

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CHANGES TO THE LAW RELATING TO GUILTY PLEAS

For **defendants** pleading guilty–

- A change to the law now means that pleading guilty **as soon as possible** may result in a reduction of sentence of up to **40%**.
- You should discuss the benefits of an early plea of guilty with your lawyer as soon as possible.
- The earlier you tell the court, the greater the possible reduction in sentence.
- The clock starts ticking from the date of your first court date, so find out **now**.
- If you are applying for legal aid, get your application in **immediately** to take advantage of this possibility.
- If you are going to represent yourself and require more information, contact the Legal Services Commission on 1300 366 424.
- If you are unsure, get legal advice as soon as possible.

For **legal practitioners**–

- The *Criminal Law (Sentencing) (Guilty Pleas) Amendment Act 2012* provides for a possible reduction in sentence of up to **40%** for an early guilty plea.
- The possible reduction in sentence decreases as a matter gets closer to trial.
- The legislation provides strict time limits within which guilty pleas must be entered for this reduction in penalty to occur.
- Clients should now be made aware of the benefits of an early plea at the earliest possible opportunity.
- To ensure no client misses the opportunity to take advantage of this reduction in sentence please lodge all applications for legal aid as soon as possible.