

24 May 2023

Statement

JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF VICTORIA PUBLISHES CONDUCT GUIDELINE ON JUDICIAL BULLYING

The Judicial Commission has today published a Judicial Conduct Guideline on Judicial Bullying following consultation with the Victorian legal and court sector.

It provides guidance on what constitutes judicial bullying and makes it clear that it breaches the standards of conduct expected of judicial officers. It provides guidance on factors that can contribute to judicial bullying and outlines the impact on those who experience it. Importantly it states how the Commission addresses complaints and the potential outcomes.

The Guideline supplements the Australasian Institute for Judicial Administration's (AIJA) Guide to Judicial Conduct, which provides guidance for judicial officers about a broad range of conduct and ethical issues and has been adopted by the Commission.

The Guideline applies to all judicial officers and VCAT members in all work related activities.

Feedback received during the Commission's consultation with the legal and court sector confirmed that judicial bullying:

- is an important issue for legal practitioners, court users, court staff, the judiciary, and the broader community;
- has significant consequences for those subjected to it; and
- undermines confidence and respect for the courts.

A paper summarising the key findings from the consultation and recommendations made as a result has also been published. That paper contains nine recommendations to prevent and address judicial bullying including the publication of the Guideline, judicial education and continued engagement by the Commission to increase awareness of its role and processes.

The Chair of the Judicial Commission, Chief Justice Anne Ferguson states:

Judicial officers have a responsibility to ensure they create a safe and respectful workplace and model appropriate workplace behaviour.

I am grateful for the support already provided by judicial officers to me and the other heads of jurisdiction as we attempt to address the issue of judicial bullying.

- [Judicial Conduct Guideline: Judicial Bullying](#);
- [Judicial Bullying: Summary paper - consultation and recommendations](#); and
- [A message from Chief Justice Ferguson](#)

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