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Criminal Trials at Circuit Sitings

1. This Practice Note revises District Court Criminal Practice Note 19, which commenced on 2 August 2021.

Commencement

2. This Practice Note commences on 18 February 2022.

Application

3. This Practice Note applies to all proceedings on indictment committed to the District Court for trial on or after the commencement date at Armidale, Bega, Bourke, Broken Hill, Coonamble, Goulburn, Grafton, Moree, Nowra, Port Macquarie, Queanbeyan and Taree.

Introduction

4. Following the implementation of the Early Appropriate Guilty Plea reforms in 2018, changes to pre-trial procedures have been identified to improve efficiency and procedural fairness.
5. The prosecutor and the legal representative for the accused person are expected to have attended a case conference that has been held in accordance with s 70 of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986* (NSW) ("CP Act") before the accused person is committed to the Court for trial. An objective of the case conference is "to facilitate the resolution of other issues relating to the proceedings against the accused person, including identifying key issues for the trial of the accused person and any agreed or disputed facts": CP Act s 70(3)(b).
6. As such, the prosecutor and the legal representative for the accused person who attend the Audio Visual Link ("AVL") call-over are expected to have full knowledge of the state of the proceedings and to identify the key issues for the trial.
7. The use of AVL is intended to facilitate the efficiency of call-overs and Readiness Hearings. At all times, AVL call-overs constitute formal Court hearings.

8. Accordingly, the purpose of this Practice Note is to:

- (a) ensure that matters are dealt with efficiently and in a manner consistent with the obligations of the prosecution and an accused person under Chapter 3, Part 3 of the CP Act;
- (b) establish case management procedures from the time an accused person's matter is first mentioned in the District Court;
- (c) refine the disclosure obligations of the prosecution and an accused person;
- (d) reduce avoidable delays; and
- (e) promote procedural fairness.

Definitions

9. In this Practice Note:

“accused person” includes an Australian legal practitioner representing an accused person;

“circuit sitting” means a scheduled sitting of the District Court at Armidale, Bega, Bourke, Broken Hill, Coonamble, Goulburn, Grafton, Moree, Nowra, Port Macquarie, Queanbeyan and Taree;

“Court” means the District Court of New South Wales;

“presiding Judge” means the Judge who will preside over the circuit sitting in question;

“prosecutor” has the same meaning as in the CP Act;

“Readiness Hearing” means a hearing to ascertain the readiness of the parties to proceed on the allocated trial date;

“service” of documents required under this Practice Note may be effected by service on the legal representative for an accused person or by service personally on an accused person who is not legally represented.

Listing for AVL Call-over

10. When committing an accused person to the Court for trial, the magistrate will list the matter for an AVL call-over at Sydney District Court at 9:00am on the Wednesday four weeks after the date of the committal.

AVL Call-Over Procedure

11. The following persons must be present during the AVL call-over:
 - (a) the prosecutor; and
 - (b) the legal representative for the accused person; or
 - (c) the accused person, if not legally represented.
12. For the avoidance of doubt, the accused person is not required or expected to be present at the AVL call-over provided he or she is legally represented.
13. Parties must be connected to the AVL call-over at 8:50am, to commence the list at 9:00am.
14. Parties must mute their microphone until their matter is called. Parties connecting through the telephone must not place the AVL call-over on hold. If a party must disconnect for any reason, they are to notify the Court.
15. Parties are to contact the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher responsible for circuit matters by email for the connection details. The contact details of the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher are available in the [Readiness Hearing Guidance](#) published on the District Court website.
16. The Director of Public Prosecutions is to file and serve on each accused person, no later than 10 days prior to the date fixed for the AVL call-over, the Crown case statement, an index to brief material and a copy of the indictment intended to be presented at the accused's trial.
17. A copy of the Crown case statement and indictment must also be provided to the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher by email prior to the date fixed for the AVL call-over. The contact details of the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher are available in the [Readiness Hearing Guidance](#) published on the District Court website.
18. The legal representative for the accused person is to file and serve on the prosecution, no later than five days prior to the date fixed for the AVL call-over, a Notice of Appearance. This document must also be provided to the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher by email prior to the date fixed for the AVL call-over.

Trial Management

19. The AVL call-over date will serve as the first trial management listing. Where a plea of not guilty is intended to be entered to any of the charges, the Court will fix a date for the trial in the appropriate circuit sitting and for an AVL Readiness

Hearing. The AVL Readiness Hearing is to be listed at 9:00am on the Thursday at least eight weeks before the date fixed for trial or earlier at the discretion of the Judge.

20. At the AVL call-over, the prosecutor and the legal representative for the accused person are to provide the Court with:

- (a) an outline of issues in dispute including any anticipated pre-trial issues or legal argument to the extent that is possible and any agreement as to facts;
- (b) an accurate estimate of the length of the trial as well as dates suitable for witnesses and counsel briefed to appear at trial. The estimate of the trial is to include allowance for pre-trial argument, counsels' addresses to the jury and for the trial Judge's summing up;
- (c) any requirement for remote witness facilities;
- (d) any requirement for interpreters, including the language and number; and

The legal representative for the accused person must advise whether a question may arise under Chapter 6, Part 5, Division 2 of the CP Act (sexual assault communications privilege) for determination by the Court and whether leave may be required for the issue of subpoena or for evidence to be adduced with respect to protected confidences.

21. If the accused person is not legally represented, a further purpose of the first trial management listing is to ensure that representation is provided for at the earliest opportunity.

Standard Directions

22. Unless the Court otherwise orders, the standard directions that are to apply at the AVL call-over are:

- (a) Where leave of the Court is required for the production of a document or the giving of evidence under s 298 of the CP Act, the legal representative for the accused person must make an application for leave under s 299C of the CP Act no later than six weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing.
- (b) The prosecution is to file and serve on the accused person, no later than six weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing, the notice of the prosecution case in accordance with s 142 of the CP Act. In addition to the requirements of s 142, the notice is to include a statement as to the

basis upon which the prosecution will contend that the accused person is criminally responsible in respect of the alleged offence(s).

- (c) In the case of State matters, the prosecution is to file and serve on the accused person, no later than eight weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing, an affidavit by the police officer or law enforcement officer in charge of the case which:
 - (i) confirms compliance with the duty of disclosure as set out in s 15A of the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986* (NSW); and
 - (ii) details any further evidence the police are yet to obtain.
- (d) In the case of Commonwealth matters, the prosecution is to file and serve on the accused person, no later than eight weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing, an affidavit by an appropriate officer of the relevant investigating agency which:
 - (i) confirms compliance with the duty of disclosure as set out in paragraph 3 of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions “Statement on Disclosure in Prosecutions conducted by the Commonwealth”; and
 - (ii) details any further evidence the police are yet to obtain.
- (e) The defence is to file and serve on the prosecution, no later than three weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing, the notice of the defence response in accordance with s 143 of the CP Act.
- (f) The prosecution is to file and serve on the accused person, no later than one week prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing, the notice of the prosecution response to the defence response in accordance with s 144 of the CP Act.
- (g) If the prosecution intends to adduce tendency and/or coincidence evidence pursuant to ss 97 or 98 of the *Evidence Act 1995* (NSW), notice in writing must be given to the defence no later than six weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing.
- (h) If the defence intends to adduce tendency and/or coincidence evidence pursuant to ss 97 or 98 of the *Evidence Act 1995* (NSW), notice in writing must be given to the prosecution no later than three weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing.
- (i) The defence is to provide notice of alibi within the period prescribed in s 150 of the CP Act.

- (j) The parties are to hold a pre-trial conference pursuant to s 140 of the CP Act no later than two weeks prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing to determine whether the parties can reach agreement regarding the evidence to be admitted at trial. The parties are also to consider the issues in paragraphs 33 and 34 of this Practice Note. This does not apply if the accused is not legally represented.
- (k) The prosecution must file the pre-trial conference form within the time frame stipulated in s 140(8) of the CP Act, but in any event no later than one week prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing.

Expert Witnesses

- 23. The obligation of the prosecution to comply with the Court's directions includes the service by the prosecution in accordance with s 142(1)(h) of the CP Act of a copy of the report of any expert witness that the prosecution proposes to call at trial.
- 24. The obligation of the accused person to comply with the Court's directions includes the service by the defence in accordance with s 143(1)(h) of the CP Act of a copy of the report of any expert witness that the defence proposes to call at trial.

AVL Readiness Hearing

- 25. Each party must separately file and serve a statement identifying the key issues in the trial no later than one week prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing. Each Key Issues Statement must be signed by a solicitor with carriage of the matter or the legal representative appearing at trial. The Key Issues Statement is to be in the form annexed to this Practice Note.
- 26. Each party must file and serve a completed Case Management Form no later than two days prior to the date fixed for the AVL Readiness Hearing. In order to avoid the time and expense involved in appearances, Readiness Hearings may be dealt with in chambers on the basis of satisfactorily completed Case Management Forms. Each Case Management Form must be signed by a solicitor with carriage of the matter or the legal representative appearing at trial. The Crown and Defence Case Management Forms are to be in the form annexed to this Practice Note. The contact details of the Chief Judge's Tipstaff/Researcher, for filing, are available in the [Readiness Hearing Guidance](#) published on the District Court website.

27. If for whatever reason the matter is not dealt with in chambers on the basis of the Case Management Forms, the following persons must be present during the AVL Readiness Hearing:
- (a) the prosecutor; and
 - (b) the legal representative for the accused person; or
 - (c) the accused person, if not legally represented.
28. For the avoidance of doubt, the accused person is not required nor expected to be present at the AVL Readiness Hearing provided he or she is legally represented.
29. Parties must be connected to the AVL Readiness Hearing at 8:50am, to commence the list at 9:00am.
30. Parties must mute their microphone until their matter is called. Parties connecting through the telephone must not place the AVL Readiness Hearing on hold. If a party must disconnect for any reason, they are to notify the Court.
31. Parties will be contacted prior to the AVL Readiness Hearing with details on how to connect.
32. The prosecutor and the legal representative for the accused person who attend the AVL Readiness Hearing are expected to have full knowledge of the state of the proceedings.
33. At the AVL Readiness Hearing, the prosecutor and legal representative for the accused person must inform the Court:
- (a) of the key issues in the trial;
 - (b) of any intention by the accused person to make an application for severance of counts on the indictment;
 - (c) of any intention by the accused person to make an application for a separate trial;
 - (d) of any other issues that will involve pre-trial argument;
 - (e) of any matters for the Court's determination under s 299B of the CP Act (protected confidence);
 - (f) of any facts that are agreed;
 - (g) of any issues that may prevent the trial commencing on the trial date (or delay the empanelment of the jury);

- (h) of any intention to apply to the Court for an order that the accused person be tried by a Judge alone in accordance with s 132 of the CP Act;
- (i) of the availability of any expert witnesses that the parties intend to call at trial; and
- (j) of the accurate estimate of the length of the trial, which must include an allowance for any pre-trial argument that has been identified by the parties, counsels' addresses to the jury and the trial Judge's summing up.

34. At the AVL Readiness Hearing:

- (a) further matters about which the prosecutor must inform the Court include:
 - (i) any intention to amend the indictment;
 - (ii) any evidence the prosecution intends to rely upon at trial that has not been served on the accused person;
 - (iii) any failure by the prosecution to comply with the directions of the Court;
 - (iv) any requirement for interpreters for prosecution witnesses, including the language and number; and
 - (v) any need for remote witness facilities.
- (b) further matters about which the legal representative for the accused person must inform the Court include:
 - (i) whether paragraph 22(a) of this Practice Note has been complied with;
 - (ii) any expert evidence the defence intends to rely upon at trial that has not been served on the prosecution;
 - (iii) any failure by the accused person to comply with the directions of the Court;
 - (iv) any requirement for interpreters for the accused person or defence witnesses, including the language and number;
 - (v) any concerns held regarding the fitness of the accused person to stand trial, so far as practicable; and
 - (vi) any requirement for edits to ERISP, JIRT interviews and/or surveillance or intercept material.

35. At the AVL Readiness Hearing, the Court may make further orders, determinations or findings, or give further directions or rulings as it thinks appropriate for the efficient management and conduct of the trial.

Call-overs for Trials in Circuit Sittings

36. Call-overs for trials in circuit sittings will be conducted by the presiding Judge in accordance with Practice Note 13.

Trial

37. By the date fixed for the trial, the matter must be ready to proceed. If there is an unavoidable problem or change to the conduct or the length of the trial, the parties are to notify, at the earliest possible stage, the Chief Judge or the presiding Judge.

38. Any application to vacate a trial date:

(a) is to be made by way of filing and serving a Notice of Motion with a supporting affidavit, setting out the grounds for the application; and

(b) the application is to be listed before the presiding Judge at the earliest possible date.

Non-compliance with the Court's Directions

39. If it appears to the Court that a party has not complied with this Practice Note or with any other direction made by the Court, the Court may contact the offending party directly or list the matter for mention, either on the Court's own initiative or at the request of either party.

40. Without limiting the Court's power otherwise to deal with a failure to comply with a direction, the Court may order the offending party to file an affidavit of non-compliance, or give evidence in Court, explaining the failure to comply.



The Honourable Justice D M Price AO
Chief Judge of the District Court
11 February 2022

Amendment History:

2 August 2021: This Practice Note revises former District Court Criminal Practice Note 19, which commenced on 6 April 2020.

18 February 2022: This Practice Note revises former District Court Criminal Practice Note 19, which commenced on 2 August 2021.

Key Issues Statement

Case Number:

Name of the accused person:

Legal representative for the Crown/accused:

What are the key issues in the trial?

Signature

Signature of legal representative:

Capacity:

Date of signature:

Crown Readiness Hearing Case Management Form

MATTER DETAILS

Case Name: Regina v
Case Number:
Crown legal representative:
Crown briefed to appear at trial:
Bail status of the accused:
Date of filing:

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

If consented to by the accused, will the Crown consent to a trial by judge alone? [Yes/No]

Has the indictment been finalised? [Yes/No] [If no, what are the issues with the indictment and when can it be finalised?]

Has all of the evidence including expert evidence been served on the defence? [Yes/No] [If no, provide details of what is outstanding and when you anticipate to have that material.]

Has the disclosure affidavit been filed and served? [Yes/No] [Include whether it has been ordered. If no, why has para 19(c) or 19(d) of Practice Note 18 or para 22(c) or 22(d) of Practice Note 19, as applicable, not been complied with?]

Has the s 142 notice been served? [Yes/No]

Has there been a s 140 conference? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate. If no, why has para 19(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 22(j) of Practice Note 19 not been complied with, and is there any reason a conference should not be ordered? If yes, has the pre-trial conference form been filed in accordance with para 19(k) of Practice Note 18 or para 22(k) of Practice Note 19?]

Has the s 144 notice been served? [Yes/No]

Has a Statement of Key Issues been filed? [Yes/No] [If no, why has para 22 of Practice Note 18 or para 25 of Practice Note 19 not been complied with?]

Is there scope for agreed facts? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]

Is tendency or coincidence evidence anticipated to be relied upon by either party? Has notice of tendency or coincidence evidence been given/received?	[Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]
Are there any issues for the Court's determination under s 299B of the <i>Criminal Procedure Act 1986</i> ?	[Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]
How many complainants/alleged victims are there?	
What are the pre-trial issues, if any?	[Please identify any pre-trial issues carefully.]
What are the key issues for the trial?	[Please identify the key issues carefully.]
Is there any issue with Crown witness or expert witness availability at the trial?	[Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]
List the number and preferred modes of attendance for the lawyers and Crown witnesses at the trial.	[Specify the mode of attendance and number.] (e.g. In person – 2 Lawyers, 2 witnesses)

NO CONSENT TO TRIAL BY JUDGE ALONE

What is the estimated length of the trial?	[In accordance with para 28(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 33(j) of Practice Note 19, include allowance for pre-trial argument, counsels' addresses and the trial Judge's summing up.]
How many relevant witnesses are there pursuant to s 354(1) of the <i>Criminal Procedure Act 1986</i> ?	
What is the estimated length of the complainant's/alleged victim's evidence including cross- and re-examination?	
Are any interpreters required?	[Yes/No] [Provide the language(s) and number of any interpreters required.]
Are remote witness facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]
Are AVL facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]

CONSENT TO TRIAL BY JUDGE ALONE

If the accused consents to a judge alone trial what is the estimated length of the trial?	[In accordance with para 28(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 33(j) of Practice Note 19, include allowance for pre-trial argument, counsels' addresses, and the trial Judge's summing up.]
Are any interpreters required?	[Yes/No] [Provide the language(s) and number of any interpreters required.]
Are remote witness facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]
Are AVL facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]

PROPOSED ORDERS

1

2

SIGNATURE

Signature of legal representative:

Capacity: [Solicitor/Barrister for the Crown]

Date of signature:

Defence Readiness Hearing Case Management Form

MATTER DETAILS

Case Name: Regina v

Case Number:

Defence legal representative:

Barrister briefed to appear at trial:

Bail status of the accused:

Date of filing:

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Will the accused consent to a judge alone trial? [Yes/No]

Has all of the Crown evidence including expert evidence been received? [Yes/No] [If no, what is outstanding?]

Has all of the defence evidence including expert evidence been served on the Crown? [Yes/No] [If no, provide details of what is outstanding and when you anticipate to have that material.]

Has the s 143 response been served? [Yes/No]

Has there been a s 140 conference? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate. If no, why has para 19(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 22(j) of Practice Note 19 not been complied with, and is there any reason a conference should not be ordered?]

Has a Statement of Key Issues been filed? [Yes/No] [If no, why has para 22 of Practice Note 18 or para 25 of Practice Note 19 not been complied with?]

Is there scope for agreed facts? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]

Is tendency or coincidence evidence anticipated to be relied upon by either party? Has notice of tendency or coincidence evidence been given/received? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]

Has a s 150 Notice of Alibi been served? Is there any intention to rely on alibi? [Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]

Are there any issues for the Court's determination under s 299B of the <i>Criminal Procedure Act 1986</i> ?	[Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]
Are there any issues with Legal Aid?	[Yes/No]
Is there any intention to make an application for severance or separate trials?	[Yes/No]
Are any edits required to ERISP, JIRT interviews and/or surveillance or intercept material?	[Yes/No]
What are the key issues for the trial?	[Please identify the key issues carefully.]
Are there any issues pertaining to fitness?	[Yes/No] [Provide details so far as practicable.]
What are the pre-trial issues, if any?	[Please identify any pre-trial issues carefully.]
Is there any issue with defence witness or expert witness availability at the trial?	[Yes/No] [Provide details as appropriate.]
List the number and preferred modes of attendance for the lawyers, accused and defence witnesses at the trial.	[Specify the mode of attendance and number.] (e.g. In person – 2 Lawyers, 2 witnesses)

NO CONSENT TO TRIAL BY JUDGE ALONE

What is the estimated length of the trial?	[In accordance with para 28(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 33(j) of Practice Note 19, include allowance for pre-trial argument, counsels' addresses and the trial Judge's summing up.]
How many relevant witnesses are there pursuant to s 354(1) of the <i>Criminal Procedure Act 1986</i> ?	
What is the estimated length of the complainant's/alleged victim's evidence including cross-examination?	
Are any interpreters required?	[Provide the language(s) and number of any interpreters required.]
Are remote witness facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]
Are AVL facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]

CONSENT TO TRIAL BY JUDGE ALONE

What is the estimated length of the trial by judge alone?	[In accordance with para 28(j) of Practice Note 18 or para 33(j) of Practice Note 19, include allowance for pre-trial argument, counsels' addresses and the trial Judge's summing up.]
Are any interpreters required?	[Provide the language(s) and number of any interpreters required.]
Are remote witness facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]
Are AVL facilities required?	[Yes/No] [Please provide details.]

PROPOSED ORDERS

1

2

SIGNATURE

Signature of legal representative:

Capacity: [Solicitor/Barrister for the Accused]

Date of signature: