

Oversight

Mallesons digest of cases against directors commenced or concluded in 2025

July 2026



Introduction

In this digest we provide a summary of key judgments and proceedings against company directors in Australian courts and tribunals in 2025. We have also included two cases heard in 2025 or earlier for which judgments were delivered in early 2026: ASIC's proceedings against directors and officers of The Star Entertainment Group and ASIC's proceedings against Nuix and its directors.

We summarise court judgments and proceedings instigated by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and private litigants, as well as ASIC administrative action and workplace health and safety proceedings against directors.

Our review of 2025 cases highlights ASIC's continued focus on continuous disclosure and the readiness of the courts to hold directors personally accountable where their conduct exposes the company to regulatory breach. Beyond ASIC enforcement, 2025 has also seen significant workplace health and safety prosecutions, with substantial penalties imposed on both companies and directors where failures in governance and oversight have had serious consequences.

Cases of particular note:

- **ASIC v Bekier (Liability Judgment) [2026] FCA 196**, where ASIC commenced proceedings against all of the directors and certain senior executives of The Star Entertainment Group (The Star), and the Federal Court (Lee J) determined that former CEO and the former Chief Legal and Risk Officer of The Star (but not the non-executive directors) had breached their statutory duty of care and diligence under s 180(1).
- **ASIC v iSignthis Ltd**, where the Court imposed a six year disqualification and a \$1 million penalty on the former managing director and chief executive officer for exposing the company to statutory liability for, and being knowingly involved in, continuous disclosure breaches and misleading statements to the ASX.
- **ASIC v Nuix Ltd**, in which the Federal Court dismissed all of ASIC's claims against Nuix and five of its directors, finding that Nuix did not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct by re-affirming its IPO prospectus revenue and ACV forecasts in ASX announcements, did not contravene its continuous disclosure obligations under s 674(2) and that the directors did not breach their duty of care and diligence under s 180.



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Overview

COURT JUDGMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS: REGULATORS

CASE	OVERVIEW
<i>ASIC v Bekier</i> (Liability Judgment) [2026] FCA 196	ASIC proceedings against all directors and certain senior executives of The Star Entertainment Group – The Federal Court found former CEO and former Chief Legal and Risk Officer breached s 180(1) by failing to inform the board of material AML and compliance risks and failing to act on those risks. All claims against the non-executive directors were dismissed.
<i>ASIC v iSignthis Ltd (Penalty)</i> [2025] FCA 917; <i>ASIC v iSignthis Ltd (Costs)</i> [2025] FCA 1667	Following the 2024 liability judgment, the former CEO was disqualified for six years and fined \$1 million for serious and deliberate misconduct involving continuous disclosure and misleading statements to the ASX. The Court also ordered iSignthis and the former CEO to pay ASIC's costs.
<i>ASIC v Cohen</i> [2025] FCA 1255	ASIC's conflicted remuneration and breach of directors' duties claims against Freedom Insurance's former CEO and former manager were dismissed. The Court found no relevant financial product advice had been given and no breach of the statutory duty of care was established.
<i>ASIC v TerraCom Ltd</i> [2025] FCA 726	ASIC commenced civil penalty proceedings against four TerraCom directors over three public statements concerning a whistleblower investigation into fraudulent alteration of coal quality certificates. The Court rejected all allegations, finding the statements were not false or misleading and that the directors had not failed to exercise care and diligence.
<i>ASIC v Nuix Ltd</i> [2026] FCA 490	ASIC brought proceedings against Nuix and its directors alleging continuous disclosure, misleading or deceptive conduct, and directors' duties contraventions arising from Nuix's FY21 revenue and ACV forecasts. The Federal Court dismissed all claims, finding ASIC had not established any contravention by Nuix or its directors. ASIC has appealed only in relation to Nuix, not the directors.
Director charged for dealing with money suspected of being proceeds of crime	Brendan Gunn a former director of Mormarkets Pty Ltd, pleaded guilty to dealing with \$180,000 reasonably suspected of being the proceeds of crime – allegations arose from bank cheque transactions linked to scam-related funds processed through a digital currency business.
ASIC proceedings against mining company and directors for continuous disclosure and directors' duties breaches	ASIC commenced civil penalty proceedings against former Wiluna Mining Corporation officers over an allegedly misleading ASX announcement about funds raised under a rights issue – ASIC seeks penalties and disqualification orders.
Director charged with 33 criminal offences	Michael Dunjey, a director of Ascent Investment and Coaching Pty Ltd, was charged with 33 criminal offences arising from alleged fraud, misuse of investor funds and falsification of company books – criminal prosecution follows ASIC's investigation and earlier winding up proceedings.
ASIC proceedings against former Blockchain director	ASIC commenced civil penalty proceedings against a former Blockchain Global director concerning dealings with customer funds, related statements and books and records failures – proceedings were adjourned pending a charging decision by the CDPP.
Director sentenced for dishonest conduct and misuse of company funds	A former director of Berndale Capital Securities Pty Ltd was sentenced to two years and 11 months' imprisonment for misleading an auditor, dishonest use of position and dishonest conduct in relation to a financial service – noted as <i>the first ASIC matter to proceed in the Federal Court under its expanded corporate criminal jurisdiction</i> .

ASIC proceedings against AVZ Minerals directors for disclosure failures	ASIC commenced proceedings against AVZ directors over alleged failure to disclose an escalating legal dispute concerning an overseas project – ASIC alleges breaches of directors' duties and misleading or incomplete ASX announcements.
ASIC proceedings against former MWL director over Shield Master Fund advice failures	ASIC commenced proceedings against MWL's former director and lead generator Imperial in connection with allegedly inappropriate advice directing superannuation into the Shield Master Fund – ASIC alleges contraventions of general licensee obligations and seeks civil penalties and disqualification orders.
Shadow director charged with \$8m debt factoring fraud	Mr Brent Young has been charged with fraud committed while acting as a shadow director of HWT Group Australia Pty Ltd and with managing a corporation while disqualified – ASIC alleges he lodged more than 10,000 fraudulent invoices for fictitious supply of materials to Bunnings to obtain over \$8.3 million under a debt factoring arrangement.
ASIC proceedings against former director of defence tech company for failure to disclose material downgrades to revenue forecast	ASIC commenced proceedings against former CEO and director of defence and space technology company Electro Optic Systems Holding over the alleged failure to disclose a material downgrade to 2022 revenue guidance – ASIC seeks declarations, pecuniary penalties, disqualification orders and costs.

ASIC ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS

MATTER	OVERVIEW
ASIC has banned a former director from financial services industry for 6.5 years	Director banned from the financial services industry for six and a half years following ASIC's investigation into the Kingdom Developments Group – findings included unlicensed financial services conduct, offers of securities without disclosure and misleading conduct.
ASIC has disqualified a NSW construction company director for five years	Construction company director disqualified for five years following the failure of three companies owing more than \$93.7 million to unsecured creditors – ASIC found failures in record-keeping, statutory lodgements, insolvent trading and misuse of position.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEEDINGS

MATTER	OVERVIEW
<i>SafeWork NSW v HMR Supplies Pty Ltd</i> [2025] NSWDC 25	Company, director and worker convicted after an unlicensed forklift incident injured a worker – Court emphasised that simple and inexpensive safety measures could have avoided the risk and imposed fines on each defendant.
<i>SafeWork NSW v Paul Whitmarsh (No. 4)</i> [2025] NSWDC 274	Director fined \$300,000 after a fatal crane incident – Court found culpability in the high range given the known risk, obvious control measures and failure to implement adequate safety systems.
<i>SafeWork NSW v Garben;</i> <i>SafeWork NSW v Stevens;</i> <i>SafeWork NSW v Crestville Holdings Pty Ltd</i> [2025] NSWDC 302	Directors of an indoor climbing gym were convicted and fined after overdue servicing of equipment led to a fatal fall – Court found failures in maintenance, training and WHS governance processes.

<p><i>DPP v Onkar Group Pty Ltd & Anor [2025] VCC 1382</i></p>	<p>Sole director convicted after a fatigued subcontracted driver was killed during an overnight delivery run – an adverse publicity order was also made against the company because the case involved breaches that posed a significant risk to the public, and a misunderstanding on behalf of the director that fatigue management was the contractor’s responsibility.</p>
<p><i>DPP v LH Holding Management Pty Ltd; DPP v Hanna [2025] VSCA 75</i></p>	<p>Victoria’s first workplace manslaughter conviction upheld in part on appeal with the company’s fine increased from \$1.3 million to \$3 million, while the director’s community correction order was left undisturbed.</p>
<p><i>Dennis Jones Engineering Pty Ltd v The King; Jones v The King [2025] VSCA 76</i></p>	<p>Victorian Court of Appeal reduced the sentence imposed on a director after finding that mitigating factors, including early plea, co-operation and remorse, were not adequately reflected.</p>

OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

<p>MATTER</p>	<p>OVERVIEW</p>
<p><i>ASIC v Noumi Ltd (No 5) [2025] FCA 1524</i></p>	<p>For the first time, the Federal Court directed that a pecuniary penalty be distributed to group members in a parallel shareholder class action – the \$5 million penalty was diverted from the Commonwealth under s 1317QF.</p>



Court Judgments and Proceedings: Regulators

[ASIC V BEKIER \(LIABILITY JUDGMENT\) \[2026\] FCA 196](#)

In December 2022, ASIC commenced proceedings against all the directors and several senior executives of The Star Entertainment Group Limited (**the Star**). On 5 March 2026, The Federal Court (Justice Lee) delivered its liability judgment. ASIC alleged breaches of the duty of care and diligence under s 180(1) between 1 November 2016 and 31 March 2020. ASIC settled with two executives before the trial commenced. The remaining nine defendants were Mr Bekier (CEO and Managing Director), Ms Martin (Group General Counsel and later Chief Legal and Regulatory Officer (**CLRO**) and Company Secretary), and seven non-executive directors.

ASIC's case concerned two aspects of the Star's business:

1. **Junkets:** The Star's relationships with junkets, particularly Suncity (its largest junket customer). Suncity ran a private high-rollers room called Salon 95 at the Star Sydney.

In May 2018, Mr Bekier was notified by email that Suncity's conduct in Salon 95 exposed the Star to "an unacceptable level of risk" and broke applicable laws. Issues included cash-for-chip transactions, suspicious cash deposits and anti-money laundering compliance concerns. Ms Martin later received a copy of this email.

Around this time, KPMG issued reports finding that the Star's money laundering/terrorism financing risk was high and revealing that the Star had no risk assessment methods for junkets. Management gave the Board only a summary of the reports and key findings were omitted.

Mr Bekier and Ms Martin also failed to inform the Board of information known to them concerning Suncity's criminal activities.

2. **China UnionPay (CUP) Cards:** the Star allowed patrons to use CUP cards to access funds for gambling (which was prohibited by CUP card issuers) through a workaround via hotel accounts. From 2016, CUP and NAB sought confirmation that transactions were not related to gambling. The Star's responses were misleading and did not mention that funds drawn on CUP cards were being used for gambling.

Liability of Mr Bekier and Ms Martin

The Court found that Mr Bekier and Ms Martin both failed to discharge their duty of care and diligence. They failed to (1) properly inform the Board of material risks and (2) to take reasonable action to address risks they became aware of.

Both Mr Bekier and Ms Martin raised defences, which were unsuccessful:

- (i) Mr Bekier argued that the business judgment rule should protect him from the alleged breaches of s 180 relating to junkets. His evidence was that he did not turn his mind to it. The Court held that as he had not made a conscious decision about the matter, he failed to make out the required elements of the rule.
- (ii) Ms Martin initially suggested she could operate within discrete spheres of responsibility between her duties as Company Secretary, Group General Counsel and CLRO, arguing this was relevant to the question of liability under s 180(1). She later withdrew this submission but the Court, following a High Court decision concerning officers of James Hardie, found that once a person is an "officer", as Ms Martin was, all of their actions in any capacity for the company are subject to the duty of care and diligence under s 180(1).¹

¹ *Shafron v Australian Securities and Investments Commission* [2012] HCA 18.

Liability of the non-executive directors

The Court held that ASIC had not made out its allegations against the non-executive directors determining that the non-executive directors:

- (a) were entitled to rely on Mr Bekier and other members of senior management to bring key information or material risks to their attention;
- (b) can rely on management without verification except where they know, or should by acting with care have known, facts that would deny reliance;
- (c) cannot be passive recipients of information from management; and
- (d) like executive directors, they must “take a diligent and intelligent interest in the information” provided to them, understand it and “apply an enquiring mind” to their role.

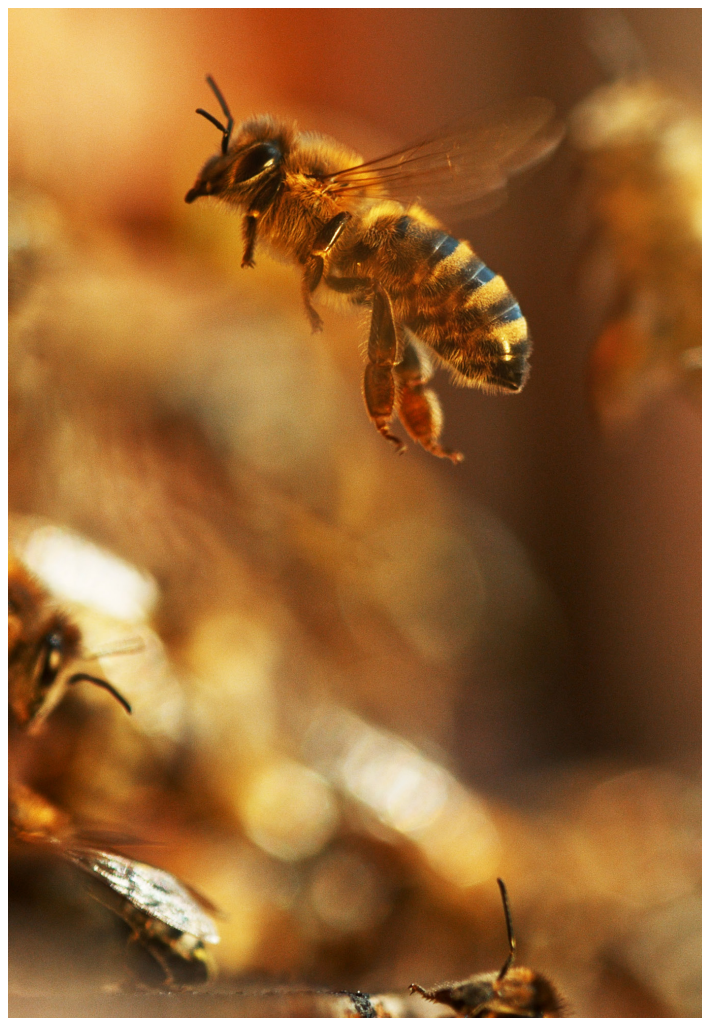
Justice Lee identified a number of issues about the way that ASIC had pleaded and presented its case against the non-executive directors. ASIC failed to prove that non-executive directors had or should have had information that ASIC alleged they had (including information that ASIC also alleged the executives had failed to provide to the board); ASIC overstated the severity of the threat to the Star that the alleged failures presented; and the Court found that ASIC had applied “hindsight bias” in formulating its allegations.

Notably, the Court rejected a submission from the non-executive directors that they could not discharge their duties because the board papers were too long, and were sometimes provided on short notice so they could not be reasonably expected to read them in full. While it was the case that the Star’s board papers were often very long and in some instances had been provided with insufficient time to be reviewed (in one case, minutes before the board meeting commenced) the Court observed that it was the directors’ responsibility to ensure that board papers were of an appropriate length and were provided in a timely manner.

Penalties

Mr Bekier was penalised \$700,000 and disqualified for 6 years. Ms Martin was penalised \$400,000 and disqualified for 7 years. They were ordered to pay 45% of ASIC’s costs.

For our further observations on this judgment see our article: [Section 180 in action: The Star judgment explained](#).



[ASIC V ISIGNTHIS LTD](#)

The Court's determination on penalty and costs in this matter follows its 2024 liability judgment where it found that the former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of iSignthis Ltd (**iSignthis**), Nickolas John Karantzis (**Karantzis**) breached s 180(1) and s 674(2A) by exposing the company to statutory liability for, and being knowingly involved in, a continuous disclosure breach. Mr Karantzis was also found to have contravened s 1309(2) by giving or authorising the giving of false or misleading information to the ASX. For a detailed overview of the 2024 proceeding, see our [2024 Digest](#).

[Penalty](#)

On 8 August 2025, Mr Karantzis was disqualified from managing corporations for six years and fined \$1 million. In determining the appropriate penalty the Court considered that although there was no finding of dishonesty and no prior contraventions, the Court held that Mr Karantzis' misconduct was serious, prolonged and deliberate rather than inadvertent. The Court emphasised that Mr Karantzis was aware of his obligations, knew ASIC was investigating, and nevertheless made misrepresentations on matters central to iSignthis' business and important to the market. As managing director, he was responsible for misleading the market, helping maintain an artificially inflated share price, causing market harm, and showing little contrition or willingness to co-operate.

[Costs](#)

In a separate judgment, delivered on 22 December 2025, the Court ordered that iSignthis and Mr Karantzis pay ASIC's costs. The defendants unsuccessfully argued that this was not a case where costs should follow the event in the usual way and costs should be apportioned to reflect ASIC's lack of success on several discrete issues. They also contended that ASIC should recover only 80% of its penalty stage costs because the penalties ultimately imposed were lower than those sought. McEvoy J rejected the defendants' approach, holding that only in an exceptional case would it be suitable to depart from the starting position, that a successful party is entitled to its costs. The Court held that apportionment was not justified because the unsuccessful issues were not truly separate, substantially overlapped with ASIC's successful case and did not materially lengthen the proceeding.

[ASIC V NOUMI LTD \(NO 5\) \[2025\] FCA 1524](#)

For the first time, the Federal Court has directed that a pecuniary penalty previously ordered to be paid to the Commonwealth be instead distributed to group members in a parallel shareholder class action.

In the 2024 proceedings,² ASIC ordered a \$5 million penalty in respect of contraventions of continuous disclosure obligations under s 674(2). For a detailed overview of the 2024 proceeding, see our [2024 Digest](#).

The Federal Court has since decided that the \$5 million pecuniary penalty be distributed to the group members of a parallel class action in addition to the \$43 million settlement already awarded to the class for misrepresentations relating to Noumi Ltd's (Noumi) contraventions of its disclosure obligations.³

This is the first time the Court has applied s 1317QF for the benefit of class members. Section 1317QF allows the court to divert a pecuniary penalty awarded under s 1317G from the Commonwealth for the benefit of persons who have suffered 'damage as a result of the contravention' if it is satisfied that this amount is appropriate having regard to compensation already recovered.

² *ASIC v Noumi Limited (No 3)* [2024] FCA 862.

³ *Gehrke & Anor v Noumi Limited & Anor* [2025] VSC 373.

ASIC V COHEN [2025] FCA 1255

ASIC instituted proceedings against Mr Keith Cohen, CEO and Managing Director of the Freedom group (**Freedom**), and Mr Robert Oayda, Quality Assurance Manager of Freedom Insurance Pty Ltd (**Freedom Insurance**) for being knowingly concerned in Freedom Insurance's conflicted remuneration. An additional claim was brought against Mr Cohen for an alleged breach of his statutory duty to act with care and diligence.

The Court determined that all of ASIC's allegations against Mr Cohen and Mr Oayda were not proven and therefore dismissed them.

Conflicted remuneration claim

Freedom Insurance was selling a Freedom Protection Plan (**FPP**) to clients through sale agents. As an incentive to increase sales during a period of low sales, Mr Oayda proposed, and Mr Cohen subsequently approved his proposal, that Freedom Insurance reward top sale agents of the FPP product with a Vespa scooter or a Bali holiday. ASIC alleged Mr Cohen and Mr Oayda were 'knowingly concerned in, or party to' conflicted remuneration in breach of ss 963L, 963A and 963AA, arguing that the incentives would influence the advice sale agents gave to clients.

The Court disagreed with ASIC, determining that ASIC could not establish that sales agents were providing financial product advice when selling the FPP, as would be required to characterise rewards received for sales as conflicted remuneration. The Court determined that contravention requires evidence of a connection between a benefit offered and financial product advice.

Breach of directors duties claim

The Court also disagreed with ASIC's assertion that Mr Cohen breached his duty to act with care and diligence under s 180 by failing to take reasonable steps to prevent Freedom Insurance from providing conflicted remuneration. Interestingly, ASIC's case against Mr Cohen did not rely on the finding in the conflicted remuneration claim. Instead, the Court considered separately the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person in Mr Cohen's position would have exercised and concluded that there had been no breach.

In reaching that conclusion, the Court referred to several matters. Mr Cohen had relied on the advice of Mr McCool, Freedom's General Counsel and Head of Legal, who advised that the conflicted remuneration provisions did not apply to the rewards. The Court also accepted that Mr Cohen was not a lawyer and could not therefore be expected to have a comprehensive understanding of conflicted remuneration. Further, no one within Freedom, including Mr McCool, had informed Mr Cohen that the rewards would contravene the Corporations Act. The Court also observed that ASIC had failed to adduce evidence of what steps a reasonable person in Mr Cohen's position would have taken. Finally, ASIC was unable to prove any foreseeable risk of harm to Freedom Insurance arising from Mr Cohen's conduct that outweighed the benefits of the rewards provided to the sales agents.



ASIC V TERRACOM LTD [2025] FCA 726

ASIC instituted proceedings against four officers and directors of TerraCom Limited (**TerraCom**), an ASX-listed thermal coal producer. The allegations stemmed from three public statements published by TerraCom between February and April 2020; two of the statements were made in ASX announcements and the other in an open letter to shareholders published in two newspapers (the '**Public Statements**').

ASIC alleged that Mr Daniel McCarthy (CEO), Mr Nathan Boom (CFO), Mr Craig Ransley (adviser and later director and Deputy Chairman), and Mr Wallace King AO (Chairman) contravened s 1309(2) by authorising the giving of false or misleading information to the ASX, and also contravened s 180(1) for failing to act with the requisite degree of care and diligence regarding TerraCom's investigation of whistleblower allegations concerning fraudulent alteration of coal quality certificates. The Court (Jackman J) dismissed all the allegations.

The whistleblower and the announcements

The case arose from allegations made by a former employee, Mr Justin Williams, who alleged that TerraCom colluded with its third-party testing provider to alter Certificates of Analysis by increasing the calorific value of the coal and/or decreasing the moisture content, resulting in inflated customer invoices. TerraCom engaged Ashurst and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to conduct an independent investigation, which identified inconsistencies in coal quality data but could not determine the underlying reason for those inconsistencies.

ASIC alleged that the Public Statements made by TerraCom conveyed that whistleblower allegations made by Mr Justin Williams were false or unfounded, that an independent investigation had found no wrongdoing, and that his complaints followed his redundancy or unmet demands.

Section 1309(2) – false or misleading information to the ASX

ASIC alleged the three Public Statements contained seven representations that were either materially false or misleading, or that omitted information in a way that made them materially misleading.

The Court found that none of the representations were false or misleading.

Notably, the Court made a critical observation of ASIC's case asserting that, 'it is an unfortunate feature of ASIC's case that most of the alleged representations which it claims were false or misleading involve an exercise in tendentiously enlarging the text of the announcements which were actually made beyond the normal and ordinary meaning of the language used in the announcements themselves.'

Section 180(1) – duty of care and diligence

ASIC's case against the directors for breach of the duty of care and diligence failed because:

1. it depended entirely on the false or misleading information claim that was rejected; and
2. ASIC could not establish that the defendants had failed to make adequate enquiries of the third-party testing provider or a former employee following public announcements made by that provider regarding its own internal investigation into the amendment of coal quality certificates.

The whistleblower victimisation case

Interestingly, ASIC's separate whistleblower victimisation case against TerraCom was successful.⁴ The Court found, and TerraCom admitted, that its Public Statements amounted to whistleblower victimisation in contravention of s 1317AC(1) as Mr Williams' allegations constituted a 'qualifying disclosure'. The Court accepted the parties agreed position, imposing a \$7.5 million penalty on TerraCom together with ASIC's costs of \$1 million, with no orders or penalties against the directors.

⁴ ASIC v TerraCom Ltd (No 3) [2025] FCA 1017

ASIC V NUIX LIMITED [2026] FCA 490

In September 2022, ASIC commenced proceedings against Nuix Limited (Nuix) and five of its directors: Mr Rodney Vawdrey, Mr Jeffrey Bleich, Sir Iain Lobban, Mr Daniel Phillips and Ms Sue Thomas. On 23 April 2026, the Federal Court dismissed all of ASIC's claims against Nuix and the directors.

Background

On 18 November 2020, Nuix issued a prospectus for an IPO which contained the following forecasts for the 2021 financial year:

1. Revenue of \$193.5 million (Prospectus Revenue Forecast); and
2. Annualised contract value (ACV) of \$199.6 million (Prospectus ACV Forecast).

Nuix subsequently released two ASX announcements that reaffirmed these forecasts, before making an announcement in April 2021 downgrading the revenue forecast and ACV forecast to ranges of \$180–\$185 million and \$168–\$177 million, respectively.

ASIC alleged that:

- Nuix engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct in contravention of s 1041H(1) of the Corporations Act and 12DA(1) of the ASIC Act by making the two initial ASX announcements and by failing to disclose particular information to the ASX;
- Nuix contravened s 674(2) by failing to disclose particular information to the ASX in breach of continuous disclosure obligations; and
- Each director contravened s 180(1) by failing to exercise a duty of care and diligence to prevent Nuix from making misleading statements and breaching its continuous disclosure obligations.

Misleading and Deceptive Conduct

Non-disclosure of the 1HFY21 ACV Result

ASIC alleged that Nuix's failure to disclose the 1HFY21 ACV Result (being ACV of \$161.9 million as at 31 December 2020) was misleading because the market expected year-on-year ACV growth of approximately 20 per cent and an ACV at the end of 1HFY21 significantly higher than \$162 million. The Court found that ASIC failed to prove that there was a market expectation that the half year ACV figure significantly higher than \$161.9 million.

The Court found there was no reasonable expectation of disclosure because the prospectus contained no half-year ACV forecast, ACV was a point-in-time non-IFRS metric from which no valid half-year extrapolation could be made, the information fell within the exceptions in Listing Rule 3.1A, and was not required to be disclosed under the accounting standards.

The 26 February and 8 March Revenue Representations

ASIC alleged that Nuix misled the market by re-affirming the Prospectus Revenue Forecast and Prospectus ACV Forecast on 26 February with its half-year results announcement, and again in an ASX announcement on 8 March. ASIC alleged that Nuix lacked reasonable grounds for both forecasts when the forecasts were reaffirmed. (The Nuix share price fell 32% immediately after the half year results announcement. Amongst other things, revenue at the half year had fallen compared to the prior year.) The Court rejected that case because it was satisfied Nuix had reasonable grounds to re-affirm both forecasts, and accordingly that ASIC failed to prove that Nuix did not have reasonable grounds for its forecasts on 26 February and 8 March 2021. Therefore the Court found that Nuix had not engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct.

Continuous Disclosure

ASIC's continuous disclosure claim failed because:

- the 1HFY21 ACV Result fell within Listing Rule 3.1A, carving it out from immediate disclosure; and
- in line with ASX guidance, the 5% variation to the adjusted 1HFY21 ACV figure was presumed immaterial.

The Court found that an investor, who is familiar with the ASX Listing Rules and disclosure guidance would not reasonably expect a variation of 5% or less to be disclosed, unless the variation would impact their investment expectations.

Directors' Duties

ASIC's s 180 case against the directors was dismissed because it depended on establishing a Nuix contravention, and ASIC failed to establish any such contravention.

Appeal

ASIC has appealed the Federal Court's dismissal of its case against Nuix, but only as to Nuix's alleged continuous disclosure and misleading conduct contraventions, not the directors' duties claims.

DIRECTOR CHARGED FOR DEALING WITH MONEY SUSPECTED OF BEING PROCEEDS OF CRIME

ASIC alleged that Mr Brendan Gunn, a former director of Mormarkets Pty Ltd (**Mormarkets**), dealt with two bank cheques totalling \$180,000, which were believed to be derived from international scams targeting Australian investors.

Mormarkets was registered as a digital currency exchange and accepted customer deposits for conversion into cryptocurrency. ASIC alleged that, despite a number of bank accounts being closed because of suspicious activity and fraud concerns, Mr Gunn continued to open further accounts to process deposits.

Between March and May 2020, after the closure of two such accounts, Mr Gunn received two bank cheques totalling \$180,000 and dealt with them by transferring them to an associate. It was alleged that there were reasonable grounds to suspect that the funds represented the proceeds of crime.

In January 2026, Mr Gunn pleaded guilty to the offence.

ASIC PROCEEDINGS AGAINST MINING COMPANY AND DIRECTORS FOR CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURE AND DIRECTORS' DUTIES BREACHES

On 14 April 2025, ASIC commenced civil penalty proceedings against Wiluna Mining Corporation's (**Wiluna**) and its former Chair Mr Milan Jerkovic and Chief Commercial Officer Mr James Malone. ASIC alleges that both directors were involved in Wiluna's 17 June 2022 ASX announcement stating that the company had raised \$57.3 million under a rights issue when \$7 million of that amount had not been received.

ASIC alleges that Mr Jerkovic breached his duty of care and diligence by failing to take the steps necessary to cause Wiluna to qualify, withdraw or correct the announcement. ASIC also alleges that both Mr Jerkovic and Mr Malone failed to take reasonable steps to ensure the announcement did not omit material information that rendered it misleading.

ASIC is seeking declarations of contravention and pecuniary penalties against Mr Jerkovic and Mr Malone, as well as orders disqualifying them from managing corporations. In February 2026, ASIC and Wiluna agreed a statement of agreed facts and admissions, under which Wiluna agreed to submit to a declaration that it engaged in misleading conduct and breached its continuous disclosure obligations. Wiluna agreed to contribute \$34,000 to ASIC's costs. ASIC agreed not to seek a penalty against Wiluna. Interestingly, the Federal Court has deferred a hearing of the case against Wiluna (notwithstanding the SAFA) until the proceedings against Mr Jerkovic and Mr Malone, which are continuing, have been heard and resolved.

DIRECTOR CHARGED WITH 33 CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Mr Michael Dunjey, a director of Ascent Investment and Coaching Pty Ltd (**Ascent**), was charged with 33 criminal offences, comprising 23 counts of fraudulently obtaining a benefit in relation to more than \$4 million in investor funds, 5 counts of failing to act in good faith in relation to the use of approximately \$2.5 million, and 5 counts of falsifying books in relation to the company's annual returns.

The charges arose from an ASIC investigation into allegations that Ascent had made misrepresentations to investors when raising funds and had misappropriated investor funds. They also followed ASIC's 2022 civil proceedings to wind up Ascent and its unregistered managed investment scheme.

The criminal prosecution remains on foot.

ASIC PROCEEDINGS AGAINST FORMER BLOCKCHAIN GLOBAL DIRECTOR

ASIC has commenced civil penalty proceedings against Mr Liang (Allan) Guo, a former director of Blockchain Global Ltd (in liquidation) (**Blockchain Global**), in connection with the operation of the ACX Exchange, a cryptocurrency exchange platform that collapsed in around December 2019 after customers were unable to withdraw funds from their accounts.

ASIC's allegations concern Mr Guo's dealings with customer funds, statements made about those dealings, and failures to maintain proper books and records. It is estimated that Blockchain Global owed \$58 million to unsecured creditors and \$22 million in unsecured creditor claims to former customers.

Mr Guo left Australia on 23 September 2024 on the expiration of his travel restraint orders and has not returned.

On 3 June 2026, the Court stayed the civil proceeding pending the hearing and final determination of criminal proceedings commenced by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, or further order.

DIRECTOR SENTENCED FOR DISHONEST CONDUCT AND MISUSE OF COMPANY FUNDS

On 10 July 2025, Mr Daniel Kirby, a former director of Berndale Capital Securities Pty Ltd (**Berndale**), Berndale Capital Securities Management Pty Ltd and Algoplus Pty Ltd, was sentenced to 2 years and 11 months' imprisonment for dishonest conduct and misuse of company funds.

Mr Kirby pleaded guilty to providing false or misleading information to an auditor, dishonest conduct in relation to a financial service and dishonest use of his position as a director. ASIC alleged that, before and immediately after Berndale's Australian financial services licence was cancelled in November 2018, Mr Kirby transferred company funds to benefit himself and other associates and entities.

ASIC also alleged that Mr Kirby submitted false or misleading documents to Berndale's auditor about overseas bank accounts said to contain Berndale funds, when those accounts or funds either did not exist or were grossly inaccurate.

Mr Kirby is eligible for release after 12 months upon entering a \$1,000 recognisance, subject to maintaining good behaviour for a further 3 years.

ASIC noted that this was the first ASIC matter to proceed in the Federal Court under its expanded corporate criminal jurisdiction.

ASIC PROCEEDINGS AGAINST AVZ MINERALS DIRECTORS FOR DISCLOSURE FAILURES

On 11 November 2025, ASIC commenced proceedings against AVZ Minerals Limited's (**AVZ**) managing director Mr Nigel Ferguson and technical director Mr Graeme Johnston in relation to alleged disclosure failures concerning AVZ's lithium project (**Manono Project**) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (**DRC**). ASIC alleges the two directors failed for nearly 12 months to inform the market of a significant legal dispute concerning AVZ's claimed acquisition of a further 15% interest in the Manono Project.

ASIC alleges that the two directors breached their directors' duties by failing to take reasonable steps to ensure AVZ complied with its continuous disclosure obligations and by authorising or permitting ASX announcements that were false or misleading, or that omitted matters making them misleading. ASIC alleges those announcements misrepresented AVZ's legal title to a 75% interest in the Manono Project and did not properly disclose the dispute with Dathomir Mining Resources SARL over the relevant shares.

ASIC is seeking declarations of contravention and pecuniary penalties against the two directors and also seeks orders disqualifying them from managing corporations. AVZ was suspended on 11 May 2022 and removed from the ASX on 13 May 2024.

ASIC PROCEEDINGS AGAINST FORMER MWL DIRECTOR OVER SHIELD MASTER FUND ADVICE FAILURES

ASIC has commenced proceedings against MWL Financial Services Pty Ltd's (**MWL**), former director Mr Nicholas Maikousis, and lead generator Imperial Capital Group Australia Pty Ltd (**Imperial**) in connection with allegedly inappropriate financial advice directing clients to invest their superannuation into the Shield Master Fund (Shield). ASIC alleges that, between May 2022 and February 2024, MWL representatives advised at least 556 clients to invest approximately \$114 million of their superannuation funds into Shield as a pre-selected investment option.

ASIC alleges that Mr Maikousis was involved in MWL's contraventions of its general licensee obligations, including its obligation to provide financial services efficiently, honestly and fairly, maintain adequate arrangements to manage conflicts of interest, and take reasonable steps to ensure its authorised representatives complied with their best interests and related duties.

ASIC is seeking declarations and civil penalties against Mr Maikousis, MWL and Imperial, and an order disqualifying Mr Maikousis from managing corporations.

SHADOW DIRECTOR CHARGED WITH \$8M DEBT FACTORING FRAUD

Mr Brent Young has been charged with fraud under section 408C of the *Criminal Code 1899* (QLD) for alleged debt factoring fraud committed while acting as a shadow director of HWT Group Australia Pty Ltd (**HWT**). He has also been charged with managing a corporation while disqualified under section 206A.

ASIC alleges that Mr Young created and lodged over 10,000 fraudulent invoices with a finance provider to obtain over A\$8.3 million in advances under a debt factoring arrangement he set up on behalf of HWT. The alleged invoices purported to bill Bunnings Warehouse for goods shipped to various stores, even though HWT and Mr Young did not have any business relationship with Bunnings Warehouse.

At the time of the alleged fraud, Mr Young was automatically disqualified from managing corporations due to bankruptcy.

ASIC PROCEEDINGS AGAINST FORMER DIRECTOR OF DEFENCE TECH COMPANY FOR FAILURE TO DISCLOSE MATERIAL DOWNGRADES TO REVENUE FORECAST

In November 2025, ASIC commenced proceedings against Dr Ben Greene, former CEO and director of Electro Optic Systems Holdings Limited (**EOS**). The proceedings centre on Dr Greene's alleged breach of his duty of care and diligence arising from EOS's failure to correct a materially overstated revenue forecast for 2022. (EOS has a 31 December financial year end.) EOS had issued guidance, including at its AGM in May 2022 and again in June, that it expected its 2022 revenue to match or surpass the \$212.3 million it recorded in 2021, but ASIC contends that Dr Greene knew, or should have known, that actual revenue was likely to fall well short of that figure.

According to ASIC, Dr Greene did not bring to the board's attention key factors that undermined the reliability of the guidance, such as supply chain difficulties impairing the manufacture and testing of remote weapon systems, and reliance on significant volumes of prospective new business for which there was no reasonable basis to anticipate revenue within the 2022 period. It is further alleged that Dr Greene did not recommend revising the guidance issued in June 2022 and participated in board resolutions that deferred any corrective disclosure to the market.

EOS did not revise guidance until 31 October 2022, when it disclosed a revised revenue range for 2022 of \$100 million to \$140 million. ASIC is seeking declarations of contravention, pecuniary penalties, disqualification orders and costs against Dr Greene. (In April 2026, in separate Federal Court proceedings, EOS was found to have breached its continuous disclosure obligations and was ordered to pay a penalty of \$4 million and ASIC's costs.)

ASIC Administrative Proceedings

FORMER KINGDOM DEVELOPMENTS DIRECTOR BANNED FOR 6.5 YEARS

On 26 February 2025, ASIC banned property developer Mr Andrew Bodnar from providing financial services, controlling an entity that carries on a financial services business and performing any function involved in carrying on a financial services business for six and a half years following its investigation into the collapse of the Kingdom Developments Group.

ASIC found that the SPVs in the Kingdom Developments Group and Mr Bodnar were carrying on a financial services business while unlicensed. ASIC also found that Mr Bodnar was involved in some SPVs offering securities without the disclosure document required under the Corporations Act and engaging in misleading or deceptive conduct about the use and repayment of investor funds.

ASIC also relied on the fact that Mr Bodnar is an undischarged bankrupt, which provided a separate basis for the ban. On 30 August 2023, he became bankrupt on his own petition, and a report issued by the bankruptcy trustee stated that creditors were owed \$131 million.

In determining the length of the ban, ASIC considered that Mr Bodnar's conduct demonstrated deficiencies in governance and financial management and reflected a lack of professionalism and judgement. ASIC also noted his contrition and remorse, and that there was no dishonesty or intention to defraud.

NSW CONSTRUCTION DIRECTOR DISQUALIFIED FOR FIVE YEARS FOLLOWING FAILURE OF THREE COMPANIES

ASIC has disqualified Mr Anthony Azizi from managing corporations for five years following his involvement in the failure of three construction companies. At the time of ASIC's decision, the companies owed a combined total of \$93,708,563 to more than 300 unsecured creditors, including the Australian Taxation Office, the NSW Office of State Revenue, the Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in relation to the Fair Entitlements Guarantee, the NSW Self Insurance Corporation, and other small businesses.

Between January 2001 and September 2021, Mr Azizi was a director of Trinity Constructions (Aust) Pty Ltd and Regal Consulting Services Pty Ltd. ASIC was also satisfied that he acted as a shadow director of Trinco Pty Ltd. ASIC found that he failed to exercise due care and diligence to ensure the companies met their statutory lodgement requirements, failed to take reasonable steps to ensure they kept written financial records, and failed to ensure that they did not trade while insolvent.

Workplace Health and Safety Proceedings

[SAFEWORK NSW V HMR SUPPLIES PTY LTD \[2025\] NSWDC 25](#)

HMR Supplies Pty Ltd (**'HMR'**) pleaded guilty to a number of offences arising under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) (**'WHS Act'**). They related to an incident where Ms Georgia Campbell, HMR's Operations Manager drove a forklift at HMR's premises and collided with a worker who suffered non-fatal injuries requiring surgery.

At the time of the incident, Ms Campbell did not hold a high-risk work licence authorising her to operate a forklift (as required by the WHS regulations). HMR had not implemented a system of work requiring separation between forklift and pedestrian traffic and had not provided training on operating forklifts near pedestrians.

The offences HMR pleaded guilty to included:

- a category two offence (relating to a failure to comply with a health and safety duty, which exposes an individual to a risk of death or serious injury or illness) for failure to comply with its primary duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers while they are at work;
- offences relating to its failure to comply with its duties to notify the WHS regulator of a notifiable incident and preserve the incident site; and
- an offence for directing and allowing the Operations Manager to carry out work involving the forklift, when she did not hold the required high-risk work licence.

HMR received a criminal conviction and was fined a total of \$165,000.

Ms Campbell pleaded guilty to a category two offence for failing to comply with her duty as a worker to take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. She received a criminal conviction, but having regard to her limited capacity to pay a fine, was only fined \$5,000 and ordered to complete a TAFE course in work health and safety.

Mr Berry Campbell, a director of HMR was also prosecuted and pleaded guilty to a category two offence for his failure to comply with his duty, as an officer of HMR, to exercise due diligence to ensure that HMR complied with its duties and obligations under the WHS Act, thereby exposing the injured employee to a risk of death or serious injury. The director should have known that the consequences of failing to control such risks could be serious for its workers. The director also received a criminal conviction and was fined \$45,000.

[SAFework NSW v Paul Whitmarsh \(No. 4\) \[2025\] NSWDC 274](#)

Mr Paul Whitmarsh was the sole director and shareholder of AWB Contractors Pty Ltd (**AWB**), a marine salvaging operations provider. He was found guilty of an offence for his failure, as an officer of AWB, to exercise due diligence to ensure that AWB complied with its primary duty of care. This was a category two offence as it was found this failure led to an incident involving a crane that exposed a worker to the risk of death or serious injury or illness.

AWB's employees had used a crane to lift a yacht from the water. The crane lift failed and the mast of the yacht struck and killed one of the workers.

Mr Whitmarsh had ultimate responsibility for AWB's day to day operations. AWB did not have a dedicated safety manager, and occasionally prepared safe work method statements for some jobs, which were overseen and signed by Mr Whitmarsh. Prior to the incident AWB had some policies and procedures in place, and its safety management system was partly informal.

In sentencing Mr Whitmarsh, the Court found that his level of culpability as a director of AWB was high. This was because:

- the risk that eventuated during the salvage of a sunken vessel was known to him;
- the likelihood of the risk occurring was significant;
- the director had responsibility for many poor practices related to AWB's operations, beyond those arising on the day of the incident, but on a longer-term basis;
- the control measures available to manage the risk did not impose a significant burden or inconvenience, and they were implemented quickly by the director after the incident;
- the worker died because of the director's breach of duty; and
- the maximum penalty available under the WHS Act was significant, reflecting the seriousness of the offence.

Importantly, it was recognised that an officer's duty to exercise due diligence is limited to taking supervisory and proactive steps, including to ensure that the company has adequate processes and resources to ensure that it complies with its duties and obligations under the WHS Act. However, in this case the director had abdicated his responsibility by doing nothing.

In considering mitigating factors, the Court rejected submissions that Mr Whitmarsh was a person of good character, unlikely to re-offend, or had good prospects of rehabilitation for reasons including:

- he continued to operate an identical business as a new entity but led no evidence of the safety systems and practices adopted by that business;
- he breached his duty to prevent AWB from trading while insolvent under the Corporations Act; and
- his statement of contrition did not evidence his remorse, rather it expressed regret about the effects of the worker's death on him.

Mr Whitmarsh was convicted and fined \$300,000. The maximum penalty for the offence was \$353,430.

SAFEWORK NSW V GARBEN; SAFEWORK NSW V STEVENS; SAFEWORK NSW V CRESTVILLE HOLDINGS PTY LTD [2025] NSWDC 302

Crestville Holdings Pty Ltd (**Crestville**) operated an indoor climbing gym, and its directors Mr Michael Garben and Mr Simon Stevens managed the gym's daily operations. An incident occurred when an experienced recreational climber used equipment which assists climbers to lower themselves from the wall. During the climb, the lanyard supporting the climber snapped and he fell 12 metres to his death. The relevant piece of equipment was found to have wear and tear, was not working as designed and three months overdue for service. From the date of its installation to the date of the incident the maintenance log recorded four issues with its operation.

Both directors pleaded guilty to an offence relating to a breach of their duty to exercise due diligence to ensure that Crestville complied with its primary duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out by it. This was a category two offence as it exposed persons using the equipment to a risk of death or serious injury.

In sentencing the directors, the Court observed that they did not ensure that Crestville:

- have appropriate systems in place to ensure the equipment was subject to appropriate inspections and servicing;
- provide appropriate information, training and instruction to workers in relation to the inspection of the equipment;
- provide appropriate instructions to climbers that they should discontinue climbing immediately if slack developed when using the equipment; and
- develop, implement and enforce a system of tracking the resolution of maintenance issues.

Additionally, work health and safety issues were not regularly discussed at directors' meetings or recorded in minutes. The Court found the risk was obvious, the control measures that should have been implemented were readily available and the consequences of the failures were as serious as they could possibly be.

Each director received a criminal conviction and was fined \$84,375. Crestville also entered a plea of guilty to a breach of its primary duty as a category two offence and was convicted and fined \$281,250.

DPP V ONKAR GROUP PTY LTD & ANOR [2025] VCC 1382

Onkar Group Pty Ltd (**Onkar**) and its sole director Mr Maninder Singh Nagi pleaded guilty to offences under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic) (**OHS Act**) arising from an incident involving the death of one of its subcontracted drivers. The driver's van had drifted across double white lines and collided with an oncoming truck shortly after completing a 12 hour delivery run. It was identified that the driver had undertaken the same delivery run for 47 days in a row without adequate breaks, rest or recovery time between shifts.

Onkar's sole director, Mr Nagi, pleaded guilty to two offences as an officer of Onkar which had contravened its duty owed to employees and its duty owed to other persons under the OHS Act, on the basis that those contraventions were attributable to his failure to take reasonable care.

The Court found these offences too serious to allow a penalty without a criminal conviction and found the offending period prolonged, considering evidence received from other drivers that Mr Nagi had failed to respond appropriately to issues raised with him regarding driver fatigue. The director was also aware of relevant guidelines published by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Mr Nagi was convicted and fined a total of \$80,000.

Onkar pleaded guilty to three offences in relation to its duties and was convicted and fined a total of \$1.35 million.

Of interest, the Court also made an adverse publicity order against Onkar, requiring it to publicise a full-page advertisement in an industry publication including detail of the offending and penalties imposed. This was to promote general deterrence and serve an educative purpose because the case involved breaches of the OHS Act that posed a significant risk to the safety of members of the public, and a misunderstanding on behalf of the director that because the deceased was a subcontractor it was their responsibility to manage issues related to fatigue.

[DPP V LH HOLDING MANAGEMENT PTY LTD; DPP V HANNA \[2025\] VSCA 75](#)

This case involved the first workplace manslaughter prosecution in Victoria.

Mr Laith Hanna, the sole director of LH Holding Management Pty Ltd (**LH Holding**), a stone masonry business, was operating a forklift to move an A-frame rack (used in the workplace to store slabs of stone) on a slope, when the forklift toppled, crushing and fatally injuring a subcontractor.

LH Holding pleaded guilty to the offence of workplace manslaughter under the OHS Act. Mr Hanna pleaded guilty to an offence as an officer of a body corporate that committed workplace manslaughter where that contravention was attributable to his failure to take reasonable care in his operation of the forklift.

At first instance, Mr Hanna was convicted and sentenced to a two-year community correction order (**CCO**) (requiring 200 hours of unpaid community work and participating in a forklift operation course). LH Holding was convicted and fined \$1.3 million, notwithstanding this well exceeded the company's assets.

The Director of Public Prosecutions appealed both sentences on the basis they were manifestly inadequate, and for the Court of Appeal to lay down principles relevant to sentencing workplace manslaughter offences.

The Court of Appeal confirmed that continued or repeated negligent conduct which represents a blatant disregard for the health and safety of persons in the workplace will be considered more culpable than negligent conduct representing an aberration or temporary lapse in an offender's otherwise satisfactory conduct.

Although the Court of Appeal found that LH Holding's offending was not in the worst category, as it lacked aggravating features such as complacency with respect to safety, a blatant disregard for the health and safety of workers and did not represent a course of unsafe work practice tolerated over an extended period. Nevertheless, the Court of Appeal increased LH Holding's fine to \$3 million. This acknowledged the offending could not be categorised as one of the least serious examples of workplace manslaughter and demonstrated that the director operated the forklift in a manner that was a very significant departure from accepted safety standards.

Conversely, the Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal against the director's sentence, acknowledging that despite the leniency of the CCO, it remained within the permissible sentencing range. Given that the director was, for all practicable purposes LH Holding, there would have been little point in also imposing a fine on him. Additionally, as the CCO was partially completed, the director's rehabilitation was at an advanced stage weighing against imposing a greater penalty.

[DENNIS JONES ENGINEERING PTY LTD V THE KING; JONES V THE KING \[2025\] VSCA 76](#)

Dennis Jones Engineering Pty Ltd (**DJE**) operated a machine shop, managed by its sole director and shareholder Mr Dennis Jones. The director was operating an automated machine with the assistance of a second-year apprentice, when a piece of steel pipe became bent and whipped, either striking the apprentice on the side of his head, or causing him to strike his head on something else after being flung to the side when the pipe hit him. The apprentice suffered very serious injuries, including a traumatic brain injury.

DJE pleaded guilty to a breach of its duty under the OHS Act to not, without lawful excuse, recklessly engage in conduct that places (or may place) another at a workplace in danger of a serious injury. Mr Jones pleaded guilty to an offence as an officer of DJE on the basis that DJE's contraventions were attributable to his failure to take reasonable care.

At first instance, DJE was fined \$2.1 million, and Mr Jones was fined \$140,000 and given a five-year CCO requiring him to perform 600 hours of unpaid community work. Both sought leave to appeal against the sentences on the basis they were manifestly excessive and the Court erred in sentencing DJE on the basis that anything more than a modest fine would result in its liquidation.

DJE was unsuccessful on both grounds, but the Court of Appeal agreed that Mr Jones's sentence was manifestly excessive. This was because there were a number of mitigating factors that should have been reflected in any sentence imposed on him, including his early guilty plea and his co-operation with investigators, demonstrating genuine remorse. Having regard to the director's good character and significant contribution to the community, the Court of Appeal set aside the sentence and imposed a CCO of three years, with a condition to perform 200 hours of community work.

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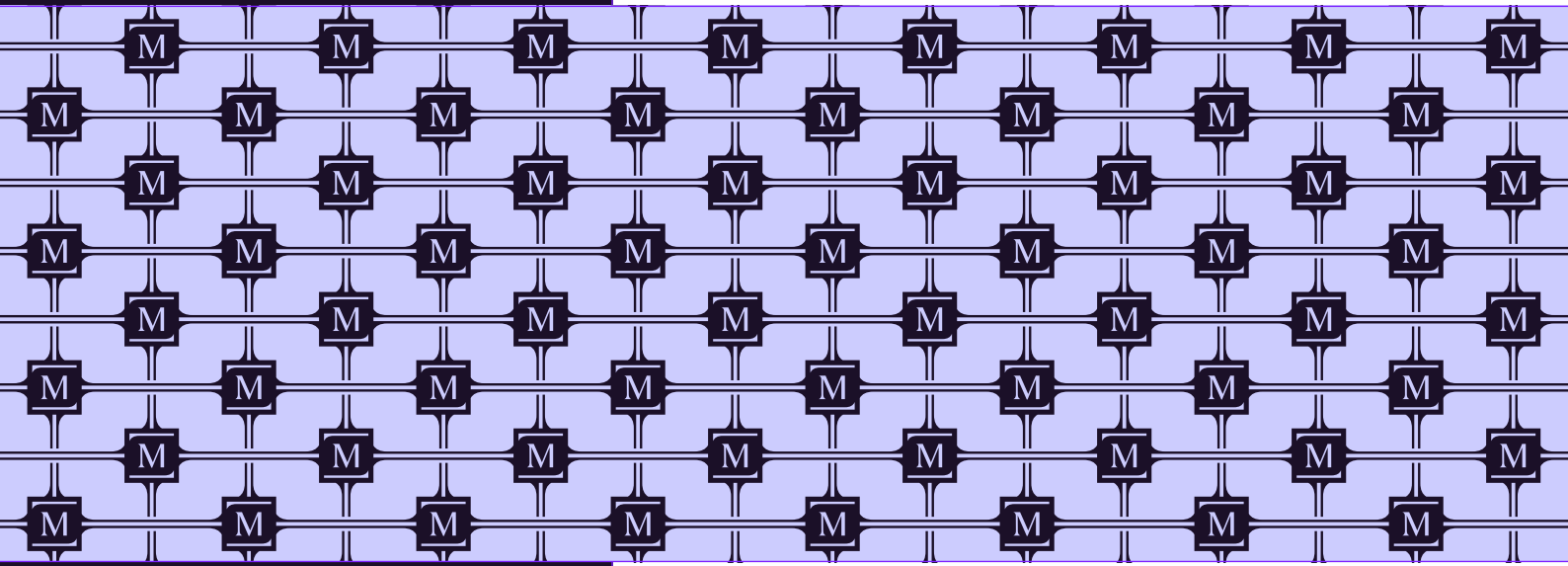
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