



SUPREME COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PUBLIC NOTICE - COVID-19

SUPREME COURT AND DISTRICT COURT CRIMINAL TRIALS

The Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Hon Justice Peter Quinlan and the Chief Judge of the District Court, his Honour Judge Kevin Sleight, have today announced that the commencement of new jury trials will be temporarily suspended as a precautionary response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The action has been taken to limit the close social contact between persons over extended periods of time that is a necessary feature of jury trials. It was taken following consultation, including with the Department of Justice, the Sheriff's Office, the Department of Health, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Law Society and the Criminal Lawyers Association.

In taking this step the Chief Justice and the Chief Judge are acutely conscious of the impact this action will have on the administration of justice in the State. All available steps will be taken to reduce that impact, and all options will be considered to enable jury trials to resume as soon as practical, in a manner consistent with the health and safety of the public.

A decision will be made prior to 1 May 2020 as to whether it is necessary for the suspension to continue after that date.

All trials presently listed to commence in March, April and May 2020 will be listed for a status conferences before a judge as soon as possible, in order to consider any applications for trial by judge alone or to otherwise make provision for the programming of those matters, including any legal issues that can be addressed prior to trial.


Judge alone trials, and other hearings not involving juries (including sentencing hearings), will not be affected.

Any matter that is, or becomes, the subject of an order for trial by judge alone will, as far as is possible in each respective court, be brought forward for earlier hearing and determination.

Dated 16 March 2020.



The Hon Justice Peter Quinlan
Chief Justice of Western Australia



Chief Judge Kevin Sleight
Chief Judge of the District Court