



4 December 2015

MEDIA STATEMENT – POLICE ACCOUTREMENTS IN COURT BUILDINGS

Chief Justice Wayne Martin today announced revised arrangements governing the accoutrements which police officers may carry while attending court buildings in Western Australia.

Among a number of changes to be introduced, additional facilities will now be provided in CBD courts so police can securely deposit accoutrements, such as guns and tasers, which are not permitted within the secure court precinct. Police will also be permitted to bring a limited range of accoutrements into courtrooms.

Those arrangements have been agreed by the Heads of all WA Courts, following extensive consultation with officers of the Department of the Attorney General Court Risk Assessment section, and WA Police. Information provided by the WA Police Union was also considered, together with information obtained from a review of arrangements made in comparable jurisdictions.

Chief Justice Martin said that the review's focus was on identifying the arrangements which would optimise the safety and security of all court users, including WA Police, in the current security environment.

In summary, those arrangements are:

- Police responding to an emergency incident in a court building will be permitted to attend wearing the full range of usual accoutrements.
- Police participating in a planned operation relating to a particular identified security risk will be permitted to wear all accoutrements authorised by the presiding judicial officer.
- Police attending court buildings briefly in order to file documents or undertake other clerical activities will be permitted to wear the full range of accoutrements usually worn, except in the Supreme Court where the filing office is within the secured precinct.
- Police entering court buildings to attend court hearings will be permitted to carry handcuffs, an extendable baton and a police radio. However, other accoutrements involving the greater use of force such as OC spray, tasers or guns, will not be permitted. In those courts where metal screening devices are in permanent use (the Central Law Courts, the District Court, the Children's Court and the Supreme Court),

facilities will be provided to enable police to safely and securely deposit accoutrements not permitted within the secure precinct.

In those court buildings without permanent metal screening devices, which are generally suburban and regional courts, police will be required to remove all accoutrements other than handcuffs, batons and radios before entering the court building, if they are participating in a court hearing. As those court buildings are almost all located in very close proximity to a police station, accoutrements which cannot be taken into the court can easily be deposited at the police station.

“The WA Courts believe that these arrangements strike an appropriate balance between the need to recognise and respond appropriately to the threats and risks which police officers currently face, and the need to optimise the safety and security of all court users by excluding dangerous weapons from court buildings in all but exceptional circumstances,” Chief Justice Martin said.

Media contact: Val Buchanan, Manager, Media & Public Liaison for the Courts
Ph: (08) 9421 5303; Mob: 0439 953 898