



## Local Court of New South Wales

### Practice Note - Domestic and Personal Violence Proceedings

Issued: 2 April 2026

Commences: 4 May 2026

## Domestic and Personal Violence Proceedings

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## 1. Commencement and Application of Practice Note

- 1.1 This Practice Note commences on 4 May 2026.
- 1.2 This Practice Note applies to:
- a) Application proceedings pursuant to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (the Act) in the Local Court and is intended to reflect the legislative objective set out in ss 9 and 10 of the Act; and
  - b) Summary proceedings in the Local Court for domestic violence offences as defined in s 11 of the Act.
- 1.3 This Practice Note revokes (subject to the transition provision in paragraph 1.4):
- a) Local Court Practice Note 2 of 2012, *Domestic and Personal Violence Proceedings*, issued 12 April 2012;
  - b) Local Court Practice Note *Specialist Family Violence List Pilot*, issued 25 September 2023; and
  - c) Paragraphs 10.1-10.4 of Local Court Practice Note *Crim 1*, issued 24 April 2012.
- 1.4 This Practice Note applies only to domestic violence or application proceedings listed for first mention on or after the commencement date. Any domestic violence or application proceedings commenced prior to the commencement date will be case managed in accordance with the relevant Practice Notes referred to in paragraph 1.3.
- 1.5 This Practice Note applies to all Local Courts in New South Wales.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 In this Practice Note:

**The Act** refers to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*.

**Application proceedings** means Court proceedings for an application under the Act.

**CPA** means the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986*.

**AVO** means an apprehended violence order within the meaning of the Act.

**ADVO** means an apprehended domestic violence order within the meaning of the Act.

**APVO** means an apprehended personal violence order within the meaning of the Act.

**Business day** means a day that is not on a weekend or gazetted as a public holiday in the State of New South Wales.

**Complainant** means the person/s in need of protection in ADVO or APVO proceedings and/or the complainant/s in domestic violence criminal proceedings.

**Domestic violence offence** has the same meaning as defined in s 11 of the Act.

**Domestic violence proceedings** means Court proceedings for a domestic violence offence.

**DVEC (domestic violence evidence-in-chief)** means a recorded statement as defined in Part 4B of the CPA.

**In camera** means closed to the general public.

**Related criminal charge(s)** means a charge for a domestic violence offence arising from the same facts or circumstances that give rise to an AVO application.

**Standalone AVO proceedings** means an application for an apprehended violence order that does not involve any criminal charge(s).

**Written statement** means a written statement prepared in accordance with the form and requirements, and with the evidentiary effect, set out in s 283B of the CPA, and the related regulations in the Criminal Procedure Regulations 2017.

### **3. Purpose**

3.1 This Practice Note is issued for the purpose of outlining procedures to be adopted in summary proceedings for domestic violence offences and in application proceedings under the Act.

3.2 The aim of this Practice Note is to:

- a) Promote consistency in the determination of application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings and procedural fairness to all parties;
- b) Improve the efficiency of the Court process in application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings;
- c) Minimise delays in the finalisation of application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings;
- d) Improve the Court experience for participants in application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings;
- e) Improve communication between the Court, law enforcement, the legal profession and support services in application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings;
- f) Ensure that application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings are conducted in a trauma-informed and culturally respectful manner; and
- g) Avoid inconsistencies between ADVOs and other Court orders such as bail conditions, Children's Court orders and any existing family law orders, where appropriate.

### **4. Trauma-Informed Practice**

4.1 The Local Court recognises that:

- a) Many Court participants have experienced violence, abuse or other traumatic events; and may display trauma symptoms to varying degrees, which may be present and exacerbated as a result of Court proceedings;
- b) Acknowledging and understanding the impact of trauma on Court participants may lead to more successful interactions and outcomes; and
- c) Applying trauma-informed practice in the Court may positively impact participation and decrease the level of trauma that Court participants experience.

4.2 Trauma informed judicial practice requires an awareness of the nature of trauma, its effects on behaviour and wellbeing and how judicial processes can be conducted sensitive to the needs of those affected by trauma.

4.3 In application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings, the presiding Judge should:

- a) Adopt clear, simple language instead of unnecessary legal jargon;
- b) Provide clear explanations about what will happen to participants in the Courtroom;
- c) Give complainants as much agency and choice as possible;
- d) Monitor whether the complainant and/or the defendant understands the Court process;
- e) Adapt their language and tone when communicating with vulnerable witnesses;

- f) Accommodate regular breaks for vulnerable witnesses;
- g) Avoid informal/familiar exchanges with legal representatives and the prosecution;
- h) Explain actions that may otherwise give the impression of disinterest, for example, reading documents or taking notes; and
- i) Where possible, avoid use of language that appears to minimise or trivialise the subject matter of the domestic violence proceedings.

## **5. Case Management – Continuity in Courtroom**

- 5.1 Where possible, there will be continuity with the Judges presiding over the AVO list at a particular Court location.
- 5.2 The Court recognises the importance of continuity in the Courtroom and, where possible, consistent police prosecutors and duty lawyers should be made available to appear in the AVO list.
- 5.3 To ensure efficiency, a police officer with sufficient authority to negotiate AVO conditions should be made available to attend Court at each appearance.
- 5.4 Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs) and / or other domestic violence support services should endeavour to maintain consistent communications with the complainant(s) throughout the Court process.

## **6. Sittings and Court User Forums**

- 6.1 Each Local Court is to list AVO list matters on a dedicated day of the Court sitting week so as to ensure appropriate support services and Domestic Violence Liaison Officers are available at Court wherever possible.
- 6.2 To ensure the purpose of this Practice Note is being implemented, each Local Court location/circuit must hold regular Court user forums in relation to application proceedings and domestic violence proceedings, no less than once a year.

## **7. Listing of Applications**

- 7.1 Police are to list an AVO application and any related criminal charge(s) on the same first mention date at the same Court. Thereafter they should continue to be listed concurrently.
- 7.2 If the AVO application is initially listed on a different date to the related criminal charge(s), the AVO application should be adjourned to the same date as the related criminal charge(s) so that the proceedings can be heard together.
- 7.3 An AVO application is to be listed on the same date as any cross AVO application(s) so that the applications can be heard together.

## **8. Procedures for AVO Applications with Related Criminal Charge(s)**

### **First Mention**

- 8.1 The defendant must attend Court in person on the first mention date for the AVO application unless legally represented; or otherwise not required in accordance with paragraph 13.2(c).
- 8.2 The complainant may attend Court in person on the first mention date but is not required to do so. Where the complainant does not attend on the first mention date, the prosecutor is to ensure they have up to date instructions.
- 8.3 If the defendant consents to a final AVO at the first mention, the Court may make a final order irrespective of what plea is entered in the related criminal charge(s). Before doing so, the

Court is to enquire of any self-represented defendant whether they have had the opportunity to access legal advice.

- 8.4 If the defendant enters a plea of not guilty to any related criminal charge(s) at the first mention, the Court is to:
- a) Determine the time estimate for the defended hearing of the related criminal charge(s). In order to assist the Court, the parties are to advise the Court of the following:
    - i. estimated number of prosecution and defence witnesses;
    - ii. whether there is a DVEC available and if so the length of that recorded statement;
    - iii. whether there is any footage to be played to the Court and if so the length of that footage;
    - iv. whether a remote witness room may be required for the complainant;
    - v. whether a Court appointed questioner may be required;
    - vi. whether there are any vulnerable witnesses such as children and if so, what age;
    - vii. whether any interpreters are required and if so, what language.
  - b) List the related criminal charge(s) for defended hearing so that a date is allocated without undue delay. In the absence of a clear time estimate from the parties, list for defended hearing for 2 hours; and
  - c) List the related criminal charge(s) and AVO application for mention in the AVO List 6 weeks prior to the allocated defended hearing date (**'Readiness Mention'**).
- 8.5 If the defendant enters a plea of guilty to any related criminal charge(s) at the first mention, the Court is to either:
- a) Proceed to sentence if the parties and the Court are in a position to proceed; or
  - b) Determine if a sentencing assessment report is required and if so order that report;
  - c) List the matter for sentence so that a date is obtained without undue delay; and
  - d) Either finalise the AVO application under s 39 of the Act or adjourn the AVO application for a final order to be made on the sentence date.
- 8.6 An adjournment may be granted for no longer than 14 days at the first mention date for any domestic violence proceedings without a plea being entered, but only for the following purposes:
- a) for a defendant to consider their position and/or obtain legal advice;
  - b) for a legal representative to obtain instructions; or
  - c) for the prosecution to make a referral to the Director of Public Prosecutions for possible election.
- 8.7 The Court will not adjourn any related criminal charge(s) for a domestic violence offence or an associated AVO application for the sole purpose of representations being made to the prosecution.

- 8.8 Unless a plea of guilty is entered, a plea of guilty is indicated, or an adjournment of no longer than 14 days is granted in accordance with paragraph 8.6, the Judge is to:
- a) enter a plea of not guilty on behalf of the defendant and clearly mark the bench papers with the notation “Judge’s plea of not guilty”;
  - b) allocate the related criminal charge(s) a defended hearing date; and
  - c) list the related criminal charge(s) and AVO application for Readiness Mention 6 weeks prior to the allocated defended hearing date.
- 8.9 Where a “Judge’s plea of not guilty” is entered on behalf of a defendant, and a subsequent application for diversion under the *Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020* is made and refused, a plea of guilty entered at the time of refusal will be treated by the Court as an early plea of guilty for the purposes of s 22 of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999*.
- 8.10 Where a person is charged with a domestic violence offence, the prosecution shall serve on the defendant or their legal representative at the first available opportunity, but no later than the first mention, a copy of the mini brief of evidence upon which the prosecution relies. The mini brief is to include:
- a) the alleged facts;
  - b) either a copy of the DVEC or an audio copy of the DVEC pursuant to s 289L and/ or s 289M of the CPA;
  - c) a copy of the complainant’s written statement (if any); and
  - d) any photographs on which the prosecution will rely.
- 8.11 The balance of the brief is to be served not less than 14 days before the allocated defended hearing date, in accordance with s 183 of the CPA.

### **Readiness Mention**

- 8.12 The defendant is encouraged to attend Court in person at the Readiness Mention even if legally represented. Where the defendant is legally represented but does not attend the Readiness Mention, the defendant must be contactable and the legal representative is to ensure they have up to date instructions. If the legal representative does not have up to date instructions, the Judge may stand the matter down and require the defendant to attend in person.
- 8.13 The complainant may attend Court in person for the Readiness Mention but is not required to do so. Where the complainant does not attend the Readiness Mention, the prosecutor is to ensure they have up to date instructions.
- 8.14 If the defendant maintains a plea of not guilty to any related criminal charge(s) at the Readiness Mention, the parties are to provide the Court with a completed Notice of Readiness (in the form set out in Annexure A).
- 8.15 The Court is to:
- a) confirm the time estimate for the defended hearing;
  - b) adjourn the related criminal charge(s) for hearing to the defended hearing date previously allocated; and
  - c) adjourn the AVO application for mention to the same date as the defended hearing.

- 8.16 If the defendant enters a plea of guilty to all related criminal charge(s) at the Readiness Mention, the presiding Judge should vacate the defended hearing date and proceed in accordance with paragraph 8.5.
- 8.17 If the defendant is not legally represented and does not attend Court in person at the Readiness Mention, the Court may finalise the proceedings *ex parte* and vacate the defended hearing date.

### **Defended Hearing**

- 8.18 The defended hearing is to proceed on the allocated defended hearing date without delay. Wherever possible, discussions between the parties or with witnesses should take place prior to the commencement of Court.
- 8.19 Wherever possible, at a defended hearing the prosecution is to provide the Court with a transcript of any DVEC, police body worn video footage and recorded interview (ERISP) which it seeks to rely upon. The transcript may be generated by artificial intelligence provided this is expressly stated on the transcript itself. The transcript will be an *aide memoire* (not an exhibit).
- 8.20 If a defendant requires the assistance of a Justice Advocacy Service (“JAS”) support worker at a defended hearing during the complainant’s evidence given *in camera* pursuant to s 289U of the CPA, the Court may permit a JAS support worker to stay in the Courtroom while the complainant gives evidence, provided the parties consent. If a JAS support worker is to remain in the Courtroom during the complainant’s evidence, they must first provide the Court with identification/documentation to satisfy the Court that they are from JAS.
- 8.21 At the conclusion of the defended hearing, if there is a finding of guilt, the AVO may be made final in accordance with s 39 of the Act.
- 8.22 At the conclusion of the defended hearing, if there is not a finding of guilt, the Court is to ascertain if the defendant consents to a final AVO, and:
- a) If the defendant consents to a final AVO, the final AVO may be made in accordance with the Act;
  - b) If the defendant does not consent to a final AVO, the parties are to engage in short discussions (subject to the conditions of any enforceable AVO) as to whether the AVO application can be resolved amongst the parties;
  - c) If the AVO application cannot be resolved by the parties, the parties are to inform the Court whether they intend for the AVO application to proceed either:
    - i. By relying on the evidence adduced in the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s), or
    - ii. By relying on the evidence adduced in the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s) together with additional evidence, or
    - iii. Where there is no consent to the AVO application being determined either wholly or in part based on the evidence adduced in the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s), by relying on new evidence.
- 8.23 Where the parties elect to proceed in accordance with paragraph 8.22(c)(i), the Court will immediately proceed to determine the AVO application on the basis of the evidence adduced in the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s), together with any further submissions on the application.

- 8.24 Where the parties elect to proceed in accordance with paragraph 8.22(c)(ii), the Court will proceed to determine the AVO application on the basis of the evidence adduced in the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s), together with any additional evidence. If time permits, the additional evidence may be adduced on the application immediately following the conclusion of the defended hearing for the related criminal charge(s).
- 8.25 Where the parties elect to proceed in accordance with paragraph 8.22(c)(iii), the Court is to:
- a) Make a case management timetable directing the exchange of evidence (in the form set out in Annexure B); and
  - b) List the AVO application for Compliance Mention in the AVO list, at which time the application will progress as a Standalone ADVO application in accordance with paragraphs 10.1–10.19.

## **9. Where Related Criminal Charge(s) is Committed to the District Court**

- 9.1 Where any related criminal charge(s) is committed for sentence to the District Court, the Court is to initially adjourn any associated AVO application for 4 months for mention only to an appropriate AVO list day.
- 9.2 Where any related criminal charge(s) is committed for trial to the District Court, the Court is to initially adjourn any associated AVO application for 8 months for mention only to an appropriate AVO list day.
- 9.3 If the substantive proceedings in the District Court are not finalised by that mention date, the Court may adjourn the AVO application to an AVO list day after those criminal proceedings are expected to be finalised.
- 9.4 Where any related criminal charge(s) results in a not guilty verdict in the District Court or is otherwise withdrawn, the prosecution is to inform the Court if it wishes to proceed with the associated AVO application. If the prosecution presses the associated AVO application and it is not consented to by the defendant, the Court will case manage the AVO application in accordance with paragraphs 8.22-8.25, including consideration of transcript evidence from the District Court proceedings.

## **10. Procedures for Standalone AVO Applications (Where no Related Criminal Charge(s))**

- 10.1 In this Part, ‘**contested hearing**’ means a contested hearing at which an application for an AVO is heard and determined, but does not include:
- a) an interim hearing; or
  - b) the hearing of an AVO application under the Act where concurrent criminal proceedings are in progress against the defendant for a related criminal charge(s).

### **First Mention**

- 10.2 The defendant must attend Court in person on the first mention date for a Standalone AVO unless legally represented; otherwise the Court may proceed under s 57A of the Act.
- 10.3 The complainant may attend Court in person on the first mention date for a Standalone AVO but is not required to do so. Where the complainant does not attend on the first mention date, the prosecutor is to ensure they have up to date instructions.
- 10.4 If the defendant consents to a final AVO at the first mention, the Court may make a final order. Before doing so, the Court is to enquire of any self-represented defendant whether they have had the opportunity to seek legal advice.

- 10.5 If the defendant does not consent to the AVO at the first mention, the Court is to:
- a) Make a case management timetable directing each party to serve on each other party a written statement of the oral evidence that the party intends to adduce in chief on any question of fact to be decided at a contested hearing (in the form set out at Annexure B); and
  - b) List the matter for Compliance Mention 5 weeks from the date the case management timetable is made.
- 10.6 An adjournment may be granted at the first mention without the defendant informing the Court whether they consent to the AVO application for no longer than 14 days, but only for the following purposes:
- a) for a defendant to consider their position and/or obtain legal advice; or
  - b) for a legal representative to obtain instructions.
- 10.7 Unless the AVO is consented to or an adjournment of no longer than 14 days is granted in accordance with paragraph 10.6, a case management timetable will be made by the Court (in the form set out in Annexure B).
- 10.8 The Court will not adjourn an AVO application for the sole purpose of representations being made to the prosecution.
- 10.9 Written statements of or on behalf of the person for whose protection an order is sought must, to the fullest extent practicable, address all matters required to be considered by the Court in deciding whether or not to make:
- a) a final ADVO, pursuant to ss 16 and 17 of the Act, or
  - b) a final APVO, pursuant to s 20 of the Act.

### **Compliance Mention**

- 10.10 The defendant is encouraged to attend Court in person at the Compliance Mention even if legally represented. Where the defendant does not attend the Compliance Mention, the legal representative is to ensure they have up to date instructions.
- 10.11 The complainant may attend Court in person for the Compliance Mention but is not required to do so. Where the complainant does not attend, the prosecutor is to ensure they have up to date instructions.
- 10.12 If the defendant no longer contests the AVO application at the Compliance Mention, the Court may make a final order.
- 10.13 If the AVO application remains contested at the Compliance Mention, the Court is to determine if all parties have complied with the case management timetable.
- 10.14 If the case management timetable has not been complied with by either or both parties, any of the following may occur:
- a) the application may be dismissed;
  - b) a final order may be made; or
  - c) an extension to the case management timetable may be granted if the Court is of the view that it is in the interests of justice, in which case the AVO application may be listed again for a further Compliance Mention.

- 10.15 If the case management timetable has been complied with by both parties and the AVO application remains contested, the Court is to list the AVO application for a contested hearing. In order to assist the Court with the allocation of the contested hearing date, the parties are to provide the Court with a completed Listing Advice (in the form set out in Annexure C).
- 10.16 In the absence of a clear time estimate from the parties, the Court is to list the AVO application for contested hearing with a 2-hour estimate.

### **Contested Hearing**

- 10.17 Unless the Court orders otherwise, a witness' evidence-in-chief at a Contested Hearing must be given by written statement signed by the witness.
- 10.18 If the party serving the written statement calls as a witness at the Contested Hearing any person whose written statement has been served in accordance with the case management timetable:
- a) That person's written statement is to stand as the whole of their evidence-in-chief, so long as the person testifies to the truth of the written statement, and
  - b) Except by leave of the Court, the party may not adduce from that person any further evidence-in-chief.
- 10.19 Nothing in this Part operates to make admissible any evidence that is otherwise inadmissible or privileged.

## **11. Applications to Vary or Revoke an Interim AVO**

### **First Mention**

- 11.1 Any person (including a prosecutor) who applies to vary an interim AVO must inform the Court if there are bail conditions attached to any related criminal charge(s). If the applicant is not legally represented, the prosecutor must inform the Court in relation to bail conditions. If there are any bail conditions that are inconsistent with the application to vary an interim AVO, an application to vary bail must be filed, and determined by the Court, prior to any application to vary or revoke an AVO being considered by the Court. An application to vary or revoke an interim AVO will not be determined by the Court prior to the bail variation application for any related criminal charge(s). It is the defendant's responsibility to file a bail variation application.
- 11.2 An application to vary or revoke an interim AVO will not be considered by the Court in the absence of the substantive AVO application and any related criminal charge(s) being listed concurrently with the application to vary or revoke.
- 11.3 When an application to vary an ADVO is before the Court, the parties must bring to the attention of the Judge any relevant *Family Law Act 1975* orders that are in existence.
- 11.4 Where an applicant seeks to vary or revoke an interim AVO, the parties are to first engage in discussions (subject to the conditions of any enforceable AVO) as to whether an agreement can be reached between the parties.
- 11.5 If agreement cannot be reached between the parties:
- a) The Court may, with the consent of the parties, adjourn the variation or revocation application to the same date as the substantive AVO application and/or any related criminal charge(s), to be heard concurrently; or
  - b) If the parties do not consent to the variation or revocation application being heard concurrently with the substantive AVO application or any related criminal charge(s),

absent exceptional circumstances, the Court is to determine any variation or revocation application based only on the written grounds of the application and any submissions made at the time.

- 11.6 In the event that exceptional circumstances are established, the Court is to:
- a) Enquire of any self-represented parties whether they have had an opportunity to seek legal advice prior to making any case management timetable for the application to vary or revoke;
  - b) Set a case management timetable directing the exchange of evidence relating solely to the application to vary or revoke (in the form set out in Annexure B); and
  - c) List the application for Compliance Mention.
- 11.7 At the Compliance Mention the variation or revocation application will proceed in accordance with paragraph 10.10-10.16.
- 11.8 The presiding Judge may consider the question of leave under ss 73(3) and 72B of the Act at any stage of the Court proceedings, including mention dates.
- 11.9 Before finalising any application to vary or revoke a police application for an ADVO, the Court may allow the complainant the opportunity to communicate their views in relation to the application, including addressing the Court.
- 11.10 Before finalising any application to vary or revoke an AVO, the Court shall enquire of any self-represented parties whether they have had an opportunity to seek legal advice.

### **Variation or Revocation Hearing**

- 11.11 Unless the Court orders otherwise, a witness' evidence-in-chief at a contested hearing for a variation or revocation application must be given by written statement signed by the witness.
- 11.12 If the party serving the written statement calls as a witness at the variation or revocation hearing any person whose written statement has been served in accordance with the case management timetable:
- a) That person's written statement is to stand as the whole of his or her evidence-in-chief, so long as the person testifies to the truth of the written statement, and
  - b) Except by leave of the Court, the party may not adduce from that person any further evidence-in-chief.
- 11.13 The Court may order that any or all of a witness' evidence be given orally.
- 11.14 Nothing in this Part operates to make admissible any evidence that is otherwise inadmissible or privileged.

## **12. Private AVO Applications**

- 12.1 In this Part, 'private AVO' means an AVO application where the applicant is a person other than a police officer on behalf of the NSW Commissioner of Police.

### **Case Management**

- 12.2 If the applicant is not present at any Court date for the private AVO application, and the Court is satisfied the applicant is aware of the Court date, the private AVO application may be dismissed.
- 12.3 A private AVO application will be case managed in the same way as a Standalone AVO application in accordance with paragraphs 10.1-10.6, subject to the following exceptions:

- a) If there is any related criminal charge(s) or police application for an AVO pending before the Court arising from the same or similar grounds, the private AVO will be adjourned until after the conclusion of the related criminal charge(s) and any related police AVO application. The private AVO application will be given a case management timetable only once any related criminal charge(s) and/or police application for an AVO have been finalised; and
- b) A private AVO application is to be listed on the same date as any cross AVO application(s) so that the applications can be heard together.

### **Procedures Where Interim Court Order Sought by Applicant**

- 12.4 Where an applicant for a private AVO seeks an Interim Court Order, the parties are to first engage in discussions as to whether an agreement can be reached between the parties on an interim basis.
- 12.5 If agreement cannot be reached between the parties, absent exceptional circumstances, the Court is to determine any application for an Interim Court Order based only on the written grounds of the application and any submissions made at the time.
- 12.6 In the event that exceptional circumstances are established, the Court is to:
  - a) Enquire of any self-represented parties whether they have had an opportunity to seek legal advice prior to making any case management orders for an interim hearing;
  - b) Make a case management timetable directing the exchange of evidence relating solely to the question of whether interim orders are necessary or appropriate; and
  - c) List the matter for an Interim Hearing (wherever possible, prior to the hearing of the substantive application).

### **Interim Hearing**

- 12.7 Subject to s 22 of the Act, an Interim Court Order may be made by the Court where the person for whose protection an order is sought is present at the interim hearing and gives evidence orally or by written statement or by a combination of both.
- 12.8 Subject to s 22 of the Act, an Interim Court Order may not be made unless the person for whose protection an order is sought is present at an interim hearing, unless the Court is satisfied that the person is unable for good reason to be present and the matter requires urgent consideration by the Court.
- 12.9 At an Interim Hearing at which the defendant and the person for whose protection an order is sought are present and the application for an Interim Court Order remains contested, unless the Court orders otherwise, the application for an Interim Court Order is to be heard and determined on the basis of any one or more of the following:
  - a) A written statement from any witness intended to be called at the interim hearing. A person's written statement is to stand as the whole of their evidence-in-chief, so long as the person testifies to the truth of the written statement, and except by leave of the Court, the party may not adduce from that person any further evidence-in-chief;
  - b) Evidence given orally (including in cross-examination) at the interim hearing;
  - c) Any submissions made by the parties or their legal representatives.
- 12.10 Unless the Court orders otherwise, the evidence-in-chief and cross-examination of a witness at an Interim Hearing is:
  - a) Limited to establishing whether or not it is necessary or appropriate for the Court to make an Interim Court Order, and

- b) Not to be directed to establishing whether the making of a Final Order is warranted.

### **13. Orders Sought in the Absence of a Defendant**

- 13.1 This Part applies in respect of AVO application proceedings conducted in the absence of the defendant.
- 13.2 Where a defendant named in an AVO application (including a private AVO) has been served with the application but is not present on any date that the matter is listed before the Court, the matter may proceed in accordance with s 57A of the Act unless:
- a) They are legally represented; or
  - b) They have otherwise communicated with the Court, and the Court is prepared to excuse them on the basis of that communication; or
  - c) The AVO application has been inadvertently listed by police for first mention on a separate date to any related criminal charge(s) and the AVO application is being adjourned for mention to the same date as the related criminal charge(s) in accordance with paragraph 7.2.
- 13.3 When an AVO application proceeds under s 57A of the Act in the absence of the defendant, the Court must be satisfied of the matters set out in:
- a) Sections 16 and 17 of the Act, in the case of a final ADVO, or
  - b) Section 20 of the Act, in the case of a final APVO.
- 13.4 Subject to s 75 of the Act:
- a) Where, in the course of proceedings, the applicant seeks any additional or alternative orders to those specified in an AVO application and/or any Provisional or Interim Order, and
  - b) The additional or alternative orders being sought would, if made, have the effect of increasing or varying (except for lessening) the restrictions imposed upon the defendant,
  - c) The applicant must file and serve upon the defendant a variation application specifying the orders sought.
- 13.5 A person serving a variation application must complete a statement of service in accordance with rule 5.12 of the Local Court Rules 2009.
- 13.6 Before making an order that will have the effect described in paragraph 13.4, the Court must be satisfied that service of the variation application has been effected upon the defendant.

### **14. Procedures for Protection of Children**

- 14.1 In proceedings under the Act where a child is required to give evidence and the defendant is not legally represented, in addition to the requirements set out in s 41A of the Act:
- a) A legal practitioner or suitable person appointed by the Court is to ask the child only the questions that the defendant requests that person to put to the child; and
  - b) A legal practitioner or suitable person appointed by the Court must not independently give the defendant legal or other advice.
- 14.2 Paragraph 14.1 applies whether or not remote witness room facilities or other similar technology (or alternative arrangements) are used by the child to give evidence.
- 14.3 In accordance with s 42 of the Act, in application proceedings under the Act where any child may be directly or indirectly affected by the making or variation of an AVO:

- a) A person who applies for an order must inform the Court of any relevant parenting order or pending application for a relevant Parenting Order, and
- b) Prior to making or varying an AVO, the Court is to inform the applicant of their obligation to do so.

## **15. Final Orders**

- 15.1 An AVO may be made final by consent and without admissions. If finalised in this manner, the Judge is to clearly mark the bench papers with this notation.
- 15.2 Before making a final ADVVO, the Court may allow the complainant the opportunity to communicate their views in relation to the conditions sought to be imposed, including addressing the Court.
- 15.3 When making a final AVO, the Court shall ensure that the proposed conditions are not contradictory or repetitive.
- 15.4 Prior to the Court finalising an AVO under s 39 of the Act, the prosecution should endeavour to make enquiries with the complainant and obtain updated instructions.
- 15.5 Prior to a final ADVVO being made, the prosecution should inform the Court whether there are any other ADVVOs or parenting plans in place for the same parties and provide copies of any such orders to the Court, if available.

## **16. Property Recovery Orders**

- 16.1 A Property Recovery Order may be sought by either the complainant or the defendant.
- 16.2 Prior to seeking a Property Recovery Order, the applicant is to:
  - a) Complete an application form including an itemised list of the property they seek to recover (in the form set out in Annexure D); and
  - b) Seek the agreement of the police and/or the DVLO as to the property to be recovered so that the other party (and/or the occupier of the premises, if necessary) can be consulted.
- 16.3 Once the itemised list is agreed between the parties, the itemised list is to be provided to the Court for consideration as part of the application.

## **17. Application for a Serious Domestic Abuse Prevention Order (SDAPO)**

### **Filing and Listing of Application**

- 17.1 An application for a SDAPO is to be filed by NSW Police or the ODPP in writing in the agreed form.
- 17.2 The registry is to list the SDAPO application for mention in the next AVO list (irrespective of service).

### **First Mention**

- 17.3 If the respondent is present or legally represented at the first mention and consents to an order being made, the SDAPO application may be granted on the grounds of the application, provided the Court is satisfied as to the statutory criteria in s 87B of the Act.
- 17.4 An adjournment may be granted for no longer than 14 days at the first mention date, but only for the following purposes:
  - a) for a defendant to consider their position and/or obtain legal advice; or
  - b) for a legal representative to obtain instructions.

- 17.5 If the respondent is present or legally represented at the first mention and contests the SDAPO application, the Court is to:
- a) Review the time estimate for hearing as nominated in the application by the applicant;
  - b) List the application for hearing so that a date is obtained without delay. In the absence of a clear time estimate, the application is to be listed for hearing for 3 hours;
  - c) Make a case management timetable (in the form set out in Annexure E); and
  - d) List for compliance mention.
- 17.6 If the respondent is not present or legally represented at the first mention and the SDAPO application has been served, the application may be granted on the grounds of the application provided the Judge is satisfied as to the statutory criteria in s 87B of the Act.
- 17.7 If the respondent is not present at the first mention and has not been served, the Court is to:
- a) List the SDAPO application for hearing so that a date is obtained without delay. In the absence of a clear time estimate, the application is to be listed for hearing for 3 hours;
  - b) Make an order that the applicant is to file and serve supporting material in 4 weeks; and
  - c) List for compliance mention in 6 weeks.

### **Compliance Mention**

- 17.8 The applicant is to confirm that the respondent has been served with the SDAPO application. If the respondent has not been served, the Court is to list the application for a further mention in six weeks. The allocated hearing date is to be maintained.
- 17.9 If the respondent is present or legally represented at the compliance mention and the SDAPO application remains contested:
- a) The Court is to confirm if the applicant has filed and served supporting material;
  - b) The Court is to confirm if the respondent has filed and served supporting material (in the event that such an order was made at a previous mention date);
  - c) The parties are to provide the Court with a Listing Advice (in the form set out in Annexure F); and
  - d) The Court is to confirm the time estimate and the allocated hearing date.
- 17.10 The respondent is excused from attending Court at the Compliance Mention only if legally represented.
- 17.11 If the respondent is not present or legally represented at the compliance mention and the SDAPO application has been served, the application may be granted on the grounds of the application provided the Judge is satisfied as to the statutory criteria set out in s 87B of the Act.
- 17.12 If the case management timetable has not been complied with by either or both parties, an extension to the Court timetable may be granted if the Court is of the view it is in the interests of justice, in which case the SDAPO application may be listed again for a further compliance mention, provided the allocated hearing date is maintained.

### **Hearing Mention Date**

- 17.13 If the SDAPO application is listed for mention 14 days prior to the allocated hearing date, the applicant is to confirm at the mention that the respondent has been served with the application (and any supporting material) and is aware of the allocated hearing date.

17.14 If the respondent has not been served, the Court is to make further orders for service to occur prior to the hearing date, if appropriate, or otherwise vacate the allocated hearing date and obtain a new hearing date.

### **Stay Application**

17.15 If a SDAPO has been made and the respondent seeks a stay of the order, the stay application must be filed with the Registry in writing (in the form set out in Annexure G).

17.16 Wherever possible, it is preferable that a stay application should come back before the same Judge that heard the original SDAPO application. If this is not possible, a different Judge may determine the stay application (and likely set it down for 1 hour to allow for reading).

### **18. Application to Vary or Revoke a SDAPO**

18.1 Any application to vary or revoke a SDAPO must be filed with the Registry in writing (in the form set out in Annexure H).

18.2 The Registry is to list the application to vary/revoke a SDAPO for mention in the next AVO list (irrespective of service).

### **First Mention**

18.3 If the applicant is the person against whom the SDAPO was made, the application can only be made with leave of the Court.

18.4 The Court may consider whether to grant leave to hear the application at the first mention, or any subsequent mentions, if there is sufficient information before the Court as to whether there has been a substantial change in the relevant circumstances since the SDAPO was last made or varied, otherwise the question of leave may be determined on the day of hearing.

18.5 If the respondent is present and does not oppose the variation/revocation application, the application may be granted if the Court is satisfied as to the matters set out in s 87G(3) of the Act.

18.6 If the respondent is present or legally represented at the first mention but opposes the variation/revocation application, the application will be case managed in the same way as an initial application for a SDAPO in paragraph 17.4.

18.7 If the respondent is not present or legally represented and the variation/revocation application has been served, the Court is to:

- a) If the applicant is the person against whom the SDAPO was made:
  - i. Direct the Registrar to notify the police or the ODPP of the application and the next Court date (noting that the Court must allow all parties to the proceedings for the original SDAPO a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the matter (s 87G(3)(a) of the Act));
  - ii. List the variation/revocation application for hearing so that a date is obtained without delay. In the absence of a clear time estimate, list for hearing for 3 hours;
  - iii. Make an order that the applicant is to file and serve supporting material in 4 weeks; and
  - iv. List for compliance mention in 6 weeks.
- b) If the applicant is the police or the ODPP, the variation/revocation application may be granted on the grounds of the application provided the Judge is satisfied as to the statutory criteria in s 87G of the Act.

- 18.8 If the respondent is not present and the variation/revocation application has not been served, the Court is to:
- a) If the applicant is the person against whom the SDAPO was made, direct the Registrar to notify the police or the ODPP of the application and the next Court date (noting that the Court must allow all parties to the proceedings for the original SDAPO a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the matter (s 87G(3)(a) of the Act));
  - b) List the variation/revocation application for hearing so that a date is obtained without delay. In the absence of a clear time estimate, the application is to be listed for hearing for 3 hours;
  - c) Make an order that the applicant is to file and serve supporting material in 4 weeks; and
  - d) List for compliance mention in 6 weeks.

### **Compliance Mention**

- 18.9 The respondent is excused from attending Court at the compliance mention only if legally represented.
- 18.10 The applicant is to confirm that the respondent has been served with the SDAPO variation/revocation application.
- 18.11 If the respondent no longer contests the variation/revocation application at the compliance mention, the Court may grant the application.
- 18.12 If the respondent is present or legally represented at the compliance mention and the variation/revocation application remains contested:
- a) The Court is to confirm if the applicant has filed and served supporting material;
  - b) The Court is to order that the respondent file and serve material in 4 weeks (in the event that such orders were not made at a previous mention date(s));
  - c) The parties are to provide the Court with a Listing Advice (in the form set out in Annexure F); and
  - d) The Court is to confirm the time estimate and the allocated hearing date.
- 18.13 If the case management timetable has not been complied with by either or both parties, an extension to the Court timetable may be granted if the Court is of the view it is in the interests of justice, in which case the variation/revocation application may be listed again for a further compliance mention, provided the allocated hearing date is maintained.
- 18.14 If the respondent is not present or legally represented at the compliance mention and the SDAPO application has been served, the application may be granted on the grounds of the application provided the Judge is satisfied of the statutory criteria set out in s 87G(3) of the Act. If time does not permit the Court to make its decision in the absence of the other party, the Court is to confirm the allocated hearing date.
- 18.15 If the respondent has not been served and is unaware of the date, the Court is to list the variation / revocation application for a further mention to allow for service in 6 weeks.

### **19. Miscellaneous**

- 19.1 Nothing in this Practice Note should be read as limiting the Judge's general discretion to conduct proceedings or make any such orders available to them under any law of the State or the Commonwealth as they see fit.

## Annexure A: Notice of Readiness (Prosecution and Defence) – DV Charges

### Notice of Readiness (Prosecution) – Local Court of New South Wales Domestic Violence Proceedings

Case No.		Parties:	Police/DPP/Other:	-v-
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Unless otherwise ordered this form must be completed and provided to the Court at the Readiness Mention

#### Hearing Estimate:

Previous Time Estimate:	(Hours/Days)	Revised Time Estimate (if changed):	(Hours/Days)
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#### Readiness Issues:

Issue	Yes/No	Details
I have confirmed the readiness of this case and witnesses with the Police informant:		
Is an interpreter required?		Required for witness/victim:  Language:
Is a Court Appointed Questioner required?		
Has the mini brief been served as required?		
Has the PINOP made a written statement or electronic recording (DVEC)?		Specify and indicate length of recording:
Have all discussions and considerations regarding alternate charges/pleas been explored and exhausted? Is there scope for resolution of the matter, agreed facts?		
Will there be a request for a Prosecution witness to appear by AVL?		Is there any objection by the defence?
Is a Remote Witness Room required for the Complainant?		
Is appropriate technology available (at witness location) to allow Prosecution witness to give evidence via AVL?		
Have the witnesses been issued subpoenas?		Specify if subpoena served in person or electronically?
Are there any child witnesses required to give evidence?		Specify their ages:
Has the OIC or DVLO maintained contact with the PINOP?		
Has the Prosecution complied with its disclosure obligations?		
I certify the Prosecution case is ready to proceed to hearing without delay:		
Notice, cl 27 Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 given?		

Prosecutor Name:	Date:
Email:	Contact Number:

## Annexure A: Notice of Readiness (Prosecution and Defence) – DV Charges

### Notice of Readiness (Defendant) – Local Court of New South Wales Domestic Violence Proceedings

Case No.		Parties:	Police/DPP/Other:	-v-
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Unless otherwise ordered this form must be completed and provided to the Court at the Readiness Mention

#### Hearing Estimate:

Previous Time Estimate:	(Hours/Days)	Revised Time Estimate (if changed):	(Hours/Days)
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#### Readiness Issues:

Issue	Yes/No	Details
I am in effective contact with the Defendant/Respondent		
Have the Defence reviewed prosecution witness requirements and notified any changes?		Number of witnesses Prosecution: Defence:
Is an interpreter required?		Required for witness/victim:  Language:
Has the mini brief been served at least 14 days prior to the Readiness Mention?		
Have all negotiations with the prosecution been explored and exhausted? If not, why not? Have alternative charges and pleas been considered and communicated/negotiated with the Prosecution?		
Will there be a request for any Defence witnesses to give evidence via AVL?		Specify all witnesses that are seeking to give evidence via AVL:  Is there any objection by the prosecution for this evidence to be given via AVL? <b>Yes/No</b>
Is appropriate technology available (at witness location) to allow Defence witness to give evidence via AVL?		
Is video evidence (e.g. CCTV footage, body worn video evidence) required to be played?		Specify and indicate length of recording:
Is the case ready to proceed without delay?		
I certify that I have explained the discount regime for a plea of guilty to my client?		
I certify the Defendant's case to be hearing ready?		

Legal Representative Name:	Date:
Email:	Contact Number:

## Timetable for Statements

### Applicant's Evidence

1. The Applicant or their legal representative is to serve on the Defendant, or their legal representative, a copy of:
  - All witness statements (including any written statement by the Applicant) relied upon by the Applicant on or before: [    /    /    ] (approximately 2 weeks).
  - If both the Applicant and the Defendant are not legally represented, written statements prepared in accordance with this timetable should be placed with the Local Court Registry for collection by the other party (rather than serving on the other party directly). The appropriate Local Court Registry is the Local Court at which this timetable is made.

### Defendant's Evidence

2. The Defendant or their legal representative is to serve on the Applicant, or their legal representative, a copy of:
  - All witness statements (including any written statement by the Defendant) relied upon by the Defendant on or before: [    /    /    ] (approximately 4 weeks).
  - If both the Applicant and the Defendant are not legally represented, written statements prepared in accordance with this timetable should be placed with the Local Court Registry for collection by the other party (rather than serving on the other party directly). The appropriate Local Court Registry is the Local Court at which this timetable is made.

### Compliance Mention

3. The matter is next listed on: [    /    /    ] (approximately 5 weeks) ('the Compliance Mention date') to review compliance with this timetable and, if ready, to list the matter for Contested Hearing.
4. Unless the Court otherwise orders, and subject to the interests of justice, on the Compliance Mention date:
  - If the Applicant has failed to comply with these directions, the application may be struck out.
  - If the Defendant has failed to comply with these directions, an Apprehended Violence Order may be made

**It is important to comply with the above timetable. If statements are not exchanged prior to the Contested Hearing date, it will be necessary to seek leave of the Court to give oral evidence.**







## Timetable for Statements

### Applicant's Evidence

1. The Applicant is to serve on the Respondent, or their legal representative, a copy of:
  - All witness statements (including any written statement by the Applicant) relied upon by the Applicant on or before: [    /    /    ] (approximately 4 weeks).

### Respondent's Evidence

2. The Respondent or their legal representative is to serve on the Applicant a copy of:
  - All witness statements (including any written statement by the Respondent) relied upon by the Respondent on or before: [    /    /    ] (approximately 8 weeks).

### Compliance Mention

3. The matter is next listed on: [    /    /    ] (approximately 10 weeks) ('the Compliance Mention date') to review compliance with this timetable and, if ready, to list the matter for Hearing.

## Local Court Listing Advice – Application for Serious Domestic Abuse Prevention Order

(IMPORTANT – Where the Defendant is represented by a barrister or solicitor, a completed and signed copy of this document must be given to the Court and the Applicant at the Compliance Mention)

Case:	Applicant: [ Police / DPP ] Respondent: [ _____ ]		
For Mention:	At [ _____ ] Local Court on [ ____ / ____ / ____ ]		
Witness Statement	Corroborative Witness*?	If yes, corroborative of which other witness?	Required for cross-examination**?
1.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
2.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
3.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
4.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
5.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
6.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
7.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
8.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
9.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
10.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
11.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
12.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
13.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
14.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
15.	[ Yes / No ]		[ Yes / No ]
Estimated Duration of Hearing:			[ ____ ] Hours
Respondent Witnesses? If Yes, How Many?			[ Yes / No ] [ ____ ] Witnesses
Is an Interpreter Required?			[ Yes / No ]
What Language?			
Technology Required?			
• Audio-Visual Link		[ Yes / No ]	
• Remote Witness Room (Child / Vulnerable Person / DV Complainant)		[ Yes / No ]	
		If Yes, Age: [ ____ ]   Sex: [ Male / Female ]	
• CCTV Footage/Electronic Evidence to be Played		[ Yes / No ]	
Hearsay Notice Given or Required?			[ Yes / No ]

Legal Representative Name:	Date:
Email:	Contact Number:

\*A member of the NSW Police Force called to give evidence in proceedings to corroborate evidence-in-chief given by another member of the NSW Police Force for the prosecution: s 5BAA, *Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998*.

\*\* Where a witness is not required for cross-examination it will *prima facie* be assumed that the tender of the statement is consented to subject to the *Evidence Act 1995*.



