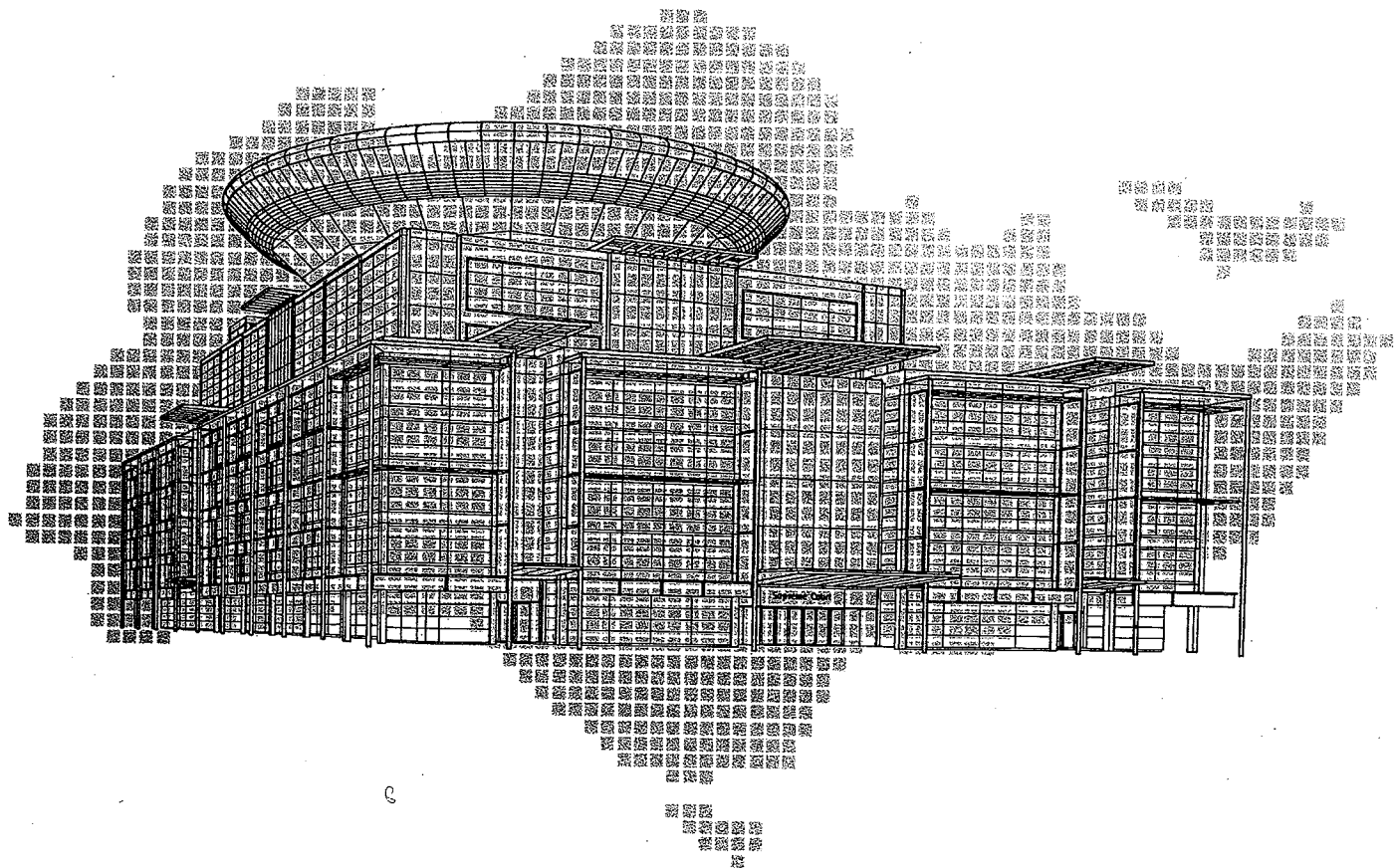


SUPREME COURT SINGAPORE



Annual Report 2006

**FOREWORD BY
REGISTRAR, SUPREME COURT**



After the momentous move from the grand old Supreme Court and City Hall buildings to the modern new Supreme Court building in 2005, we had a historic change of leadership in 2006. Chief Justice Yong Pung How retired and passed the baton of leading the Judiciary to Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong.

For the Supreme Court Registry, 2006 continued to be a busy year. This Annual Report records the work of the Supreme Court in the past year.

Caseload in the Supreme Court remained steady at around the annual figure of 15,000. The disposal rate continued to be high – cases concluded stood at 98% of cases filed. The target of concluding 85% of writs within 18 months of filing was exceeded, with 88% concluded within 18 months. The targets for waiting periods for the various processes were also met in 2006. In particular, trial dates were available within 3 weeks of set down for writs and within 4 weeks of preliminary inquiry for criminal cases.

Active case monitoring carried on with an eye not only on timelines but also on effective management of the cases. For complex cases, special monitoring was introduced to allow the trial Judge to preside over interlocutory appeals and give pre-trial directions. This has resulted in more effective and better controlled trial proceedings. For pre-trial conferences (PTCs) before Registrars, a pilot programme was started to conduct electronic PTCs (e-PTCs) for admiralty matters, with consent of the parties. Under this programme, lawyers may update the court of the case progress via email and Registrars may also give directions via email. As a result, physical attendance of lawyers is dispensed with, saving much time and expense.

Civil procedure underwent a major reform when the originating processes were streamlined from four modes to two modes. The transition for the change went smoothly. The Electronic Filing System was modified and the Registry workflow was reviewed. There was a conscious effort to ensure that lawyers were fully prepared for the reform. Briefing sessions were conducted and articles setting out the details of the changes were published.

A review of the knowledge management strategy was done and measures were taken to improve the gathering and dissemination of information within the Supreme Court. Specialist teams were set up to monitor legal developments around the world, and to capture valuable knowledge within the Court. Staff members attended a series of lectures on legal principles and procedures to gain knowledge and understanding of the court processes which they support.

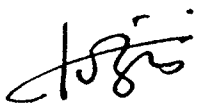
A great deal of resources was committed to ACES, the information technology project to overhaul the Registry workflow and database. With ACES, intelligence and logic will be built into the electronic registry workflow to enable the Registry staff to work in a smarter manner. Information will be harnessed in a more comprehensive manner for effective case management and monitoring. Targeted to be implemented in phases in 2007, this project will dovetail with the development work of *i*-ELS due to move into full gear in 2007.

The revamp of the Supreme Court website brought us honour in 2006. The new website features a more navigation-friendly design, greater use of plain English, more information about court processes and procedures, and makes available the latest grounds of decisions and media summaries for important decisions. Our efforts were recognised by the international community and the Supreme Court website was awarded the top placing in the Justice Served Top 10 Court Website Competition for 2006, amongst a pool of 3,500 entries.

In the area of organisational excellence, the Supreme Court was re-certified for the Singapore Quality Class and also garnered the gold award for the Singapore HEALTH Award in 2006.

I would like to thank everyone who has played a part in our journey in the past year. The officers and staff were fully committed and worked extremely hard. The lawyers were generous with their support. The court users and members of the public were very understanding.

My team and I will continue to administer our justice system with vigour and passion. There is much work to be done in 2007. The journey towards excellence never ends.



Koh Juat Jong
Registrar, Supreme Court of Singapore

TIMELINESS OF JUSTICE

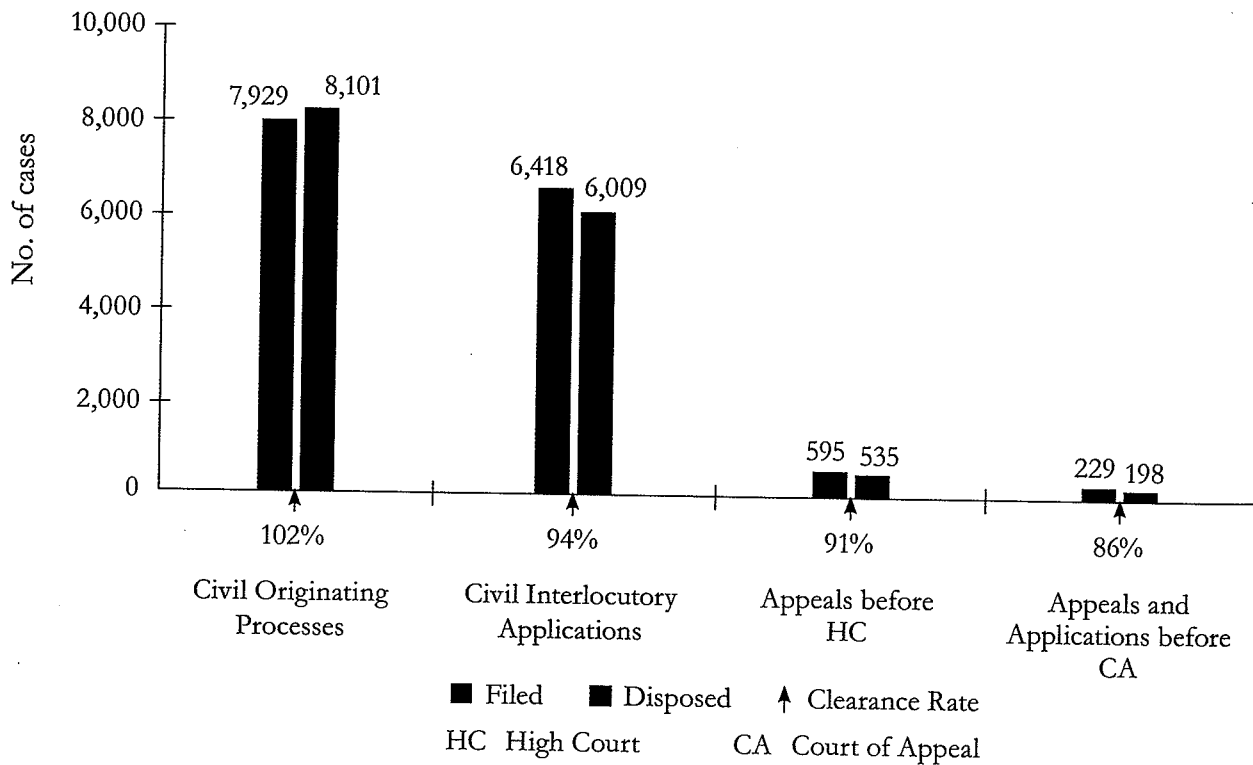
WORKLOAD STATISTICS¹

CASELOAD AND DISPOSAL IN 2006

In 2006, the Supreme Court received a total of 15,367 new civil and criminal matters. In the same period, a total of 15,018 matters were disposed of. The clearance rate² for all civil and criminal matters for 2006 was 98%.

The breakdown of the caseload and disposal of the civil and criminal proceedings for 2006 are shown in the following charts. The resultant clearance rates are reflected accordingly.

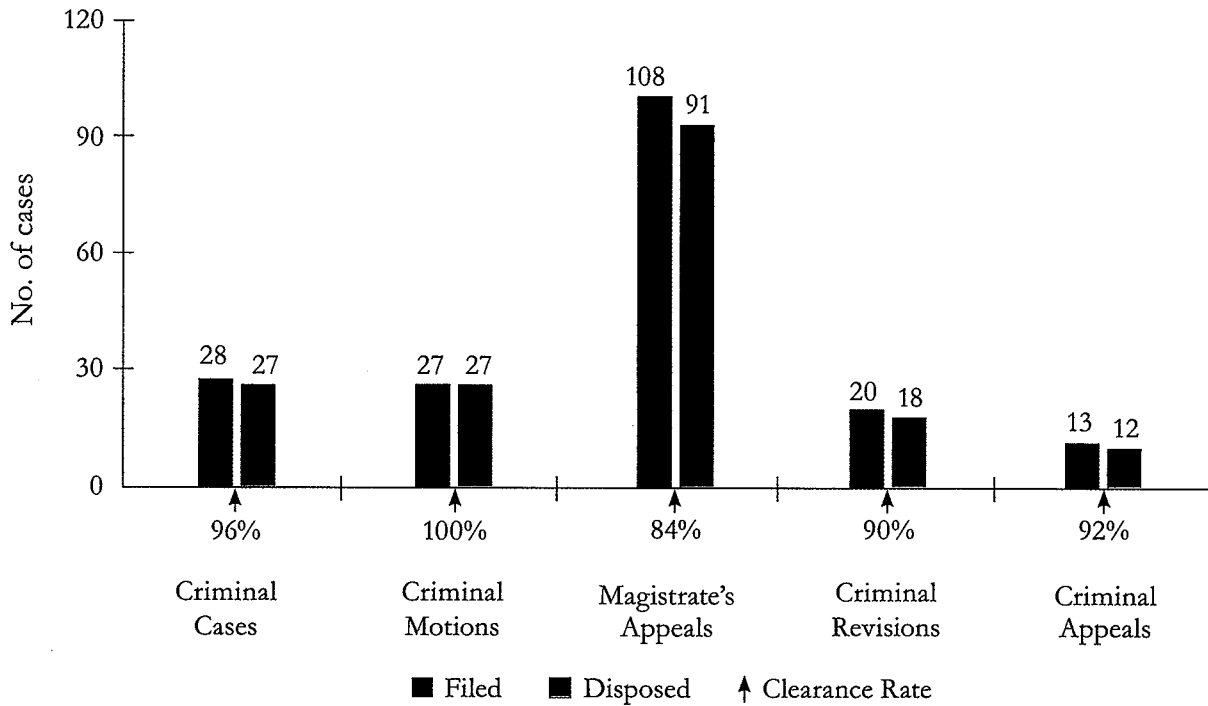
Civil Jurisdiction



¹ The reference to 2006 in this chapter means the period 1 November 2005 to 31 October 2006 and similarly for reference to 2005.

² Percentage may exceed 100% when the disposal figure is greater than the filing figure. Disposal figures may include previous year's caseload disposed of in current year

Criminal Jurisdiction



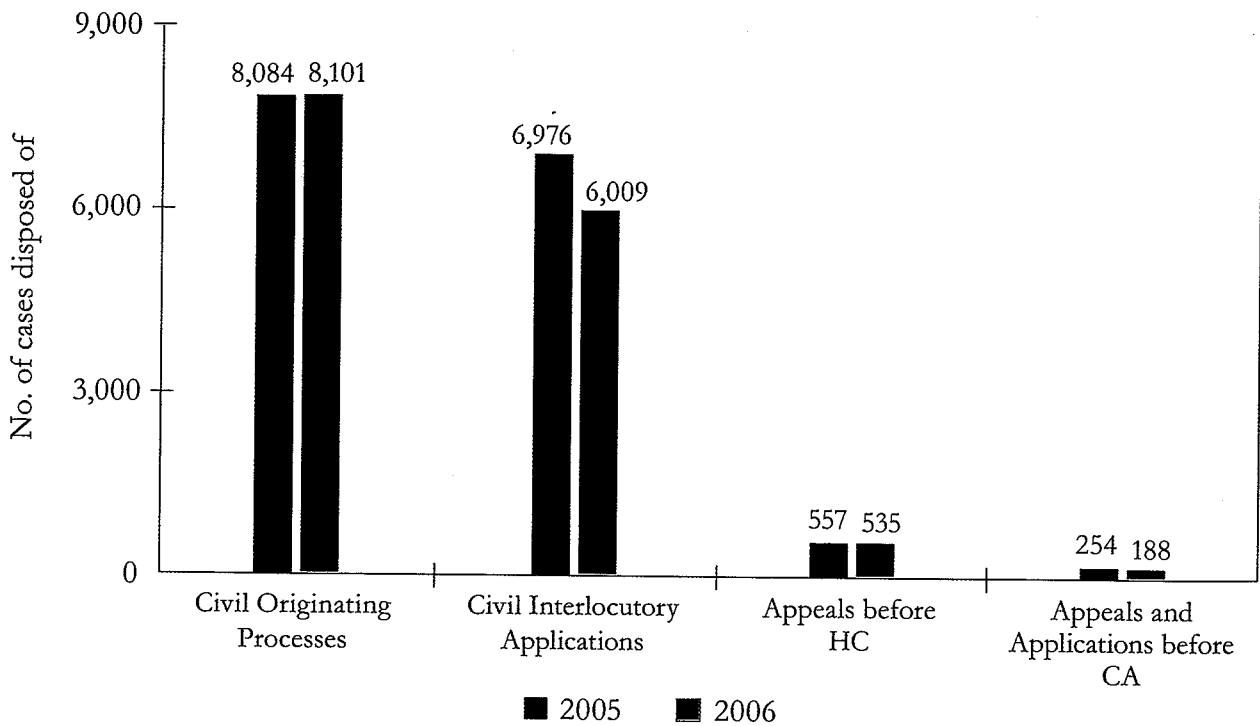
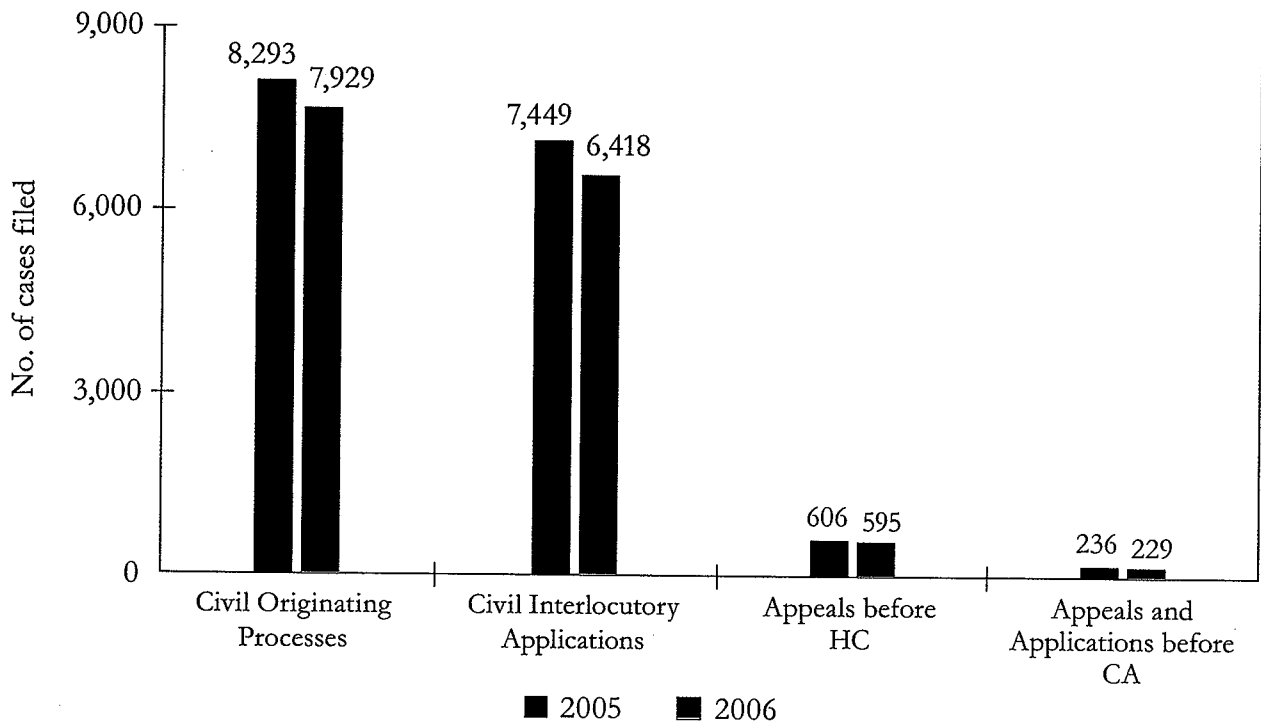
CASELOAD AND DISPOSAL TRENDS

The volume of caseload in 2006 was 8% lower than that for 2005. The caseload of all types of civil matters registered a decline. Caseload for criminal matters, on the other hand, registered an increase of 63% when compared to 2005. This was largely attributable to a higher volume of Magistrate's Appeals received in 2006.

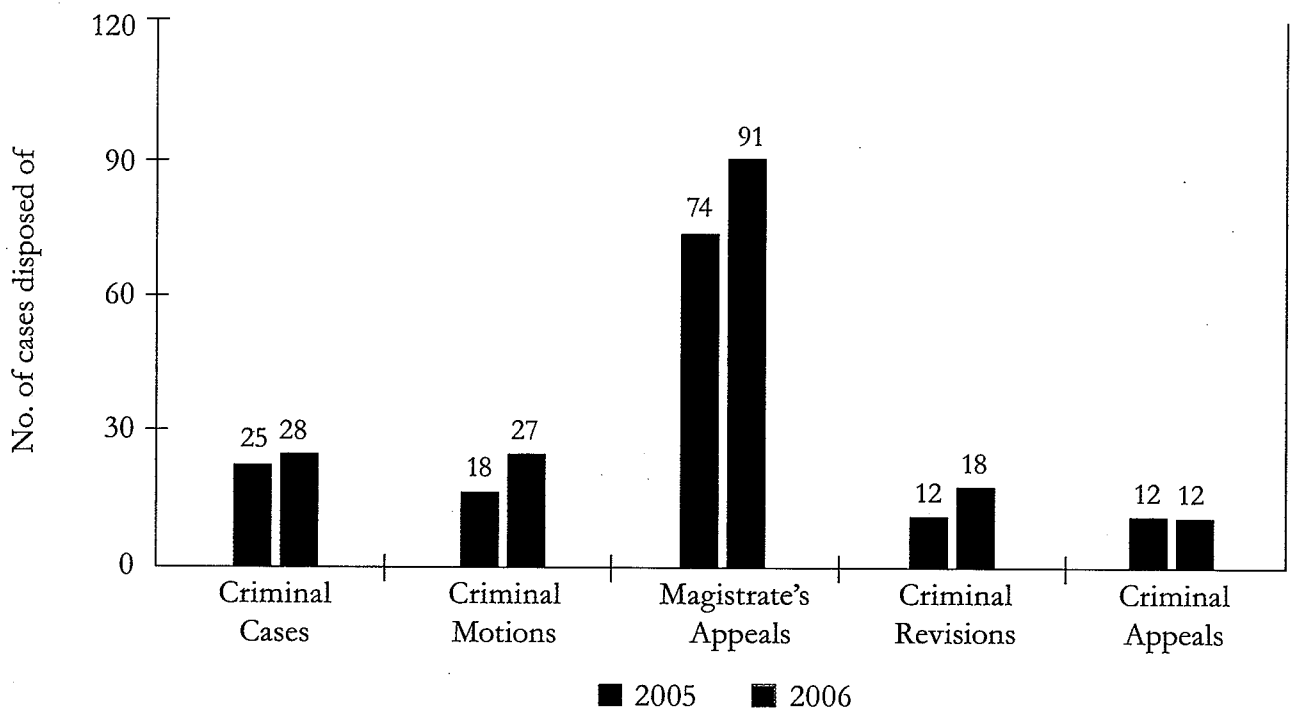
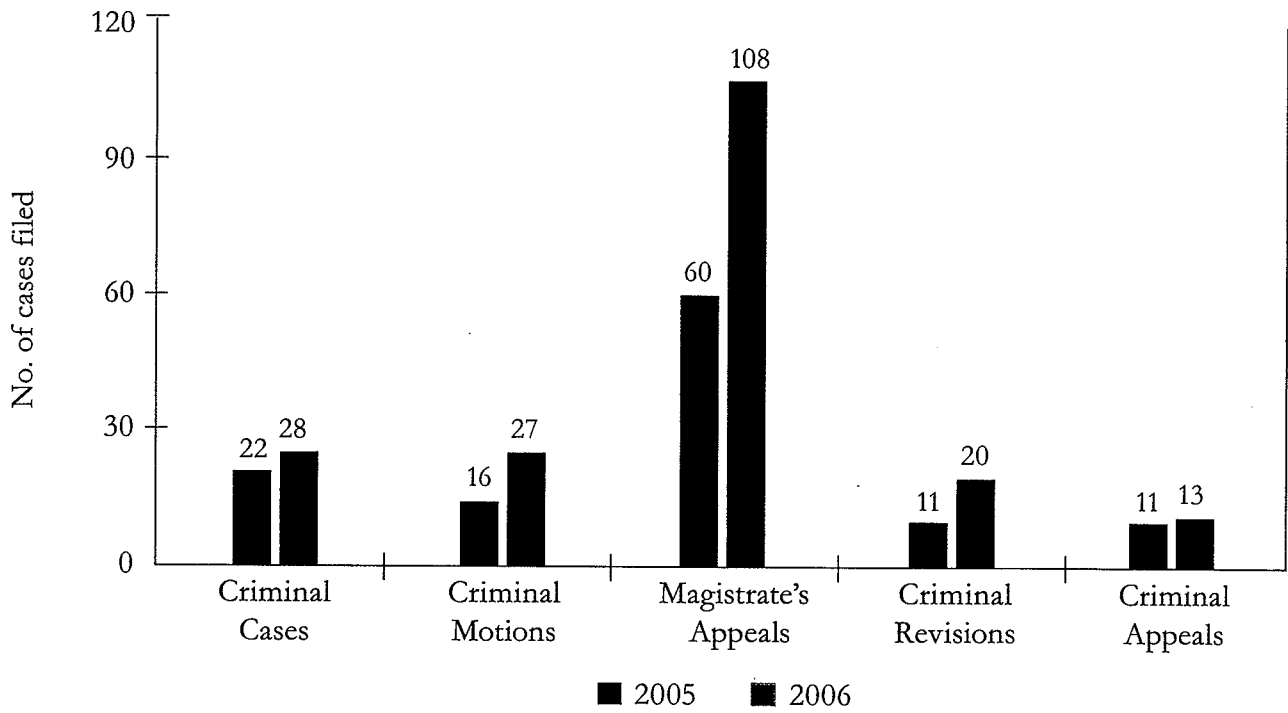
The clearance rate for all civil and criminal matters in 2006 was 98%, a slight increase over 2005's clearance rate of 96%.

A comparison of caseload and disposal between 2005 and 2006 is illustrated in the charts that follow.

Civil Jurisdiction



Criminal Jurisdiction



WAITING PERIODS

Targets for waiting periods in various court processes have been set as part of the Supreme Court's commitment to the provision of quality public service. These targets are reviewed annually to ensure that they are realistic and match international benchmarks. The Supreme Court endeavours to achieve 90% compliance of all targets set. For the past five years, the targets set have all been consistently achieved.

The average timelines for waiting periods achieved are set out in the tables that follow for the corresponding years of 2005 and 2006. In particular, trial dates for civil cases were given within 3 weeks of the date of set down and trial dates for criminal cases were given within 4 weeks of the date of preliminary inquiry.

ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION

Type of Proceedings	Target set by Department	Target achieved ³	
		2005	2006
Trials in Suits	8 weeks from date of set down to trial	3 weeks	2.3 weeks
Originating Summonses (OS)			
(i) Inter-partes ⁴	6 weeks from date of filing of the OS	N.A.	4.5 weeks
(ii) Ex-parte	3 weeks from date of filing the OS	1.9 weeks	1.4 weeks
(iii) Arbitration proceedings under Order 69 rule 6 of the Rules of Court (ROC)	13 weeks from date of filing of the OS (statutory minimum period of 3 months)	13 weeks	13 weeks

³ "Target achieved" refers to the *average* timelines attained for the period and excludes court vacations.

⁴ New performance indicator introduced with effect from January 2006.

ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION

Type of Proceedings	Target set by Department	Target achieved ³	
		2005	2006
Bankruptcy Originating Summonses⁵	6 weeks from date of filing of the OS	5.4 weeks	5.4 weeks
Company Winding-Up Originating Summonses	4 weeks from date of filing of the OS	3.6 weeks	3.5 weeks
Probate Originating Summonses and Summonses⁶	4 weeks from date of filing of the OS/SUM	1.9 weeks	1.9 weeks
Summonses (SUM)			
(i) Summonses before Judge & Registrar other than applications for summary judgment pursuant to Order 14 of the ROC	3 weeks from date of filing of the SUM	Before Judge 1.7 weeks	Before Judge 1.3 weeks
		Before Registrar 1.0 weeks	Before Registrar 1.1 weeks
(ii) Applications for summary judgment pursuant to Order 14 of the ROC	5 weeks from date of filing of the application (statutory minimum period)	4.8 weeks	4.9 weeks
Bankruptcy Applications (summonses)⁷	4 weeks from date of filing of the application (statutory minimum period)	4 weeks	3.9 weeks

⁵ Refers to applications for bankruptcy order (known as bankruptcy petitions prior to April 2006) only.

⁶ Known as Probate Petition prior to January 2006.

⁷ Refers to applications for discharge only.

ORIGINAL CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

Type of Proceedings	Target set by Department	Target achieved ³	
		2005	2006
Trials of Criminal Cases	4 weeks from date of preliminary inquiry	3.5 weeks	3.8 weeks

APPELLATE CIVIL JURISDICTION

Type of Proceedings	Target set by Department	Target achieved	
		2005	2006
Civil Appeals			
(i) Civil appeals heard before 2 Judges	Ready to be heard in 12 weeks from date of notification to collect record of proceedings (ROP)	12 weeks	11.8 weeks
(ii) Civil appeals heard before 3 Judges	Ready to be heard in 16 weeks from date of notification to collect ROP	16 weeks	15.8 weeks
Registrar's Appeals (from the High Court)	3 weeks from date of filing of appeal	2.7 weeks	2.2 weeks
	4 weeks from date of filing of appeal (against assessment of damages)	3.3 weeks	2.2 weeks
Appeals in Civil matters from the Subordinate Courts	4 weeks from receipt of ROP	3.6 weeks	3.0 weeks

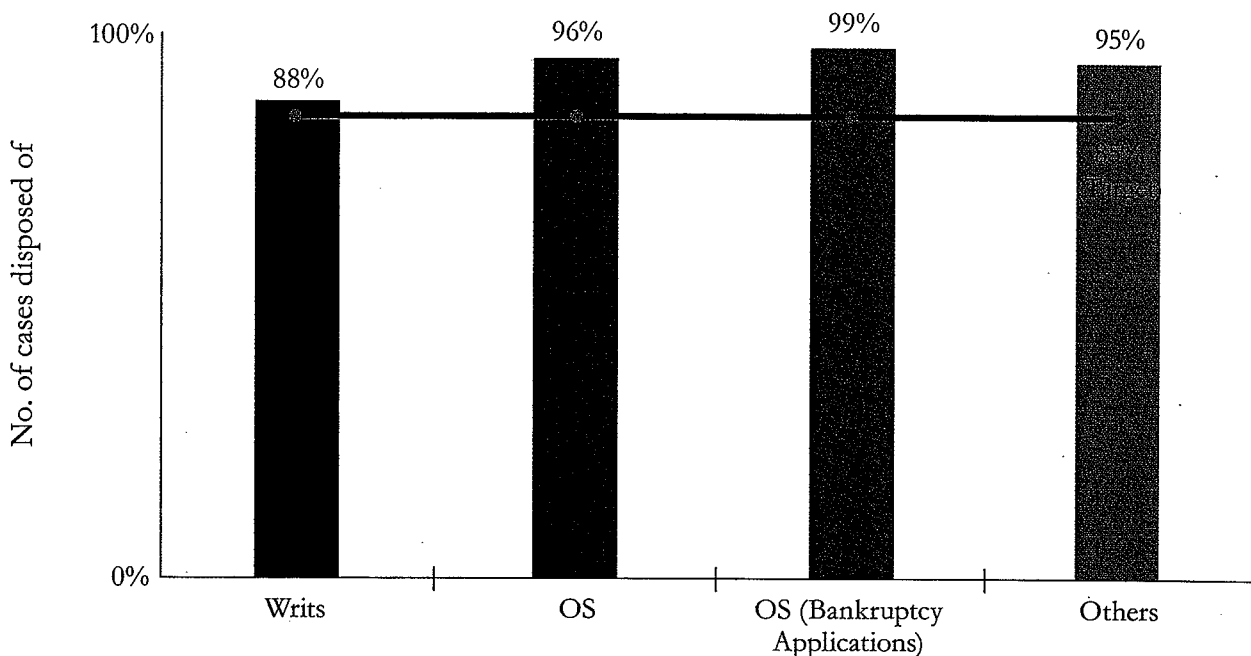
APPELLATE CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

Type of Proceedings	Target set by Department	Target achieved ³	
		2005	2006
Criminal Appeals	6 weeks from service of ROP	3.7 weeks	5.3 weeks
Appeals in Criminal matters from the Subordinate Courts	8 weeks from service of ROP	4.4 weeks	5.1 weeks

LIFE SPAN OF CASES

As part of the Supreme Court's commitment to the timeliness of justice, the Supreme Court aims to dispose of 85% of the cases within 18 months from the time of filing.

For civil cases filed during the period May 2004 to April 2005⁸, 96% were disposed of within 18 months. The breakdown by the types of cases is shown in the diagram below.



⁸ Only cases filed in April 2005 and earlier have completed the life cycle of 18 months by October 2006.

In respect of writs (other than admiralty writs), there were 612 active matters pending disposal as at 31 October 2006. The overall distribution of all active writs based on the calendar year filed is shown in the following diagram.

