



## **PRACTICE NOTE SC CL 2**

### **Supreme Court Common Law Division - Criminal Proceedings**

#### **Commencement**

1. This Practice Note was issued on 17 December 2015 and apart from paragraph 9, is effective immediately. Paragraph 9 is to take effect on 1 March 2016.

#### **Application**

2. This Practice Note applies to committals for trial or sentence and ex-officio indictments in the Criminal List of the Common Law Division.

#### **Definitions**

3. None applicable.

#### **Introduction**

4. The purpose of this Practice Note is:
  - (a) to ensure that criminal proceedings are dealt with in a timely and efficient way, consistent with the parties' obligations under Chapter 3, Part 3 of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986*; and
  - (b) to assist an accused person to take advantage of legislation which provides for a discount in sentence where an early plea of guilty is entered.

#### **Listing for arraignment**

5. Arraignments are held on the first Friday of each month in Sydney.
6. When committing an accused person for trial or sentence to the Supreme Court, the magistrate will direct the person to appear at the next arraignment, not less than four weeks after the date of the committal. If this practice would result in a January date, the matter will be listed on the first Friday in February.
7. Ex-officio criminal prosecutions will be listed by the Registry in the same way.

## Arraignment procedures

8. On the day fixed for the arraignment, the Director of Public Prosecutions shall, unless otherwise ordered, present an indictment to the Court and shall provide copies of the indictment for each accused person.
9. The Director of Public Prosecutions is also to provide to the Court and to each accused person:
  - (a) in the case of State matters, an affidavit by the law enforcement officer in charge of the case confirming the compliance by the relevant investigating agency as at arraignment with its duty of disclosure as set out in s 15A of the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986*; or
  - (b) in the case of Commonwealth matters, an affidavit by an appropriate officer of the relevant investigating agency confirming compliance as at the date of arraignment with its duty of disclosure as set out in paragraph 5 of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions "Statement on Prosecution Disclosure".
10. The court expects matters to be ready to proceed at the arraignment so that a trial date can be given. Legal representatives are expected to identify the issues for trial and estimate the likely hearing time required. The arraignment judge may give directions and rulings as to the conduct of the trial.
11. Unless the court makes a specific direction pursuant to sections 141(3) or 148 of the *Criminal Procedure Act*, the standard directions that are to apply at the arraignment are:
  - (a) The prosecution is to file and serve on the accused notice of the prosecution case in accordance with s 142 no later than eight weeks before the trial date. 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 is criminally responsible in respect to the alleged offence(s).
  - (b) The defence is to file and serve on the prosecution a defence response in accordance with s 143 no later than five weeks before the trial date.
  - (c) The prosecution is to file and serve on the accused a prosecution response to the defence response in accordance with s 144 no later than three weeks before the trial date.
  - (d) The defence is to provide notice of alibi within the period prescribed in s 150 of the *Criminal Procedure Act*; and
  - (e) The parties are to hold a pre-trial conference before the trial judge pursuant to s 140 of the *Criminal Procedure Act* two weeks prior to the trial date to determine whether the parties can reach agreement

regarding the evidence to be admitted at the trial. This does not apply if the accused is not legally represented.

12. In the event of non-compliance by a party 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 of its own motion or at the request of either party.

### **Entering a plea**

13. Upon presentment of the indictment, the accused person will be arraigned by the Court and shall enter his or her plea. The Court may, if the indictment is not presented on the day fixed for the arraignment of the accused person, fix a further date for the arraignment of the accused and the presentment of the indictment.

### **Trial**

14. By the date set for the trial, the matter must be ready to proceed. If there is an unavoidable problem or change to the conduct or length of the trial, legal practitioners are to notify the Criminal Registry or the Criminal List judge at the earliest possible stage to avoid inconvenience to jurors and witnesses.
15. An application to vacate a trial date:
  - (a) is to be made by way of Notice of Motion with a supporting affidavit, setting out the grounds for the application;
  - (b) shall be made to the Criminal List judge, unless the application is made within two weeks of the date fixed for trial; and
  - (c) that is made within two weeks of the date fixed for trial, may be made to the Criminal List judge or to the trial judge.

### **Direction under s128 of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986***

16. Prosecuting authorities are directed to present all indictments in the District Court, rather than in the Supreme Court, except for indictments relating to offences under any of the following sections:
  - ss 12, 19A, 21, 22A and 24 of the *Crimes Act 1900*;
  - ss 24AA, and 24AB of the *Crimes Act 1914* of the Commonwealth;
  - s 9 of the *War Crimes Act 1945* of the Commonwealth;
  - s 8 of the *Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976* of the Commonwealth;
  - any other offence for which the maximum penalty is life imprisonment and where either the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth) or the Director of

Public Prosecutions of NSW has formed the opinion that the imposition of a life sentence may be appropriate.

17. Subject to the usual practice as to joinder of counts, an indictment charging an offence under any of the above sections may also contain counts charging other offences.
18. Applications for exemption under s 128(2) of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986* should be made by letter addressed to the Chief Justice setting out a brief description of the nature of the case and identifying the basis upon which it is claimed that it is an appropriate case to be tried in the Supreme Court. Matters that involve particular difficulty, or that are test cases or in which there is particular public significance, will ordinarily be given an exemption. Exemption applications must be accompanied by:
  - (a) a copy of the charges that are likely to be the subject of the proposed committal order or which have been committed for trial or sentence in the District Court;
  - (b) either a draft of the indictment or indictments proposed to be presented at arraignment in the event of a committal order being made, or following a committal order, or a document containing a draft of the charges proposed to be included in such an indictment or indictments or an ex officio indictment;
  - (c) details of any anticipated pre-trial applications; and
  - (d) an estimate as to the length of the trial(s) or sentence.
19. Exemption applications must be served on the solicitor for the accused person, or if unrepresented, upon the accused person, within seven (7) days (unless otherwise ordered) after their submission to the Court.
20. The accused person or his/her solicitor must provide any response to the matters set out in an exemption application by letter addressed to the Chief Justice within 14 days (unless otherwise ordered) after a copy of the exemption application was served on him/her or his/her solicitors.



**T F Bathurst AC**

Chief Justice of New South Wales

17 December 2015

**Related information:**

*Crimes Act 1900*

*Criminal Procedure Act 1986*

*Crimes Act 1914 (Cth)*

*War Crimes Act 1945 (Cth)*

*Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976 (Cth)*

**Amendment History:**

17 December 2015: This Practice Note replaces former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued on 29 September 2014 and commenced on 29 September 2014.

29 September 2014: This Practice Note replaces former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued on 27 June 2014 and commenced on 1 July 2014.

27 June 2014: This Practice Note replaces former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued on 20 September 2013 and commenced on 1 October 2013.

20 September 2013: This Practice Note replaces former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued on 13 August 2010 and commenced on 16 August 2010.

13 August 2010: This Practice Note replaces former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued and commenced on 21 December 2009.

21 December 2009: This Practice Note replaced former Practice Note SC CL 2, which was issued and commenced on 17 August 2005.

17 August 2005: Practice Note SC CL 2 was issued and commenced on 17 August 2005. It replaced former Practice Note Nos. 57, 98 and 112.