

# QIS: Improving communication with vulnerable witnesses

Recorded: Thursday, May 27 2021 | 1 hour

## Overview

The Queensland Intermediary Scheme (QIS) Pilot Program is an initiative arising out of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The scheme will commence in Brisbane and Cairns in July 2021 and will operate as a two-year pilot program. Queensland is the first Australian state to attempt to establish the intermediary scheme in a regional area. Through the use of intermediaries, the scheme will assist witnesses with communication needs give their best evidence.

Hear from the QIS's Implementation Director, Ms Debbie Jones, about the amendments to the Evidence Act 1977 (Qld), what the Queensland Intermediary Scheme is, and how intermediaries can be used by the police, prosecutors, defence counsel and the courts to assist vulnerable witnesses understand and be understood. Debbie will delve into the background of intermediary schemes, providing a robust and comprehensive understanding of the risks and benefits of intermediaries in Queensland's criminal justice landscape. Furthermore, we will be joined by His Honour Chief Judge Devereaux SC who will provide the opening remarks and an intermediary from NSW/VIC who will speak about the role of an intermediary in practice.

1 CPD Point



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5 minutes

## Welcome remarks

Chair: **His Honour Judge Brian Devereaux SC**, Chief Judge, District Court of Queensland

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55 minutes



## Queensland Intermediary Scheme: Improving communication with vulnerable witnesses

- Brief background of the QIS and intermediary schemes generally;
- legislative amendments to the Evidence Act including:
  - Appointment of intermediaries
  - Relevant proceeding
  - Eligible witnesses
  - Functions of intermediaries
  - Directions hearings
  - Intermediaries Panel.
- Overview of QIS processes;
- Challenges to the introduction of the QIS.

Presenter: **Debbie Jones**, QIS Implementation Director

## Role of the intermediaries in practice

Presenter: **Jenny Cole-Virtue**, NSW Intermediary

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15 minutes

## Q&A

Chair: **His Honour Judge Brian Devereaux SC**, Chief Judge, District Court of Queensland

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