers experiencing an urgent or exceptional need. This is an important step in ensuring we right the wrongs of the past.

Since the commencement of Parliament sittings for 2026, I have been pleased to bring reforms before Parliament to ensure that the rights of Tasmanian tenants, owner-builders and many others in the community are upheld.



Attorney General's Update — continued

(Continued from page 2)

The Residential Parks Bill 2026 provides clear legal rights and protections for long-term caravan park residents. The Bill delivers balanced, fair and modern reforms that support residents and park owners, recognising the role these parks play in housing affordability and the visitor economy.

The Bill will provide a framework for dispute resolution, charging of rent and other charges, processes and timeframes for vacancy and other issues that were highlighted by stakeholders in feedback to the discussion paper issued in 2024. Importantly, some provisions of the Bill will apply retrospectively, providing certainty and clarity to current residents and operators.

We have also developed the Occupational Licensing Amendment Bill to provide greater security for consumers, subcontractors and workers in the building industry. The Bill targets the issue of 'phoenixing', where building companies unfairly avoid paying debts, only to reappear under a new name.

My Department is commencing consultation on the Monetary Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill. This Bill aims to provide additional mechanisms for enforcing a debt, including by providing for the collection of Tasmanian monetary penalties from persons who reside in other jurisdictions, thereby reducing loopholes for interstate lawbreakers to avoid the consequences of their actions.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Magistrates Court is reestablishing a presence in Smithton. I thank my Department and the Magistrates Court who have been working over a considerable period to identify suitable premises for the Court to once again be able to sit in Smithton. The Wyndarra Community and Resource Centre has been deemed suitable, and the Magistrates Court will resume sitting in Smithton from 6 May 2026, delivering improved access to justice to the Circular Head and the North West communities.

I look forward to continuing to deliver positive reforms for Tasmanians and to continued collaboration with the Justices of the Peace community.

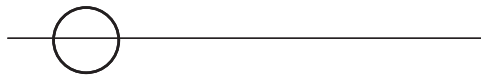
Guy Barnett

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs



Department of Justice

Keeping your JP details up to date

– Supporting access for the community

As a valued member of Tasmania's Justice of the Peace (JP) community, the Department of Justice sincerely thanks you for your continued dedication and the important service you provide to your local community.

We are committed to supporting reliable access to JP services across Tasmania. Recent feedback from the community suggests that, in some areas, people are occasionally experiencing difficulty contacting a JP. In some instances, this appears to be due to contact details or availability information not being up to date.

Accurate and up-to-date information plays an important role in helping community members connect with a JP when and where they need one.

Why keeping your details current matters

The Department maintains a publicly accessible '[Find a JP](#)' register, which allows community members to search for JPs by suburb, postcode, name or language spoken.

Under the *Justices of the Peace Act 2018* (section 17), JPs are required to advise the Department of a change in circumstances, including a change in name, residential address or contact details. Keeping this information up to date ensures the register remains accurate which in turn ensures the community can contact you.

The register displays limited information, including:

- your name
- preferred searchable location
- preferred contact number
- Availability
- languages spoken (if applicable)

If this information is out of date, it can make it more difficult for members of the public to locate and contact a JP - particularly in areas where services are in high demand.

What you can do

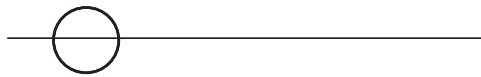
We encourage all JPs to take a few moments to review the details recorded for them on the public register. If your details need updating, the process is simple and can be completed online via the [Change your details form](#).

Alternatively, you can email jp@justice.tas.gov.au to request an update.

By keeping your information accurate, you are helping to ensure that members of the community can easily find and contact a JP when they need one.

Please note that updating your details with the Association does not update your details on the Department's JP register. If your contact information or availability changes, you will need to notify the Department directly via the means

(Continued on page 5)



Department of Justice

Keeping your JP details up to date

– Supporting access for the community

(Continued from page 4)

outlined above.

A shared responsibility

The Department relies on JPs to notify us of any changes to their details, including updates to contact information, address or availability.

Keeping this information current is a simple but important way to support the broader JP network and improve access for the community.

Thank you again for your ongoing contribution and commitment to serving the community.



ANZAC Day holds particular significance in Tasmania, where communities across the state come together each year to honour the service and sacrifice of current and former members of the Australian Defence Force. From dawn services in Hobart to commemorations in regional towns, the day is observed with quiet dignity and respect.

Tasmania has a long and proud history of military service, and ANZAC Day provides an important opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of Tasmanians who have served, as well as the lasting impact of service on their families and communities. Memorials, cenotaphs and honour boards throughout the state stand as enduring reminders of this service.

For many, ANZAC Day is a time for reflection rather than ceremony – a moment to pause, remember, and uphold the values of duty, service and respect that continue to guide public life. These values underpin the role of Justices of the Peace, reinforcing the importance of integrity and service to the Tasmanian community.

Patricia Dai Wei Wang JP, *Editor*



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Southern Report

The Department of Justice routinely invites public submissions on proposed legislation through its website. Given their regular engagement with departmental processes and their direct experience applying legislation, Justices of the Peace and Bench Justices are uniquely positioned to offer practical, informed perspectives that extend beyond those of the general public.

Two current policy drafts open for consultation - the Integrity Amendment Bill 2026 and Strengthening Our Response to Family Violence 2026 – highlight the valuable opportunities available for meaningful contribution. Each consultation provides a channel for TAJPI members to ensure that community needs, operational insights and frontline experiences are accurately represented

in the development of future law and policy.

Members are encouraged to review consultation materials as they are released and consider preparing a submission. Your insights can help shape legislative outcomes, enhance procedural fairness, and strengthen the administration of justice across Tasmania.

[Strengthening Our Response to Family Violence discussion paper](#) was opened to submissions between 1 March and 2 April. More details can be found [here](#).

James Ayliffe, JP, BA, BJSt (Hons)

The morning of 25 February 2026 was bright as Kingston DSC volunteers gathered at the Timeless Way cafe to join Coordinator Mike Percey for a morning tea. Mike explained later, "It was good to put faces to names, for a lot of us who hadn't previously met."

Having been invited to attend, it was a good opportunity for me to meet some of the volunteers I had not had the pleasure of previously meeting as well as participating in interesting conversations ranging across past and future travels, interesting jobs and hobbies, pets, and of course, some amusing encounters while undertaking JP duties.

In the photograph from L to R: Mike Percey (Coordinator), Pene Hughes, Sharon Barnett, James Ayliffe, Malika Okeil, Mike Stoddart and myself on the far right. John O'Reilly was on duty that morning. - from **Keith Lello JP, DSC Chair**

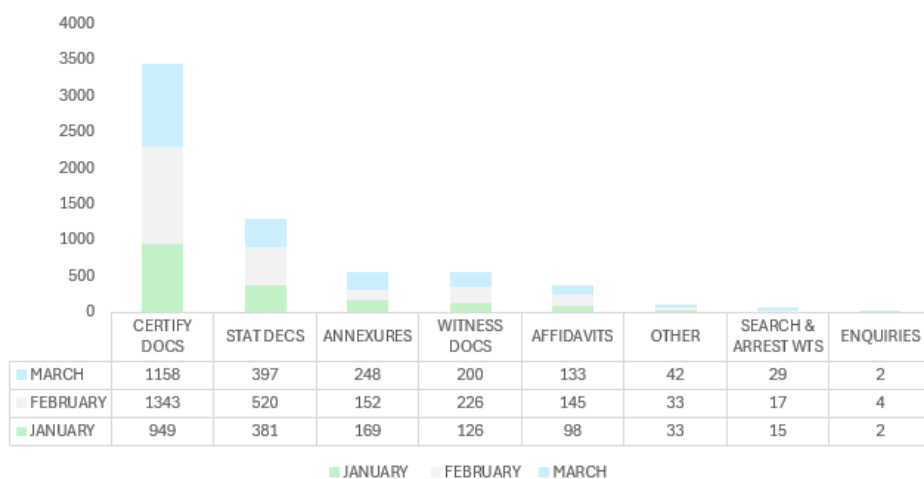




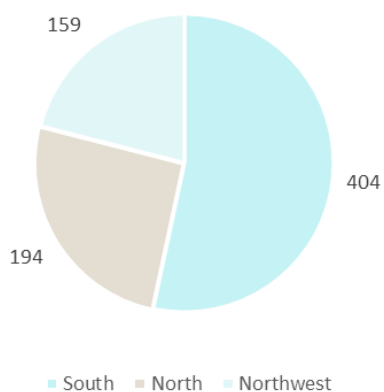
Justice of the Peace in Tasmania

Statistics

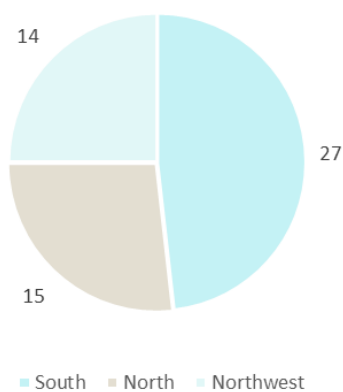
Document Signing Centre Statistics



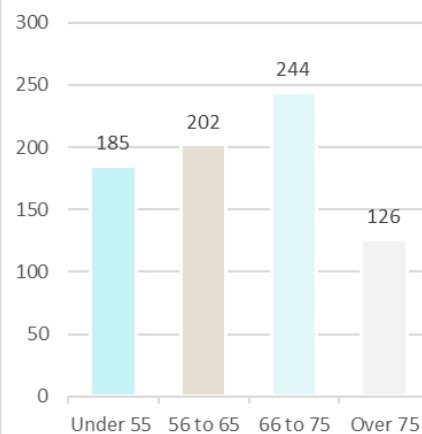
JP by Region



JP Applicants by Region



JP by Age Group





Statewide Seminar

– 28 March 2026

The opening guest speaker, the Honourable Guy Barnett, Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Attorney General and Deputy Premier, spoke of how appreciative the government are of the volunteer service to the state by JPs. He mentioned about the collaborative approach by the DoJ and the TAJPI to develop the Witnessing Checklist and the JP Handbook. There are approximately 800 JPs in Tasmania and the highest coverage of volunteers in Tasmania is in the regional areas.

Mr Barnett has previously represented Tasmania in the Senate from 2002 – 2011 in the seat of Lyons, and currently represents that seat in the state parliament. He grew up in the Quamby Estate, a sheep grazing property in northern Tasmania and went on to study at Church Grammar School and Geelong Grammar. He graduated from Utas with a Master of Law followed by a career as a lawyer. He also spent some time in Washington DC. He was also an accomplished tennis player having competed in the doubles competition at the Australian Open.

He also mentioned that tennis is in the family lines as both his father and grandfather as well as his son are all "A" level players.

Mr Barnett presented service certificates to Les Batchelor (60yrs), Daniel Garlic (40yrs), Mark Crawford (30yrs), Sharon Barnett, David Hudson, Judith Paxton and Alan Leitch (all 20yrs) and Ron Cornish (10yrs). A wonderful achievement by those JPs.

John Hayton ran a session explaining how to use the Witnessing Checklist App and how to download onto mobile phones.

Keith Lello the gave a summary of the DSCs around the state, of which there are 8. Up to the end Feb 2026 these centres have seen over 9500 clients and dealt with 32,271 documents. A fantastic outcome and definitely warrants the existence of these centres.

Detective Seargent Martin Ritson spoke of crimes in Tasmania. He works out of the Glenorchy Criminal Investigation Branch. He mentioned that JPs work as independent of the Tasmania Police and both entities have a mutual respect between the two bodies. He spoke of the possibility of combined training, clear communication and dialogue as a positive move forward. He predicted that the use of technology will be a greater force into the future. He also covered a recent national review into police and that Tasmania fared quite well in most respects of policing.

The keynote speaker for the day was The Honourable Justice Robert Beech-Jones of the High Court of Australia and his topic was "Old ideas for a modern age".

Robert was born in Wynyard and grew up in Savage River, attended Wynyard High School. He attended ANU in Canberra obtaining a double degree in Science and Law with Honours. He was admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW as a solicitor in 1988 and as a barrister in 1992, and appointed Senior Counsel in 2006. He was appointed to the High Court in November 2023. At his time of appointment, he was the Chief Judge at Common Law and a Judge of Appeal of the

(Continued on page 9)



Statewide Seminar – 28 March 2026 — continued

(Continued from page 8)

Supreme Court of NSW.

I noted from his list of speeches of 2025 that he might be a cricket fan.

Robert spoke of the history of the Justice of the Peace and the powers that they owned back then, to serve the public. He also mentioned of how the Oath and Affirmations came into being and how regularly they have been used throughout time. He made mention of oaths being used in Game of Thrones and even for those of us who have not seen this series, it was obvious how it was actioned.

Robert's speech will be available publicly soon and a link will be sent to the TAJPI.

The final speaker for the day was Brendan

McManus, Deputy Registrar to the Supreme Court of Tasmania. He showed all the documents required by the court in the area of Probate, and why these documents need to be exact and perfectly correct. The bottom line is that the court needs to prove that the person applying is the correct person.

(Hopefully there will be a copy of the ppt available soon).

Lorraine Smith JP

President, TAJPI



TAJPI Committee members with the AG



Les Batchelor receiving 60yr certificate



Northwest Report

NORTHWEST LIFE MEMBERS:

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

17 JPs recently attended an event in Ulverstone delivered by lawyer Jenna Hesp. The purpose of the presentation was to provide JPs with a detailed understanding of the legal requirements, responsibilities and best practice procedures involved in the signing and witnessing of documents within the family law context. Jenna delivered a comprehensive overview of the processes and obligations associated with the document execution in family law matters.

Copies if the handouts are available from the Devonport DSC for those JPs who were unable to attend the session.

The presentation delivered by Jenna Hesp was highly relevant, well received, and contributed meaningfully to improving professional standards in the execution of family law documentation. The session underscored the importance of accuracy, compliance, and informed practice in legal document handling.

A recent presentation at Government House by Her Excellency Governor Barbara Baker saw one of the northwest’s long time serving JP awarded an OAM. Congratulations to Rhys London.

	Devonport	Penguin
Enquiry	9	1
Witness signature	5	9
Certify document	125	10
Stat Dec	43	2
Affidavits	17	4
Aff Appendices	15	1
Total No Docs	205	100
Clients	98	17



Sovereign Citizens and the Courts: A JP's Perspective

A recent article written by a former magistrate and published by *The Conversation*, highlights an increasingly common challenge facing judicial officers: the disruptive impact of individuals who identify as “sovereign citizens.” These individuals present arguments that, while elaborate, have no foundation in Australian law, yet they consume significant court time and resources. Their claims do not assist the judicial process, and they obstruct timely resolution of genuine matters.

From the perspective of a Justice of the Peace, the issue appears even more straightforward. Too much time is being afforded to arguments that have already been exhaustively rejected at every level of the Australian legal system. Courts should not be required to repeatedly entertain pseudo-legal claims that neither advance justice nor contribute constructively to proceedings.

To understand why sovereign-citizen ideas clash so sharply with our justice system, it is useful to revisit the philosophical foundations on which modern democratic societies are built. Thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith each contributed to the development of the social contract - the principle that individuals accept the authority of the law in exchange for the protection, order, and freedoms that a lawful society provides. Their writings recognise the importance of

personal liberty, but also emphasise that freedom requires shared rules, applied equally to all.

Sovereign-citizen ideology rejects this principle. It proposes an alternative legal universe in which personal interpretation supersedes established law. But a community cannot function if every individual claims the right to decide which laws apply to them. Just as a democratic society cannot operate multiple parallel systems of criminal law, it also cannot accommodate pseudo-legal frameworks that deny the authority of Parliament, the Constitution, and the judiciary.

This prompts a broader question: Why do sovereign-citizen beliefs persist? The reasons vary but may be because of their distrust in institutions, misunderstanding of legal processes, or reactions to negative past experiences. While we may not be able to eliminate such beliefs entirely, we *can* reduce their influence by strengthening public trust and ensuring fair, transparent decision-making across public institutions.

For those in positions of authority, including JPs, the essential safeguards are the same ones that help prevent

(Continued on page 12)



Sovereign Citizens and the Courts: A JP's Perspective

(Continued from page 11)

sovereign-citizen sentiment from gaining traction in the first place:

- Consistent and impartial application of the law
- Transparency in official dealings
- Avoidance of conflicts of interest
- Clear, respectful communication about legal obligations

When these principles are upheld, there is less room for misinformation or distrust to take hold.

For JPs specifically, the task is clear. We must remain grounded in the law, patient but firm, and avoid being drawn into debates about theories that have no standing in any Australian court. Our role is not to validate

unfounded legal arguments, but to support the integrity of the justice system through impartiality, clarity, and adherence to established law.

Sovereign-citizen ideology may continue at the fringes, but the justice system, and those who serve within it, must remain anchored in the principles that sustain a lawful and democratic society. JPs play an important part in this, ensuring that confidence in legal processes is maintained and that community expectations of fairness and order are upheld.

By James Ayliffe, JP, BA, BJSt (Hons)



Advanced Health Directive (AHD) matters

This is an excerpt from the recent Qld JP magazine. It is an example of a request for a JP service for an AHD.

Recently I received a call from a member concerned with something which had transpired while they were undertaking witnessing duties.

The member had been requested to witness an AHD at a nursing home. While talking with the principal, the JP stated that he sees that the doctor has signed the AHD and then asked the principal had discussed the AHD with him. To his shock, the answer informed the JP that he had not seen the doctor and "the doctor never discussed it with me".

Thinking this might be a case of forgetfulness, the JP then commenced asking various questions to determine capacity. Finding that the principal did have capacity, the JP again asked about the doctor and received the same response.

The JP then went to see the staff at the nursing home to ask them about this and was informed that what they usually did was send AHDs to a nurse at a local hospital, who would then gather them up and present them to a doctor to sign in bulk, before returning them.

This raised several "red flags" with the JP who then called another experienced JP for advice.

A reminder for all members with regards to AHDs: we MUST ask questions to determine capacity.

- A doctor must have signed the AHD
- In the doctor's declaration they are stating that they have discussed the contents of the AHD with the principal, and
- At the time of making this AHD the principal appeared to me to have capacity to make this AHD.
- The principal appeared to:
 - 1) understand the nature and effect of this AHD
 - 2) be capable of making this AHD freely and voluntarily.

Without this occurring, the JP must err on the side of caution, and it would be prudent not to witness the AHD. It would also be advisable to make a not in your logbook attesting to this and preferably obtain details as to what transpired or did not.

Lorraine Smith JP
President, TAJPI



A comparative analysis of JPs

At last year's ACJA conference, a discussion paper presented by QJA vice-president John Carpendale originating from a ACJA discussion forum held in April of last year which was concerned with the ways and means of evaluating the JP profile in the community.

For many of the forum delegates the existence of a wide range of alternative witnessing/certifying officers within their jurisdictions was identified as a significant impediment to the community development of a high regard for local JPs.

There also seemed to be a general assumption that the JP profile throughout all of Australia & New Zealand was below par and in need of improvement.

Tasmania's position was pretty much middle-of-the-road with some issues below par and others somewhat positive. Below is a table of Tasmania's comparative analysis.

Factor	Rating level
JP density	M – L
Online visibility of JP profile	M
Density of JP signing sites (DSCs)	L
Signing site visibility analysis	M
Authorised certifiers of true copies	L
Authorised witnesses of stat decs	L
Signature witnessing of affidavits	M – H
JP authority to issue warrants/summons	H
JP authority to perform bench duties	H
Public visibility of JPs as copy certifiers	M
Public visibility of JPs as stat dec witnesses	M
Public visibility of JPs as affidavit witnesses	H

It is apparent from this paper that the government authorities in NSW, QLD and NZ each have a high regard and dependence on the JPs in those jurisdictions. This results in a community culture of heightened awareness of the services provided by JPs.



A comparative analysis of JPs— continued

In Tasmania there is the existence of conflicting influences – some that elevate the strength of the local JP and others that lessen it. With large numbers of other witnessing officer categories continuing to be authorised within these jurisdictions, it is unlikely that Tasmania will be elevated to the high profile group.

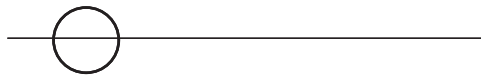
The TAS government has chosen to appoint a relatively lower number of JPs (132 density), and to give 50+ other prescribed occupations the title of Commissioner for Declarations (CDec), with the authority to perform most of same the high-volume certifying and witnessing tasks that JPs undertake. Further, the government website infers it might be easier to locate a CDec for this work. Not unexpectedly, the result is a community culture where the services provided by JPs are not appreciated and valued as highly as in some other jurisdictions.

Naturally, there is more scope for improvement in the strength of JP public profile in those jurisdictions ranked in the Low and Medium category. However, to achieve any real improvement, there would need to be a major shift in the JP-reliance policies of the governments involved. These governments and their communities seem to have adjusted to and become satisfied with the status quo (a heavy reliance on non-JP certifying and witnessing officers) and there does not appear to be any latent demand for change, except perhaps within the affected JP associations.

For anyone wishing to read the full paper, please email me & I will send a copy.

Lorraine Smith JP

President, TAJPI



Record Keeping

While JPs in Tasmania are not required to keep records of the documents they witness, there may be circumstances where a JP is asked to provide information about the witnessing process. This could occur during court proceedings or before a tribunal, where clarification is needed about how a document was executed.

For this reason, it is considered best practice for JPs to maintain clear and consistent records of the documents they witness and the actions they take. Keeping a simple logbook can be particularly useful when identification is involved, when a transaction appears unusual, or if questions arise at a later date about the witnessing process.

If you choose to keep records, it is important to inform the signatory that you are recording relevant details. This transparency helps ensure that all parties are aware of the process and supports accountability should any future enquiries arise.

The Department of Justice has developed a simple [template](#) to assist JPs in recording their witnessing activities, should they wish to do so.

For further guidance and practical advice, JPs are encouraged to refer to the [JP Handbook](#).

Patricia Dai Wei Wang JP

Editor

Why did the Easter Bunny cross the road?
To prove he wasn't chicken!

Why don't Easter eggs tell jokes?
Because they might *crack up*!

What kind of music does the Easter Bunny like?
Hip-hop!

Why was the Easter egg hiding?
It was a little *shell-shocked*.

Why did the Easter Bunny get a job?
Because he was great at *hopping* to conclusions!

How does the Easter Bunny stay in shape?
Egg-sercise!

What do you call an Easter Bunny who tells jokes?
A real *egg-head*.

Why did the chocolate bunny go to the dentist?
Because it had *buck teeth*.

What happens if you tell a bad Easter joke?
You get *egg-nored*.

What do you get if you pour hot water on the Easter Bunny?
A *hot cross bunny*!

Why did the Easter Bunny get a job at the bakery?
Because he was *really good* at *hopping* to conclusions and making plenty of dough!



the ACADEMY NEWS

from Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy of Australia

APR 2026



The Spring Festival or Lunar New Year is one of the most important period on the Lunar Calendar. On 21 February, Tasmanian Chinese Buddhist Academy of Australia invited community members to ring the Peace Bell at Jin-Gang-Dhyana Temple at Campania, Tasmania, to carry on this tradition.

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The World of Jin
Gang Dhyana



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