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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Summer Clerk 2025

### Finn Elek

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Summer clerk, Finn Elek, gives us an insight into her time at Gilshenan & Luton.

I am a descendant of the Minjungbal and Bundjalung Peoples. I grew up on the Gold Coast and finished school in 2020 at St Hilda's School in Southport. I then moved to Brisbane to commence a dual Bachelor of Laws and Behavioural Science degree at the Queensland University of Technology. I am currently a fifth-year student, set to graduate at the end of 2026.

#### Finn Elek

Gilshenan & Luton  
Summer Clerk 2025



#### Why did you apply for the clerkship?

I applied for the Summer Clerkship at Gilshenan & Luton because I had no previous experience in criminal law. I thought it would be a great opportunity to see if criminal law might be an area of law that I would be interested in pursuing.

#### What did you do during the clerkship?

I went to court nearly every day over the course of my four-week clerkship. I was able to sit in on coronial inquests, court mentions, bail applications and various pleas. I also completed research tasks and participated in workshops where I learnt important practical legal skills that I will employ in my law degree and the future. In my last week I also participated in a mock plea based on a real file. I wrote my own submissions and presented them to the 'court'. This really encouraged me to develop my legal advocacy skills.

Each day was different, and given that things are always changing in criminal law, I was always kept on my toes. I learnt so much from this opportunity, including understanding the different courts and their processes, to meeting and participating in conversations with counsel and clients. Overall, it's been an amazing opportunity, and I am so grateful for this experience.

#### What was your most memorable day?

I had so many! The most memorable experiences I had over my time at Gilshenan & Luton would be attending two coronial inquests. The coronial inquests were both very different, but it was so interesting to follow along each day and watch how counsel, the clients, witnesses and lawyers interact with one another. I was interested to learn that the evidence heard in the inquests could allow the Coroner to make findings and recommendations to improve public safety.

I was also fortunate to attend the Court of Appeal with some of the firm's Directors. This experience truly showed me how challenging criminal law can be.

I also enjoyed participating in client interviews and conferences with various solicitors. It's incredible to see how much impact you as the solicitor can have on the client, which can quite

literally change the trajectory of their life. It is a lot of responsibility and can be very rewarding at times.

**What will you take away from the clerkship?**

There are so many invaluable skills I have learnt from my time at Gilshenan & Luton, from developing my research and advocacy skills to better understanding the court processes. The past four weeks have been an infinite learning experience.

Throughout my time at Gilshenan & Luton I have always felt supported and included, everyone was always checking in and never hesitated to ask if I would like to join them to watch whatever was happening in court that day. All in all, I was exposed to a variety of new experiences first hand, which in my opinion is the best way to learn. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and feel well equipped to pursue a career in criminal law.