



Supreme Court of Victoria

Practice Note SC Gen 2

Structure of the Trial Division

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Chief Justice has authorised the issue of the following Practice Note.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Practice Note is to set out the divisional structure of the Trial Division of the Court, the specialist Lists within the Trial Division and the allocation of matters within that structure.

2. COMMENCEMENT

- 2.1 This Practice Note was re-issued and commences on 1 December 2025.

3. DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The Trial Division of the Court consists of the:
 - Commercial Court;
 - Common Law Division; and
 - Criminal Division.
- 3.2 Each Division has a Principal Judge whose responsibilities include:
 - overall supervision of cases in the Division;
 - oversight of the allocation of cases for hearing;
 - chairing regular meetings of the Division; and
 - maintaining links with members of the legal profession practising in the Divisions.

4. COMMERCIAL COURT

- 4.1 The Commercial Court comprises Judges, Associate Judges and Judicial Registrars allocated by the Chief Justice from time to time.

4.2 The business of the Commercial Court is managed through such Lists as may be determined by the Chief Justice from time to time. The judge-managed Lists with this Division are:

- The General Commercial Lists, which correspond to the relevant managing Judge;
- The Corporations List;
- The Arbitration List;
- The Taxation List;
- The Admiralty List;
- The Technology, Engineering and Construction (TEC) List;
- The Intellectual Property List;
- The Insurance List;
- The Group Proceedings List (cross-divisional list);
- Commercial and Retail Leases List (cross-divisional list)

4.3 The Commercial Court will hear and determine the following categories of cases:

- (a) those which arise out of ordinary commercial transactions, including any proceeding relating to–
 - (i) the construction of commercial, shipping or transport documents;
 - (ii) the export or import of merchandise;
 - (iii) the carriage of goods for the purpose of trade or commerce;
 - (iv) insurance;
 - (v) banking;
 - (vi) finance;
 - (vii) commercial agency;
 - (viii) commercial usage;
- (b) those in which there is a question that has importance in trade or commerce;
- (c) those in which a remedy is sought under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001* (Cth);
- (d) those in which court assistance is required to support an arbitration, enforce an award or review a decision;
- (e) those in which a substantial issue is raised in respect of technology, engineering and/or construction;
- (f) those in which proceedings concern loss or damage to a ship or by a ship, or to goods carried by sea and/or is brought pursuant to the *Admiralty Act 1988* (Cth);
- (g) those in which a substantial issue is raised in respect of taxation, including proceedings regarding taxation recovery and Victorian

Taxation Appeals save for proceedings for damages against a taxation adviser which are to be initiated in the Professional Liability List in the Common Law Division;

- (h) those in which a substantial issue is raised in respect of intellectual property;
 - (i) those in which a substantial issue of a commercial nature is raised in respect of an insurance policy; and
 - (j) those in which a substantial issue regarding a commercial or retail lease within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is raised.
- 4.4 Mortgage default, debt recovery and related enforcement proceedings initiated in the Commercial Court are ordinarily to be managed by an Associate Judge, or Judicial Registrar unless assigned to a specific judge-managed List after the filing of a defence.

5. COMMON LAW DIVISION

- 5.1 The Common Law Division comprises Judges, Associate Judges and Judicial Registrars allocated by the Chief Justice from time to time.
- 5.2 At present, the Common Law Division includes the following specialist Lists:
- Civil Circuit;
 - Judicial Review and Appeals;
 - Major Torts;
 - Personal Injuries;
 - Dust Diseases;
 - Professional Liability;
 - Valuation, Compensation and Planning;
 - Employment and Industrial;
 - Trust, Equity and Probate;
 - Testators Family Maintenance;
 - Property;
 - Confiscation and Proceeds of Crime;
 - Institutional Liability; and
 - Group Proceedings (cross-divisional list).
 - Commercial and Retail Leases (cross-divisional list)
- 5.3 The Common Law Division manages any proceeding founded or concurrently brought in tort and in breach of contract or statute.

6. CRIMINAL DIVISION

- 6.1 The Criminal Division comprises Judges and Judicial Registrars allocated by the Chief Justice from time to time to the Division.
- 6.2 The Criminal Division hears all criminal trials, criminal interlocutory applications, criminal appeals other than on a question of law from the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Children's Court of Victoria; and any other matters deemed appropriate.

7. ALLOCATION OF CASES TO THE DIVISIONS AND LISTS

- 7.1 If at any time after the issue of a proceeding in a particular Division it appears to the Court that it is more appropriate to have the proceeding determined in another Division or List, the proceeding may be transferred to that Division or List. Additional court fees may apply upon transfer.

8. AMENDMENT HISTORY

- 8.1 1 December 2025: This Practice Note was reissued on 2025 and amends the version issued on 13 October 2020. The amendments reflect updates to division lists and remove references to filing.
- 8.2 13 October 2020: This Practice Note was reissued on 13 October 2020 and amends the version issued on 30 January 2017.
- 8.3 30 January 2017: This Practice Note was issued on 30 January 2017 and replaced Practice Note No 4 of 2014.

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1 December 2025