

Timely access to justice initiatives

Judge June Jelaš

Te Kōti-ā-Rohe ki Auckland /
Auckland District Court



District Court of New Zealand
Te Kōti-ā-Rohe o Aotearoa



TE AO MĀRAMA
Enhancing Justice for All

Te Ao Mārama – enhancing justice for all

- Te Ao Mārama is a judicial initiative intended to enhance justice for all people affected by the business of the District Courts.
- Timely Justice is a central principle of Te Ao Mārama.



The scale of the backlog

In 2015 **26%** of criminal cases in the District Court were in backlog. This grew to a peak of **41%** in 2021 during Covid. By early 2023 the national backlog was **38%**, or around 15,000 cases.

Jury trial backlog at March 2023

Nationally – 1423

Auckland Metro – 602

Auckland District Court – 391

Cases aged over 1 year at March 2023

Nationally – 3525

Auckland Metro – 1491

Auckland DC – 967



Timely Access to Justice initiatives - national

1. *Priority-based rostering and scheduling* from May 2023 – putting the judicial resource in the courtrooms with the biggest backlog of cases.
2. *Timely access to justice protocol*– June 2024. This set out a timely access to justice standard (90%) and category-based timeliness thresholds for criminal cases in the District Court to encourage improved court and justice sector performance.
3. *Local timeliness plans* – July 2024.
4. *Judicial dashboard* – from May 2025. Provides Judges with current data for their court.



Local timeliness plan – Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

Auckland DC is the largest Jury Trial District Court nationally, responsible for ~20% of the jury active cases nationally.

- Additional Judicial resource to Auckland
- Improved court-led scheduling – including allocating trial dates much earlier in prosecution process.
- Improved process for determination of applications for discretionary matters and adjournment applications.
- Providing scheduled time for in-Chambers applications and management of jury trials (Jury Duty Judge Court).



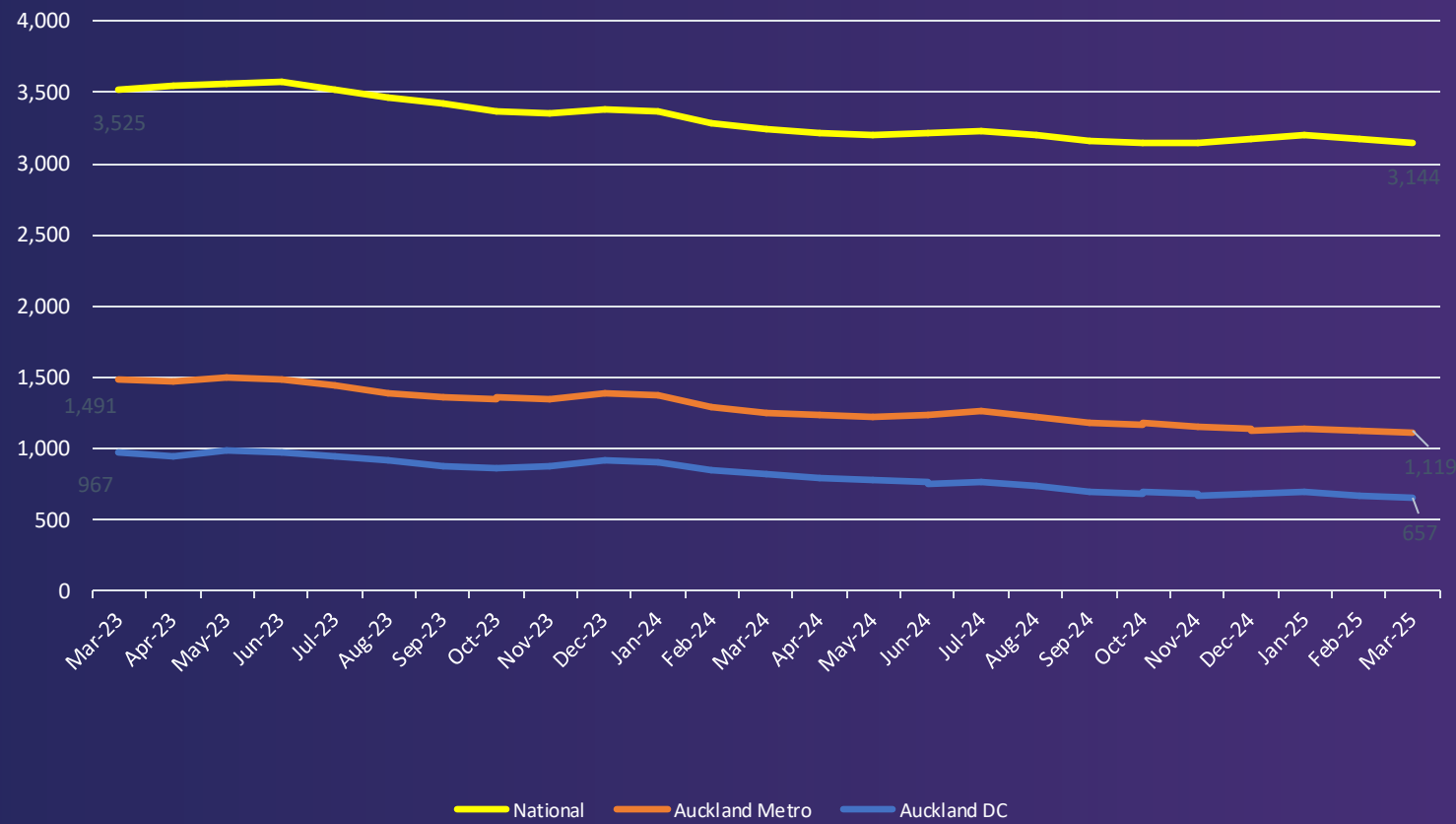
Results

- National reduction of **10.8%** in active jury trial cases (from 3,525 to 3,144)
- Auckland Metro reduction of **25%** in active jury trial cases (from 1,491 to 1,119)
- Auckland DC reduction of **32.1%** in active jury trial cases (from 967 to 657)

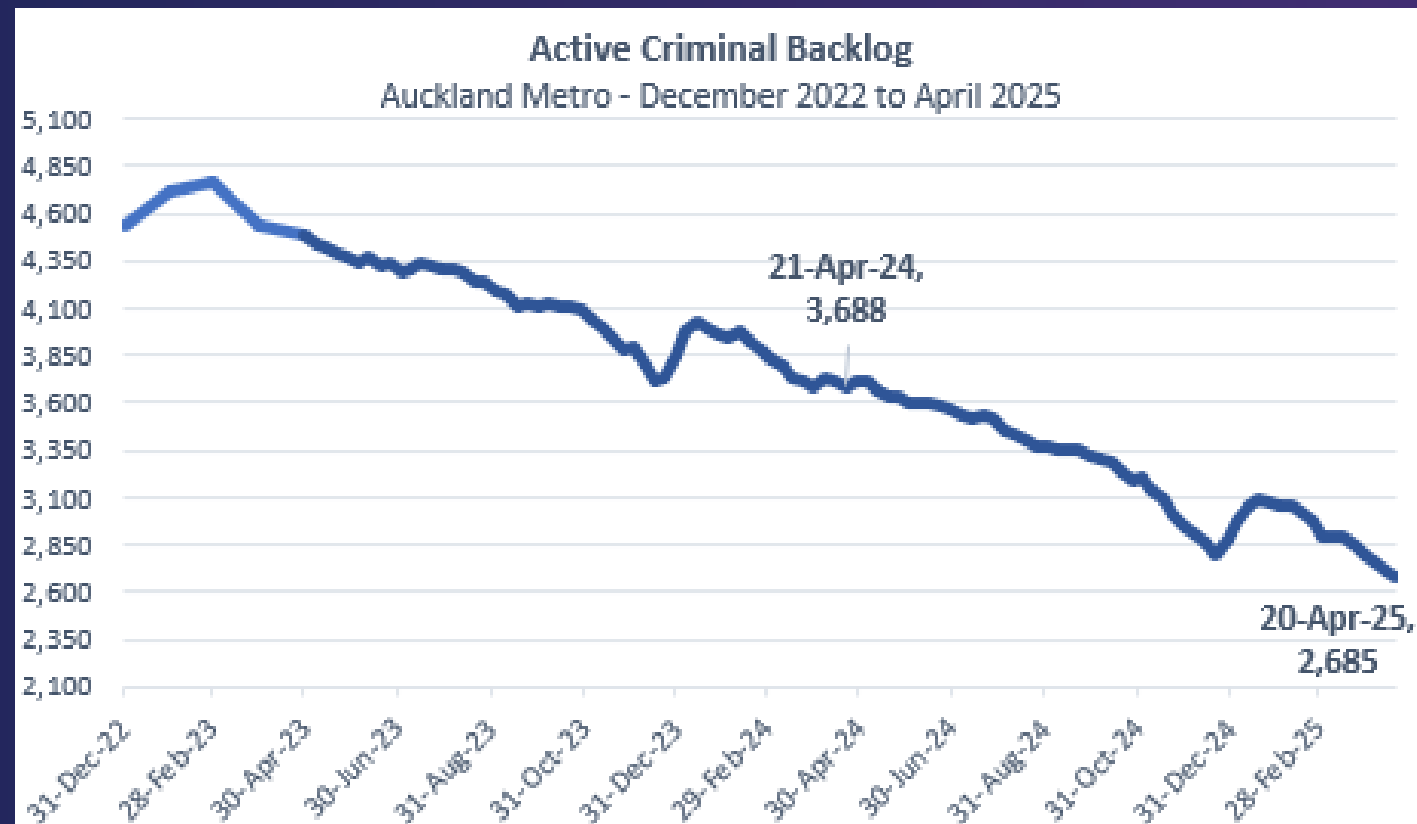


Results: March 2023-2025

Active Jury Trial Cases
March 2023 to March 2025



Auckland Metro backlog



	Last week	Since 1-May-23
Admin	↓4	↓137
Review	↓7	↓532
JAT	↓3	↓398
Jury	↓2	↓287
Guilty	↓16	↓443
Total	↓32	↓1,797

