



New South Wales

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CHIEF MAGISTRATE'S CIRCULAR

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Use of devices in courtrooms in the Local Court of NSW

1. Purpose

This protocol permits certain persons to use a device in a courtroom in a limited way.

2. Application

This protocol applies to journalists who work for recognised media organisations (and who can provide appropriate professional identification), legal practitioners (or their paralegals) and prosecutors.

3. Use of devices

Devices must be switched to “silent” inside courtrooms. Journalists, legal practitioners (or their paralegals) and prosecutors are exempt from this rule on the following conditions: -

- 3.1 the device is switched to “silent” and no verbal communication is made using the device;
- 3.2 the device is used only for electronic note-taking, messaging, emailing or legal research relevant to the proceedings before the Court;
- 3.3 the person using the device complies with any legislative requirement and any order of the presiding judicial officer; and
- 3.4 the use of the device does not cause any disruption to court proceedings.

4. Overriding discretion

Nothing in this protocol precludes the presiding judicial officer from giving any order or direction with respect to the use of a device which departs from the provisions of this protocol.

5. Definitions

Device means a mobile phone, laptop, tablet or personal digital assistant.

Journalist means a person engaged in the profession or practice of reporting for a media report of a news, current affairs, information or documentary character.

Media report and *mobile phone* have the same meaning as they have in s 4 of the *Court Security Act 2005* (NSW).


Judge Peter Johnstone
Chief Magistrate

