



## PART FOUR THE YEAR IN REVIEW



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*Images: The Public Hall of the High Court building in Canberra is an outstanding example of late modern Brutalist architecture. Phillip McConnell reduced ash glazed stoneware jar.*



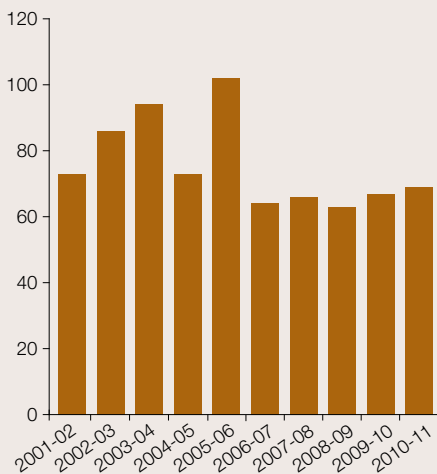
## Judicial workload

### Full Court hearings and decisions

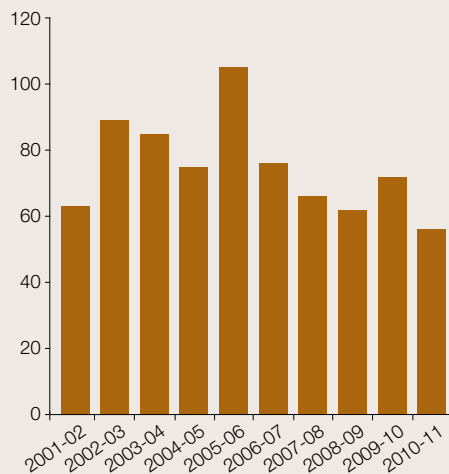
As shown in the following graphs, the numbers of Full Court hearings and decisions in 2010–11 were comparable with averages for both during the past 10 years.

Of the civil and criminal appeals decided by the Full Court in 2010–11, the decision was given in 92% of cases within six months of the hearing of argument. In over a third of the cases the decision was given within three months of the hearing.

**Full Court hearings (other than special leave applications)**



**Full Court decisions (other than special leave applications)**



## Court funding

The Court had an operating deficit of \$0.412m in 2010–11. It was announced in the 2011–12 Budget that the Court will receive an additional \$1.5m in base funding from 2011–12 to enable the Court to meet its ongoing operational costs and to maintain services.

## Records Authority

On 22 November 2010 the Chief Executive and Principal Registrar of the High Court and the Director-General of the National Archives of Australia signed a Records Authority in a ceremony attended by the Chairman of the Archives Advisory Council, Mr Paul Santamaria SC. The signing ceremony was the final step in the Court updating its previous Records Authority, which had been in effect since 1995. The new Records Authority reflects the changing business processes of the Court. The Court is now operating under a modern records authority, which contains appropriate retention periods and sentencing regimes for materials of national significance. The Records Authority represents a significant commitment by the Court to understand, create and manage records of its activities, from case files to its building plans.



## Public education and visitor programs

The Court recognises the importance of public education and visitor programs for strengthening respect for the democratic rule of law in Australia. Under the broad direction of the Court's Public Information Committee (Chief Justice French AC, Justice Kiefel AC (chair), Justice Bell and the Chief Executive and Principal Registrar), the Court's administration made a concerted effort in 2010–11 to engage more broadly and deeply with the education sector through workshops, the development of online educational resources, and improved visitor experiences. The Committee supported several initiatives aimed at improving the Court's educational and visitor programs during 2010–11 as detailed in Part Six.

The Court decided to initiate an annual series of two public lectures, focussing on constitutional and historical themes. The first lecture was held on 8 June 2011, presented by the Dean of the Adelaide Law School, Professor John Williams. The second lecture in 2011 will be presented by the Associate Dean of the Australian National University's College of Law, Professor Fiona Wheeler.

Following the significant enhancement of the Court's website during 2010–11, a wide range of information relating to the judicial work of the Court is accessible on-line. This is listed in [Annexure A](#). The Public Information Committee also approved the development of new web-based educational resources in 2010–11.

## The High Court building and its precinct

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The Court is not only the final appellate and constitutional court for Australia, its seat in Canberra is also a major tourist attraction.

The High Court National Gallery Precinct is included on the National Heritage List for its design achievement. Both the High Court building and the National Gallery are examples of late modern Brutalist architecture typified by the use of concrete, bold geometric shapes, building massing, connectivity and fluid movement. These two significant late twentieth century civic buildings are situated in a cohesive, integrated landscape setting. The precinct gives expression to the vision of Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin for a precinct of grand civic buildings in the triangular Parliamentary Zone adjacent to the lake water axis.

During 2010–11 the Court undertook various projects to maintain and enhance the heritage values of the precinct, including the building. These are discussed in more detail in Part Six. They included:

- the development of a Conservation Management Plan under the *Environmental Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- capital works in the High Court building forecourt, surrounding precinct and Cascade Waterfall.
- the upgrading of registry and other office facilities
- security enhancement
- building maintenance works.

## Links and visits

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During 2010–11 the Court and its staff maintained its many links with courts, judges and legal organisations in the region and around the world.

The Court welcomed a number of international visitors, including:

- judges, senior lawyers, court administrators and a retired former judge from Canada, East Timor, Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, People's Republic of China, South Africa, Solomon Islands and the United States of America
- Ambassadors from Japan, Pakistan and South Africa
- government officials from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom and the United States
- members of parliament and parliamentary staff from Norway
- legal academics and law students from Australia, Canada, China and the United States.

## Asia Pacific Judicial Reform Forum

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The Asia Pacific Judicial Reform Forum (APJRF) is a multi-lateral network of superior courts and judicial education bodies in the broader Asia Pacific region. The APJRF is focused on developing the effectiveness of courts throughout the Asia Pacific Region. Its members come from the judiciaries of 49 countries. It has developed a website, which is maintained by the High Court of Australia, and encourages personal contact and the exchange of ideas between judicial officers from member countries.

The APJRF has held four major international meetings since 2005. The most recent international meeting was held in Beijing in the People's Republic of China from 26–28 October 2010. The theme of the meeting was 'Using Technology to Improve Court Performance'. Where possible, the papers presented at the Meeting have been published on the APJRF website [www.apjrf.com/oct2010meeting.html](http://www.apjrf.com/oct2010meeting.html).

The work of the APJRF is managed by a Secretariat comprised of Australian judges, the Chief Executive and Principal Registrar of the High Court of Australia and the Chief Executive of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales. The Secretariat is chaired by the Honourable Justice Kenneth Hayne AC of the High Court of Australia.



*Image: A north-easterly view of the High Court building.*



*Image: Courtroom 2 of the High Court building in Canberra showing the Australian Coat of Arms carved in red cedar, designed by Derek Wrigley and carved by Peter Otto and his son, Laurence, mounted on the wall behind the Bench.*