

District Court Criminal Practice Note 4

Media Access to Sexual Assault Proceedings Heard in Camera

1. The purpose of this practice note is to provide arrangements under s 291 C 2 of the Criminal Procedure Act for the media to access sexual assault proceedings held in camera.
2. In circumstances where s 291 C 2 applies, and such arrangements are sought, the media representative should contact the registrar of the court where the proceedings are to be held.
3. Upon application by a media representative, the registrar will discuss with the media representative the reasonable and practical options available. Wherever possible, the application is to be made prior to the date of hearing. The longer the period of notice given to the registrar the more likely it will be that a practical arrangement can be made.
4. The registrar will discuss with the media representative the options available and then provide a written report to the court advising what is reasonably practical to provide pursuant to s 291 C 2. The court will then determine what arrangements should be made and these will usually be announced in court.
5. Any additional costs incurred in making arrangements pursuant to s 291 C 2 are to be met by the media representative (eg cost of installing live audio/visual feeds, cost of a sheriff/court officer to supervise access to a remote audio/visual feed, cost of providing a real time or a daily transcript). The registrar may require an undertaking to be given by the media representative to pay the additional costs.
6. If the media is given electronic access to the evidence, the media must not make an electronic recording of the proceedings.

The Hon. Justice R.O. Blanch
Chief Judge
28 November 2005