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Tēnā koe Annabel

Improve case management within the District Court at the pre-trial stage

As noted in the letter to you from the Acting General Manager, Courts and Justice Services Policy, on 18 December 2025, the Judicature (Timeliness) Legislation Amendment Bill has passed and will come into effect from 1 February 2026. It contains several items to address court timeliness by freeing up judicial resources, reducing duplication, and unnecessary churn. I am writing to provide an update on the operational implications of one of these items.

One of the changes in the omnibus Bill, is an amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 (the Act). The new s156A of the Act will allow a District Court Judge to direct that some or all charges against the same defendant be managed together at the pre-trial stage (including the administrative and review stages), in the same District Court location.

This change responds to current practice, where charges are generally filed at the nearest court to the alleged offending, resulting in multiple sets of proceedings for the same defendant across different District Court locations. This can require appearances across several locations and involvement from multiple Police Prosecution offices and defence counsel, creating delays, and inefficiencies.

The following outlines key aspects of how the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 will be implemented:

- The judicial direction will only apply to new proceedings. This is to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings currently underway.
- The judicial direction only applies to pre-trial proceedings. Charges will go back to the original court of filing for trial and/or sentencing, unless the judge directs that the charge is transferred to a different District Court location.
- The judiciary will consider requests to combine proceedings on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any queries or questions, please come back to me.

Nāku noa, nā



Jacquelyn Shannon
Group Manager, Courts and Tribunals, Regional Service Delivery

cc: Carl Crafar, Chief Operating Officer