

Forensic Science Queensland
Department of Justice
39 Kessels Road
Coopers Plains QLD 4108

7 July 2025

Forensic Science Queensland – resuming DNA testing

As you are likely aware, on 20 June 2025, Forensic Science Queensland (FSQ) paused DNA testing to review concerns about contamination in the testing process. I am pleased to advise FSQ will resume DNA testing, in a limited capacity, from 7 July 2025.

During the pause we have worked closely the Queensland Police Services (QPS) and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) to mitigate delays to matters currently before the courts.

Investigation of contamination concerns

It is our priority to deliver high quality and timely forensic services which support the integrity of the justice system. I acknowledge at the outset the veracity of DNA testing results is vitally important to maintaining confidence in the justice system.

During the pause in DNA testing FSQ undertook investigations into the contamination concerns. Our investigation identified both environmental DNA contamination events and sample-to-sample DNA contamination of quality control samples.

A small number of contamination instances have been identified, with the earliest confirmed case dating back to July 2024. A review of cases is underway, currently reaching back to July 2023, using specialised software to help pinpoint the timeframe in which the contamination occurred. This review is ongoing.

Contamination causes

To date, our analysis has found two root causes of the contamination events:

- Manual handling of samples during processing, and
- A fault related to a specific type of robotic instrument used in the laboratory.

In relation to the contamination caused by manual handling, FSQ has increased the frequency of glove changes and reviewed and updated its laboratory cleaning procedures. These revised procedures have been externally reviewed and endorsed as appropriate. Subsequent analysis of environmental samples has not detected any further contamination. We have also implemented additional monitoring controls, noting while the risk of environmental contamination can be minimised, it cannot be completely eliminated in any forensic laboratory setting.

FSQ is actively working with the supplier of the affected robotic instrument to resolve the identified issue, with the aim of implementing a solution as soon as possible.

Resumption of DNA testing

Recognising the vital importance of reliable and timely forensic science services, we have developed a staged plan which allows FSQ to resume testing of specific samples while further investigations into the affected instrument continue.

In consultation, and with the support of the ODPP and QPS, I have determined to re-commence limited DNA testing for both major and volume crime samples using an alternative instrument. Analysis of this instrument has found no evidence of contamination. For samples not suitable for testing on this alternative instrument, QPS will outsource testing of these samples, until a solution is implemented for the original instrument.

Additionally, we have implemented a new work instruction to undertake a manual check for DNA samples prior to cases being released for reporting. This work instruction has been externally reviewed and endorsed. For cases already reported, FSQ scientists are working with the ODPP to identify cases for review and provide addendum statements outlining this additional quality assurance measure.

Yours sincerely,



Natasha Mitchell
Acting Director of Forensic Science Queensland