

FAMILY, CRIMINAL AND DFV CONFERENCE

Criminal Law Track

Program

60 mins Applications to cross examine at committal: Why, when, and how?

A properly run committal hearing can be the single greatest pre-trial step taken by a defence lawyer to improve their client's prospects at trial. Yet post Moynihan reforms, there is a growing reluctance to pursue cross examination at committal. This session will look at how to craft an effective 'defence communication' and the benefits this may have for your client. It will also seek to challenge some common misconceptions about cross examination at committal and identify some replicable strategies to streamline your practice.

Presenters:

Rémy Kurz, Barrister, Queensland Bar

Jaimie-Lee Jessop, Senior Associate, Gilshenan & Luton Legal Practice; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld

Chair: **Sam Jackson**, Director, Bamberry Lawyers; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld



54 mins Case update: Criminal Law

This session takes a look at some of the most recent legislative amendments and case law updates within the criminal law space.

Presenters:

Susan Hedge, Junior Counsel, Blyth Chambers

Dylan Hans, Legal Practitioner, ATSILS

Chair: **Kristy Bell**, Director, Bell Criminal Lawyers; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld



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60 mins **Answering the Call in the Callovers**

This session provides a guide on how to meet the increasing expectations placed on practitioners at call overs and an overview of recent and relevant practice directions practitioners need to be aware of.

Presenters:

Magistrate Belinda Merrin, Brisbane Magistrates Court

Emily O'Hagan, Partner, Wallace O'Hagan Lawyers

Chair: **Adam Moschella**, Senior Associate, Bell Criminal Lawyers; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld



53 mins **Forensic DNA Failures and Complex DNA Evidence: Helping Lawyers navigate DNA in criminal matters**

This session will highlight some of the key criticisms and failures in the DNA Laboratory at Forensic Science Queensland that all lawyers need to be aware of if they have DNA evidence in their matters. In addition, this presentation will discuss complexities of sexual assault evidence, with a focus on the limitations of forensic biology and DNA analysis that all legal practitioners should understand. While DNA evidence can be compelling, it is not infallible – issues such as secondary transfer, mixed profiles, and the absence of temporal context can complicate interpretation. The presentation will highlight how uncritical acceptance of forensic evidence can lead to miscarriages of justice and stress the importance of informed cross-examination. Attendees will gain insights into challenging expert assumptions and ensuring that evidence is properly scrutinised in the interests of procedural fairness and justice.

Presenter: **Jae Gerhard**, Principal Scientist, Independent Forensic Services

Chair: **Joe Wicking**, Senior Associate, Potts Lawyers; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld



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43 mins **Youth Justice: Updates, Challenges and Sentencing implications**

This session takes a look at some of the recent legislative amendments impacting the Youth Justice space and the associated challenges and sentencing implications stemming from these changes.

Presenters:

Magistrate Andrew Moloney, Brisbane Magistrate Court

Laura Reece, Barrister, Queensland Bar

Jaimie-Lee Jessop, Senior Associate, Gilshenan & Luton Legal Practice; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld

Chair: **Emma Kearney**, Senior Associate, Bell Criminal Lawyers; Accredited Specialist (Criminal Law) – Qld



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Presenters



Kristy Bell

Kristy Bell is the Director of Bell Criminal Lawyers and one of a small number of the Queensland Law Society's Accredited Specialists in Criminal Law. In 2025, Doyle's Guide listed Kristy as a Preeminent Criminal Defence Lawyer in Queensland, and Bell Criminal Lawyers was named a Leading Criminal Law Firm in Queensland.

In addition to traditional courtroom advocacy, Kristy recognises the importance of contributing to the development of good law and good lawyers in Queensland. She currently serves as Chair of the Queensland Law Society's Criminal Law Committee, is a member of the Society's Specialist Accreditation Committee, and was appointed as Deputy Chair of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council in 2025.

Kristy acts in a wide range of criminal and quasi-criminal matters including serious indictable offences, investigative hearings, commissions of inquiry, coronial inquests, parole applications, and proceeds of crime matters.



Jae Gerhard

Jae Gerhard is the Principal Forensic Scientist and DNA expert witness at Independent Forensic Services, bringing over two decades of experience in the forensic services. She has worked on some of Australia's most complex and high-profile cases, as well as international operations.

Specialising in DNA analysis, biological fluid examination, and bloodstain pattern interpretation, Jae now works independently with criminal defence teams to review and challenge forensic evidence. Her mission is to ensure the science presented in court is accurate, balanced, truly understood, and the limitations are disclosed.



Dylan Hans

Dylan Hans is an Accredited Specialist in criminal law with more than 10 years of broad experience in the field.

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Susan Hedge



Sam Jackson

Sam is the managing director of Bamberry Lawyers and a QLS Accredited Specialist in Criminal Law. He has experience in all facets of criminal law, practicing exclusively in that field since admission, with a particular focus on solicitor-advocate work in the Magistrates to Supreme Court. He is also a member of the QLS Criminal Law Committee.



Jaimee-Lee Jessop

Jaimee-Lee is a Senior Associate at Gilshenan & Luton Legal Practice and an Accredited Specialist in Criminal Law through the Queensland Law Society. Since her admission to the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2017, she has developed a strong criminal defence practice, with varied work in specialised areas such as youth justice, domestic violence, coronial, and regulatory law.

She is an active member of the legal profession, serving on the Women Lawyers Association of Queensland's Criminal Lawyers Sub-Committee and the Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee. Through these roles, she advocates for greater support and recognition of women in criminal law and improved access to justice to vulnerable members of our community.

Jaimee-Lee's dedication has been recognised through multiple listings as a 'Rising Star' in Doyle's Guide for criminal law in Queensland, as well as being named the national winner of the Lawyers Weekly '30 Under 30' Award for criminal law.

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Emma Kearney

With six years' PAE, Emma is an Accredited Specialist in Criminal Law, having achieved the highest mark upon completing the course in 2024. She is a Senior Associate at Bell Criminal Lawyers, practising in the areas of criminal law, domestic violence, traffic matters, youth justice and investigative hearings. Emma is also a member of the Future Leaders Committee, which provides guidance and support to young and early career lawyers.



Rémy Kurz

Rémy commenced his life in the law as Terry O'Gorman's clerk in 2008 before being admitted as a solicitor in 2011. Following his admission, Rémy worked in both private practice and for Legal Aid Queensland. In 2016, Rémy returned to Robertson O'Gorman and in 2020 was awarded specialist accreditation in Criminal Law from QLS. In 2022 Rémy was called to the private Bar and shortly thereafter joined 8 Petrie Terrace Chambers. Rémy specialises in criminal defence and domestic violence proceedings but, since moving to the bar, has expanded his practice to include regulatory investigations, commissions of inquiry, and criminal prosecutions.

In 2024 and 2025 Rémy was recognised by his peers as a leading junior counsel (QLD Criminal Law) by Doyle's Guide.



Magistrate Belinda Merrin



Magistrate Andrew Moloney

Andrew was a solicitor for 25 years. He became an accredited specialist in criminal law in 2006, and a QLS Senior Counsellor in 2015. He was appointed as a Magistrate and a Childrens Court Magistrate in October 2017. He was the resident Magistrate in Bundaberg from 2019-2021.

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Adam Moschella

Adam has extensive experience acting for clients charged with criminal offences in Queensland. He has acted for clients charged with offences in the Magistrates Court, District Court and Supreme Court of Queensland, ranging from simple traffic matters to complex drug and homicide charges. His experience was recognised in 2022, when he became the youngest to be awarded Specialist Accreditation in Criminal Law by the Queensland Law Society.



Emily O'Hagan

Emily graduated with Honours in a Bachelors of Laws and Psychology from Griffith University with elective study in Criminal Law and Forensic Mental Health at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She undertook a clerkship with Hopgood Ganim Lawyers in Litigation and Family Law and was admitted as a solicitor to the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia in 2010. Following her admission, Emily has worked exclusively in criminal law. She worked at a busy criminal law practice for 5 years prior to becoming a founding partner of Wallace O'Hagan Lawyers in 2015. Emily has a wealth of experience successfully representing clients at all levels of the criminal justice system ranging from traffic offences before the Magistrates Court through to murder.



Laura Reece

Laura Reece was admitted to the Bar in 2006 and worked for almost ten years as an in-house barrister for Legal Aid Queensland, commencing at the private bar in 2017. She has appeared for accused persons in courts all over Queensland.

Laura is an experienced trial and appellate advocate and appears regularly in the superior courts. She has significant experience in youth justice matters and mental health law.

Laura has long been involved in policy work and law reform, and is the Deputy Chair of the Criminal Law committee and a member of the Human Rights committee of the Bar Association.

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Joe Wicking

Joe is a dedicated and experienced criminal and traffic lawyer. He is an Accredited Specialist in Criminal Law (Qld) and practices exclusively in this area. Joe is a member of the Queensland Law Society's Criminal Law Committee. He has also been recognised as one of Queensland's Leading Criminal & Traffic Lawyers by DoYLES Guide for a number of years.

Joe routinely appears before the Supreme, District and Magistrates Courts in Queensland and is a proficient advocate that aims to achieve the best results for his clients across a wide range of matters. Joe has been involved in several trials which have involved DNA and engaging experts to assist in deciphering what is often a complex issue in trials. In addition to a busy practice Joe is active in mentoring other lawyers who practice in Criminal and Traffic Law.