

# More 2015 Drama at Downing Centre Court

As discussed in [last week's blog](#), 2015 was a big year at the Downing Centre!

From an escaping defendant to a father who attacked the man convicted of sexually assaulting his daughter, the year has been packed full of drama.

Here are more the year's highlights, challenges and changes.

## **Inquest into the Martin Place Siege**

The Martin Place Siege shocked Sydney and the world, leading to an inquest into the police response to the incident.

The inquest has already revealed the incompetence of the DPP solicitor who opposed Monis' bail application, the [failure of the DPP make any application to revoke Monis' bail under the New Bail Act](#) (even after he made social media threats in the days leading up to the siege) and the questionable police and ASIO response to the incident itself.

The inquest began January and is ongoing, with the results to be determined sometime in the middle of this year.

## **Police allowed guns in court**

Security in courthouses is the domain of the Office of the Sheriff of New South Wales – not the police, who are merely witnesses in court.

But despite opposition from lawyers and many judges, the powerful Police Association [succeeded in obtaining authorisation](#) for officers to routinely take their guns into the courtroom with them; even have them on the witness stand while being cross-examined.

Prior to 10 August, like everyone else, police were not allowed to take weapons into court with them, unless they had sought and received permission to do so.

### **Famous faces in the Downing Centre**

Retired Soccerroos star, [Mark Bosnich](#), faced court after being charged with driving recklessly when he crashed his car with more than three times the legal amount of alcohol in his system. Fortunately for the star, his case was dealt with leniently and he did not receive a criminal conviction.

X-factor [Judge Luke Jacobz was found guilty of his second drink-driving offence](#) – which earned him the title of “serial offender” from the Magistrate.

Mr Jacobz lost his licence for one year and received a \$700 fine – which automatically carries a criminal record. And Jacobz wasn't the only former Home and Away star to come before the court – Johnny Ruffo also faced court charged with several driving offences. His case has been adjourned until late this month.

### **Unusual cases:**

All kinds of cases make their way before magistrates – including the one involving a teen who did a [nudie run for a free kebab.](#)

Unfortunately for the hungry young man, he was caught by police and given a \$500 criminal infringement notice for offensive conduct. He then took the matter to court and was fortunate enough to receive a ‘section 10’ (now [section 10 dismissal](#) or [conditional release order](#)) in court, meaning he did not receive a criminal record, fine or other penalty.

In another case, a jury trial had to be aborted after the Judge noticed a female juror winking and making suggestive gestures to the defendant.

## Uber versus Taxis:

The long-standing battle between Uber and the taxi industry continued throughout the year.

Shortly after vigilante [Russel Howarth was ordered to stop performing citizens' arrests](#) on Uber drivers, Uber itself was prosecuted by the RMS.

But the [Magistrate found that the RMS didn't have the authority to prosecute](#), forcing them to drop the 24 charges laid against Uber drivers.

Finally, at midnight on 18 December, the NSW state government declared the ride-sharing business legal, ending the dispute surrounding Uber's legality – at least for the time-being.

With 2015 now behind us, we look forward to what this year holds for Sydney's busiest courthouse.