

Editor's Note

A Matter of Judgment explores some of the issues surrounding the important tasks of judicial decision-making and judgment writing. Judicial decision-making is at the core of the judicial function and there is great public interest in ensuring that decisions, once made, are communicated effectively. By ensuring that judicial decisions are open to scrutiny, the community is reassured that decisions are made in accordance with legal principles.

The decision-making role of judges has been controversial at times — do judges make law and, if so, what factors do they, and should they, consider? The authors writing on decision-making address some important aspects of this topic, including the nature of the judicial process, the role of impartiality in decision-making, the values and considerations that should govern judicial decision-making, and the way in which changing public perceptions have impacted on the judicial role. They also provide guidance on how judges can resolve the challenges inherent in decision-making.

Many of the authors make the point that judgments are not delivered in isolation — their function is to communicate to various audiences, ranging from the parties and appellate courts to the wider community. The articles on judgment writing thus aim to provide guidance to ensure that judgments clearly and effectively communicate both the decision and the process leading to the decision. Other questions addressed are when judicial officers should give unreserved judgments and how they should prepare for delivering a judgment, whether *ex tempore* or written.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all the authors and thank them for their contributions to this collection.

I expect that this is an area in which there will be continued debate and I trust that *A Matter of Judgment* will prove to be both a useful resource for judicial officers and a thought-provoking one.

Ruth Sheard
Editor

