

SUPREME COURT OF TASMANIA

CIRCULAR TO PRACTITIONERS

No 4 of 2017

23 February 2017

REDUCTION OF BACKLOG IN CRIMINAL CASES

The Government has arranged for a number of acting judges to be appointed, with a view to dealing with a backlog in criminal cases in the Supreme Court.

The table below shows the number of first instance criminal cases awaiting finalisation at the end of 2014, 2015 and 2016. It shows that the backlog problem has been getting worse.

	31.12.14	31.12.15	31.12.16
Hobart	194	177	228
Launceston	110	137	143
Burnie	66	61	86
Total	370	375	457

Extended and additional criminal sittings

The following steps will be taken during 2017 for the purpose of dealing with a greater number of criminal cases:

- Criminal sittings in Hobart and Launceston will generally be extended to five weeks, starting with the sittings that commences on 14 March 2017. At least one judge will sit in crime during the fifth week of each sittings in Hobart and Launceston, while other judges hear appeals. These arrangements are subject to their being sufficient cases to be dealt with.
- The members of jury panels summoned to attend at the start of the third week of each sittings in Hobart and Launceston will be told to expect to have to attend the Court over a period of three weeks, not two weeks. (This will not apply on 26 June 2017.)
- During the July vacation (10 – 21 July 2017), provided there are sufficient cases to be dealt with, two judges will sit in crime in Hobart, and at least one judge will sit in crime in Launceston. Extra jury panels will be summoned to attend in both cities on 10 July.
- When convenient, a second judge will sit in crime in Launceston on an ad hoc basis.
- In Burnie, the current arrangement is that each sittings is scheduled to last three weeks, but may be extended into a fourth week if there are cases to be disposed of. This arrangement will continue.

An amended Supreme Court Calendar 2017 is attached.

Case management

When appropriate, directions hearings will be convened in relation to criminal cases that have been pending for a long time, with a view to bringing those cases to a conclusion as soon as reasonably possible. Primary responsibility for such directions hearings will be undertaken by Estcourt J in relation to Hobart matters, and by Brett J in relation to Launceston and Burnie matters.

**The Hon Alan Blow OAM
Chief Justice**

AMENDED SUPREME COURT OF TASMANIA CALENDAR 2017

Period of Sittings	HOBART		LAUNCESTON		BURNIE	
Mon. 30 Jan. to Thurs. 23 Feb.	Mon. 30 Jan. Mon. 30 Jan. Fri. 3 Feb. Mon. 13 Feb.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business OPENING OF LAW YEAR Hobart Regatta Day Holiday	Mon. 30 Jan. Mon. 30 Jan. Wed. 22 Feb.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business Launceston Cup (Half day holiday)	Mon. 30 Jan. Mon. 30 Jan. 	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 27 Feb. to Fri. 10 Mar.	FIRST TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT				
	Mon. 13 Mar.	Eight Hours Day Holiday	Mon. 13 Mar.	Eight Hours Day Holiday	Mon. 13 Mar.	Eight Hours Day Holiday
Tues. 14 Mar. to Thurs. 13 Apr.	Tues. 14 Mar. Tues. 14 Mar.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Tues. 14 Mar. Tues. 14 Mar.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Tues. 14 Mar. Tues. 14 Mar.	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 10 Apr. to Fri. 28 Apr.	SECOND TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT Excluding Easter Recess: Fri. 14 Apr. to Mon. 24 Apr. inclusive				
	Fri. 14 Apr. Tues. 25 Apr.	Good Friday Holiday ANZAC Day Holiday	Fri. 14 Apr. Tues. 25 Apr.	Good Friday Holiday ANZAC Day Holiday	Fri. 14 Apr. Tues. 25 Apr.	Good Friday Holiday ANZAC Day Holiday
Mon. 1 May to Fri. 2 June	Mon. 1 May Mon. 1 May	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 1 May Mon. 1 May	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 1 May Mon. 1 May	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 29 May to Fri. 9 June	THIRD TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT				
	Mon. 12 June	Queen's Birthday Holiday	Mon. 12 June	Queen's Birthday Holiday	Mon. 12 June	Queen's Birthday Holiday
Tues. 13 June to Thurs. 6 July	Tues. 13 June Tues. 13 June	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Tues. 13 June Tues. 13 June	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Tues. 13 June Tues. 13 June	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 10 July to Fri. 21 July	Mon. 10 July	CRIMINAL SITTINGS	Mon. 10 July	CRIMINAL SITTINGS		
Mon. 24 July to Fri. 25 Aug.	Mon. 24 July Mon. 24 July	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 24 July Mon. 24 July	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 24 July Mon. 24 July	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 21 Aug. to Fri. 1 Sept.	FOURTH TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT Admissions to the Legal Profession				
	Fri. 25 Aug.					
Mon. 4 Sept. to Fri. 6 Oct.	Mon. 4 Sept. Mon. 4 Sept.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 4 Sept. Mon. 4 Sept.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 4 Sept. Mon. 4 Sept.	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business
Mon. 2 Oct. to Fri. 13 Oct.	FIFTH TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT				
			Thurs. 12 Oct.	Launceston Show Day Holiday	Fri. 6 Oct.	Burnie Show Day Holiday
Mon. 16 Oct. to Fri. 17 Nov.	Mon. 16 Oct. Mon. 16 Oct. Thurs. 26 Oct.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business Hobart Show Day Holiday	Mon. 16 Oct. Mon. 16 Oct. Mon. 6 Nov.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business Recreation Day Holiday	Mon. 16 Oct. Mon. 16 Oct. Mon. 6 Nov.	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business Recreation Day Holiday
Mon. 13 Nov. to Fri. 17 Nov.	SIXTH TERM	COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL AND FULL COURT				
Mon. 20 Nov. to Thurs. 14 Dec.	Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 4 Dec. Thurs. 7 Dec.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business Miscellaneous: Civil Business 10am Additional Committal/ Remand Day	Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 20 Nov. Thurs. 7 Dec.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business 10am Additional Committal/ Remand Day	Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 20 Nov. Mon. 20 Nov. Thurs. 30 Nov.	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business 10am Additional Committal/ Remand Day
NOTES:						
1. Dates for Committals for Trial and Sentence will be notified from time to time.					4. Until further notice, each Burnie sittings will be of three weeks' duration unless there is sufficient business to warrant extending the sittings into a fourth week.	
2. 16 January 2017 is available in Hobart for urgent matters.						
3. All sittings commence at 10 am unless indicated.						
2018						
	Fri. 2 Feb. Mon. 5 Feb. Mon. 5 Feb.	OPENING OF LAW YEAR CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 5 Feb. Mon. 5 Feb.	CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business	Mon. 5 Feb. Mon. 5 Feb.	2.15 pm CRIMINAL AND CIVIL SITTINGS 2.15 pm Miscellaneous: Civil Business

J A CONNOLLY
REGISTRAR