

SUPREME COURT OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Practice Direction 1 of 2018

Requests for Forensic Mental Health Services Reports

This Practice Direction sets out the practice and procedures to be followed with respect to making requests for the preparation of reports by Forensic Mental Health Services (“FMHS”) in relation to Supreme Court matters.

1. A party must first apply to the Registrar for a FMHS Screening Report. The application may be made orally in Court in the Registrar’s Directions list, or by email direct to the Registrar if both parties consent.
2. If the application is granted, the Registrar will request a **Mental Health Screening Report** from FMHS.
 - (a) A Screening Report must be requested before any other FMHS report is requested.
 - (b) A Screening Report provides information on diagnosis, treatment and mental health status of the accused person and makes recommendations regarding suitability for further assessments and/or reports.
 - (c) If the accused person is not in custody, he or she will be required to attend at the offices of the FMHS at 1 Moore Street, Canberra City within 2 business days of the date of the request to enable the screening report to be prepared. If the accused person is in custody, the FMHS will attend on the person either in the court cells or at the AMC in order to prepare the report.
3. Depending on the recommendations in the Screening Report, the Court or the Registrar may then request **one** of the following reports from FMHS:
 - (a) **Brief Mental Health Report** – provides an assessment on mental health history, adherence to treatment and discharge plans. The turnaround period is 3 to 5 business days.
 - (b) **Comprehensive Mental Health Report** – provides an assessment on mental health history, treatment, personal history and recommendations relating to management of relevant issues. The turnaround period is 6 to 8 weeks.

- (c) **Fitness to Plead Report** – provides an overall mental health assessment and expert opinion in relation to the accused person’s fitness to plead **for more serious charges and complex matters**. The turnaround period is 8 to 12 weeks.
- (d) **Verdins Principle Report** – provides an overall mental health assessment and expert report **for more serious charges and complex matters**. The turnaround period is 8 to 12 weeks.
4. If the accused person is not in custody, a FMHS assessment will only be made at the offices of FMHS at 1 Moore Street, Canberra City. The Court may vary the bail conditions to require the accused person to attend at the offices of FMHS for the assessment within a certain timeframe. If the accused is in custody, the assessment will be made either in the court cells or at the AMC.

By direction of the Judges

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Annie Glover', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Annie Glover

Registrar

21 August 2018