



# Criminal Finalisations Dashboard – Explanatory Notes

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## Data source

All data used in this dashboard is sourced from the [NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research](#) (BOCSAR). The source data file is extracted from Criminal Courts Statistics and includes criminal finalisations in NSW where the defendant is an individual (organisations are excluded) broken down by the following variables:

- Court type: Children’s Court, Local Court, District Court, Supreme Court
- Court location: across 146 locations in NSW
- Period: 2012 to 2020 (broken down by semester January to June and July to December)
- Defendant Indigenous status: First Nations, non-Indigenous, unknown
- Number of charges at finalisation: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more.

See BOCSAR NSW Criminal Court Statistics [Definitions and explanations](#).

## Index

The index is equivalent to the number of finalised charges. It is calculated by multiplying the number of finalisations by the number of charges. The index is one way to reflect the complexity of matters brought to court by giving more weight to cases with multiple charges.

The example below shows a fictional number of finalisations at two court locations, court A and court B. While the total number of finalisations is the same at both locations (100), a higher number of cases with multiple charges were finalised at court B. The calculated index, 260 at court B compared to 160 at court A, reflects a greater potential demand for services at court B.

Number of charges at finalisation	Finalisations at court A	Index A	Finalisations at court B	Index B
1	65	65*1=65	40	40*1=40
2	20	20*2=40	20	20*2=40
3	10	10*3=30	5	5*3=15
4	0	0*4=0	10	10*4=40
5 or more	5	5*5=25	25	25*5=125
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>260</b>

## Clusters

Clusters are groups of court locations. They are used to define specific geographic areas that include certain court locations, as relevant for different stakeholders.

- **ALS office:** this groups together court locations that are serviced by each ALS office operating in NSW. **Important note:** counts of finalisations clustered by ALS office do not mean that the ALS was representing defendants for all these

finalisations. They must be read as counts of finalisations that occurred in court locations serviced by a particular ALS office.

- **ALS cluster:** this is an additional operational layer within the ALS service structure that groups several ALS offices together. Counts of finalisations clustered by ALS cluster do not mean that the ALS was representing defendants for all these finalisations. They must be read as a count of finalisations that occurred in court locations serviced by the ALS offices that form part of the specified ALS cluster.
- **CSP catchment:** this groups together court locations by Collaborative Service Planning (CSP) catchment area, as defined by the NLAFF CSP working group.
- **Circuit:** this groups together court locations by circuit, as defined by the Chief Magistrate's Office. Note that the circuit clusters include Children's Court Circuits (marked as 'CC') where Children's Court matters are dealt with by specialist Children's Magistrates. In rural and regional areas where the sittings of the Children's Court coincide with the sittings of the Local Court and are conducted by Local Court Magistrates, Children's Court finalisations are included in the Local Court circuit as relevant.

These groupings are subject to change over time. However, for the purpose of the dashboard, clusters are defined at a point-in-time grouping as confirmed at the time of release or update to the dashboard. Changes in courts circuits, service provider catchment areas or organisational structure that occurred during the data period covered in the dashboard may therefore not be reflected.

## Caution – small numbers

Data by individual court location may include small numbers. Caution should be used when interpreting trends over time, especially where an apparent increase or decrease is caused by small variations in actual numbers.

## 2020 data and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Changes to court operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a general decline in the number of criminal court finalisations in 2020. These changes included:

### Higher Courts

- Suspension of new jury trials for defendants, and
- In the District Court, suspension of new judge alone trials, sentencing hearings, Local Court appeals, arraignments and readiness hearings for defendants awaiting their court appearance in the community"

### Local Courts

- Postponement of defended hearings and sentencing matters likely to result in a custodial penalty
- Postponement of first listing of summary matters involving no bail considerations

Most of these measures had been lifted by the end of June 2020.

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