



11 May 2020

The District Court of NSW intends to lift the temporary suspension of jury trials in some, but not all, District Court venues on and from 15 June 2020.

The District Court has worked closely with the Sheriff of NSW, the Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Health identifying court venues and courtrooms which comply with social distancing requirements. Some of the measures taken by the Sheriff to reduce the risk around COVID-19 and to ensure jury service is a safe experience will include temperature testing, social distancing, individualised jury meals, additional commercial cleaning and limiting public access in courtrooms.

Unconventional methods will be adopted in courtrooms to ensure that jurors will be able to safely socially distance. The Chief Judge of the District Court Justice Derek Price said:

“All jurors will not be required to sit in the jury box but will be able to spread out across the courtroom. The empanelment of jurors will be conducted by audio visual link to avoid large numbers of persons in courtrooms at any one time. The maximum number of persons who can be in each courtroom in accordance with social distancing requirements has been carefully identified.”

These stringent requirements mean that the re-commencement of jury trials in mid-June will be confined to a limited number of courtrooms in the Sydney District Court, Parramatta District Court and the Newcastle District Court.

The intention to re-commence jury trials in these venues is subject to any change in advice from the Department of Health. The administration of justice and the health of all participants in the justice system remain the Court’s priority.