



NEW SOUTH WALES BAR ASSOCIATION

COVID-19: INFORMATION FOR ATTENDING COURT

Latest news as at 12 OCTOBER 2022

ATTENDING COURT

Courts and Tribunals have measures in place to conduct proceedings without the need for attending where possible, to respond to the developing COVID-19 pandemic. The Association is in constant contact with the Courts and Tribunals. Click on the links below to jump to the latest information received about:

- [Supreme Court of NSW](#)
- [Land and Environment Court of NSW](#)
- [District Court of NSW](#)
- [Local Court of NSW](#)
- [Children's Court of NSW](#)
- [Coroner's Court of NSW](#)
- [NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#)
- [NSW Industrial Relations Commission](#)
- [Personal Injury Commission](#)
- [High Court of Australia](#)
- [Federal Court of Australia](#)
- [Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia](#)
- [Administrative Appeals Tribunal](#)
- [Fair Work Commission](#)
- [Copyright Tribunal of Australia](#)

SUPPORTING MEMBERS & CLIENTS

The Bar Association continues to actively monitor COVID-19 developments and impacts on the Courts. Protecting the health, safety and interests of members, while continuing to promote the administration of justice and serve the public good, is our priority at this difficult time.

We are consistently updating our website and this point-in-time resource as information comes to hand. **However, please always double-check the latest Court resources directly as developments are changing quickly at this time, and do not make any assumptions regarding your case without first doing so.**

Key contacts

For the latest health information, please visit the following COVID-19 pages from:

- [Australian Government, Department of Health – COVID-19 Resources](#):
- [NSW Department of Health](#)

Wellbeing

Be mindful of your resilience and wellbeing during this challenging time. If you're concerned about yourself or a colleague, visit [barcare.org](#)

CURRENT RESTRICTIONS OVERVIEW: NSW

[You can find the latest information from NSW Communities and Justice here](#)

You do not need to attend a Court or Tribunal unless you:

- are a party to a court or tribunal matter and no other arrangements are in place to conduct proceedings remotely
- are a juror already empanelled for ongoing trials ([see here for further information](#))
- require face-to-face services of the registry and no other arrangements are in place to enable this remotely
- are a representative of a news-media organisation with a legitimate reason for attending court.

Do not attend a court or tribunal if you:

- have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 7 days
- have had close contact with a person who has had COVID-19 in the last 7 days
- you are waiting for a COVID test result
- you are feeling unwell and have any of the following symptoms:
 - fever
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - shortness of breath.

SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

For further info & practitioners' guidelines, visit [the Supreme Court's website and latest announcements page](#).

On 10 OCTOBER 2022 THE SUPREME COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

BULLETIN - Ending of Covid-19 Protocols: Operation of Registrar Lists

The Supreme Court has today issued the following Bulletin [Ending of Covid-19 Protocols: Operation of Registrar Lists](#).

ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022 THE SUPREME COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

Ending of Supreme Court Covid-19 Protocols – Effective from 01 October 2022

The Court's current Covid-19 protocols, for civil and criminal matters, **will cease to operate from 1 October 2022**.

Consistent with the latest health advice, masks are therefore no longer required to be worn in public areas, including courtrooms unless you are a household or close contact of someone that has tested positive to Covid-19. The Court continues to encourage mask wearing in crowded places, noting they do provide an extra layer of protection against Covid-19 and the flu. Anyone that wishes to wear a mask in the Court's precincts or in court rooms may continue to do so.

From 1 October 2022, there will no longer be any requirement to provide proof of vaccination to enter the Supreme Court. The Court encourages everyone to stay up to date with their vaccinations and boosters.

The Court's audio-visual links (video and telephone) will continue to operate and remain available for use as appropriate as determined by the lost, trial or duty judge and registrars. The use of AVL will be encouraged where it is in the interest of justice to do so, including where it will have the effect of minimising disproportionate cost to parties.

The Court is grateful to the legal profession, litigants, media and members of the public for their adherence to the various protocols which have operated since March 2020.

The Honourable A. S. Bell

Chief Justice of New South Wales

Supreme Court of New South Wales

29 September 2022

LAND AND ENVIRONMENT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

For further information, visit [the LEC's website and announcements page](#).

ON 18 FEBRUARY 2022 THE COURT PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT ON ITS WEBSITE: [COVID-19 Pandemic Arrangements Policy February 2022](#)

18 February 2022

This Policy commences on 18 February 2022. It replaces the COVID-19 Pandemic Arrangements Policy made on 1 December 2021.

The revised Policy sets out arrangements consistent with the current NSW Government requirements.

The new Policy is available [here](#) (PDF , 192.2 KB).

DISTRICT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The [latest COVID-19 updates from the District Court can be found on its website](#)

See also [Changes to Court Operations – COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

ON 4 OCTOBER 2022 THE DISTRICT COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

[District Court NSW & Dust Diseases Tribunal NSW COVID-19 Update 4 October 2022](#)

Face Masks

In view of changes in Federal and State Government policies and health advice, the mandatory requirement for all court participants, including jurors, to wear face masks **will end from Thursday 6 October 2022.**

Face masks are no longer required to be worn in courtrooms or public areas of the District Court or Dust Diseases Tribunal, unless a court participant is a household or close contact of someone who has tested positive to COVID-19. However, a trial Judge retains a discretion to require face masks to be worn in the courtroom.

Paragraph 30 (the mandatory wearing of face masks) of Criminal Practice Note 27 will cease to operate from **6 October 2022.**

All of the requirements concerning Rapid Antigen Self-Testing under Criminal Practice Note 27 will continue until further advised.

The Court continues to encourage face mask wearing in courtrooms, jury assembly areas and jury rooms. Anyone who wishes to wear a face mask is welcome to do so.

ON 22 APRIL 2022 THE DISTRICT COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

Commencing 2 May 2022: [District Court Criminal Practice Note 27](#) will replace District Court Criminal Practice Note 23

The Chief Judge has lifted the requirement that all court participants and jurors in District Court criminal trials be double vaccinated from 2 May 2022. Face masks and regular RAT testing will still be required for jurors and all court participants.

Accordingly, [District Court Criminal Practice Note 23](#) will be **replaced by** [District Court Criminal Practice Note 27](#), alongside the [Court Users FAQ](#).

Paragraphs 11 to 15 and 33 require notification of consent to RAT testing in the form annexed. Practice Note 27 applies to criminal trials commencing on and after **2 May 2022.**

LOCAL COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The latest updates to the [Chief Magistrate's Memorandum](#) can be found on the [Local Court's website](#).

See also [Changes to Court Operations – COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#) for the Local Court

ON 30 JUNE 2022 THE LOCAL COURT ISSUED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[Local Court Memorandum 28 – Commencing 4 July 2022](#)

The Chief Magistrate has released a Memorandum and it will commence on **Monday, 4 July 2022**. The new memorandum has fewer restrictions than its predecessor and marks a cautious step towards returning to normal operations.

Read the memorandum [here](#).

Court Security Act Order Expiry

Please note that on **Monday, 4 July 2022** at 5pm the current [Court Security Act Order](#) will expire. There are currently no plans to renew the Order. The expiry of the Court Security Act Order will have the practical effect that Sheriff's Officers will no longer enforce mask use and social distancing at the Local Court. Neither will Sherriff's Officers be checking if court users have 'a legitimate reason associated with a particular matter' before the person is granted access. Magistrates will retain the power to direct mask-use in their courtrooms. The Chief Magistrate may issue a further Court Security Act Order, at short notice, should the need arise in the future.

THE CHILDREN'S COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The latest COVID-19 President's public notices and announcements [can be found on the Children's Court's website](#).

ON 27 JUNE 2022 THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHILDREN'S COURT ISSUED THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

[PUBLIC NOTICE OF RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC No. 15](#)

24 June 2022

Commences 18 July 2022

The Children's Court has reviewed its operations in light of the current public health settings.

This Notice supersedes other Public Notices unless otherwise stated.

CORONERS COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

For more information, [visit the Coroner's Court's website](#).

ON 10 OCTOBER 2022 THE CORONERS COURT RELEASED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[State Coroner's COVID-19 Memorandum No 7](#)

10 October 2022

Management of coronial hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic

The NSW State Coroner, Teresa O'Sullivan, has advised the following procedures will apply in relation to the conduct of coronial proceedings at the Lidcombe Forensic Medicine and Coroners Court Complex (FMCCC) **and any other court**.

The aim of these procedures is to reduce the risk of infection at the FMCCC and in the community.

The operation and business continuity of the Forensic Medicine and Coroners Court Complex at Lidcombe regarding the admission, examination and release of deceased persons is essential.

1. Where directed by a presiding magistrate, court users attending the Court must wear a fitted face covering / mask. Any exceptions to the wearing of masks will be considered by the presiding magistrate.
2. All parties, legal representatives and family members may apply to appear via AVL.
3. These procedures will continue to be reviewed and modified if required.

Magistrate Teresa O'Sullivan

NSW State Coroner

10 October 2022

NSW CIVIL AND & ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

The latest information can be found in [the President's message from NCAT](#).

ON 25 August 2022 THE NCAT PRESIDENT RELEASED THE FOLLOWING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

President's Message

25 August 2022

Changes to in-person hearings

Measures and precautions are being taken to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Some in-person hearings have resumed at NCAT. Your listing notice will advise you if your matter is in person.

Some matters will proceed by audio visual link (AVL) or telephone. Do not attend in person if your matter is listed by AVL or telephone.

Counter services

Do not attend an NCAT Registry if you do not need to.

Parties can continue to lodge applications online* or by post. Submissions, evidence and other secondary material should be [lodged by post](#).

NCAT's phone line and online services remain operational during this time. Please phone 1300 006 228 for assistance.

*Online applications are not available for all Division cases. Learn more about [applying online](#).

Check-in service

People attending an NCAT hearing are required to check in to the hearing room. Service NSW QR codes are on display at all locations. Manual check-in is available for people without a digital device.

The data captured by the Service NSW COVID-Safe check-in is only used for the purposes of contact tracing by NSW Health.

Mask and face coverings

People attending any NCAT premises are required to wear face masks. An [order under section 7 of the Court Security Act 2005](#) is in force until 22 September 2022.

Attending in person

People attending an NCAT hearing are required to check-in and wear a face mask.

Do not attend the NCAT waiting areas and hearing room more than 15 minutes prior to the start time of the hearing. You will be required to exit the building promptly after the hearing.

NSW Health advise that people should **stay at home if they are feeling unwell**. Please do not attend NCAT if you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed on the [NSW Health website- external sitelaunch](#).

You should not be leaving home if you have been directed by NSW Health to self-isolate.

For the latest updates from NSW Health visit their [website- external sitelaunch](#).

The Hon Justice Lea Armstrong
President

25 August 2022

NSW INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

For further information, [visit the IRC's website](#).

ON 4 JULY 2022 THE COMMISSION MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

[Industrial Relations Commission Protocols update](#)

4 July 2022

Virtual Courtroom (“VCR”) or in-person hearings?

It is expected that most arbitrations will now be conducted in-person. Commission members will continue to list conciliations and directions hearings by telephone, VCR or in-person at their discretion. If parties consider that there are significant reasons in support of the matter being listed by different means, the parties should confer and then jointly write to the Registrar setting out the reasons. The decision as to whether to proceed with VCR or an in-person hearing will be made by the presiding Commissioner.

Vaccination status

Evidence of vaccination is no longer a condition of entry to the Commission.

Masks

Since Friday, 25 February 2022, the wearing of masks in the Hearing Rooms has been at the discretion of the presiding Commissioner. There is no general requirement to wear masks in the Commission precinct.

Review

These protocols may change at short notice due to further COVID-19 rules announced by the NSW Government or further risk assessments completed by the Commission.

N J Constant

Chief Commissioner

4 July 2022

PERSONAL INJURY COMMISSION

For the latest information, [see the PIC's COVID-19 response page](#).

ON 5 OCTOBER 2022 THE PERSONAL INJURY COMMISSION MADE THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

Changes to COVID-19 Safety Requirements for In-Person Dispute Resolution Events from 10 October 2022

Since the Commission recommenced in-person dispute resolution events during April 2022, we have had a number of strict protocols in place to keep event participants safe from COVID-19 transmission. These have served us well across the last six months and have enabled us to proceed with offering these important services face-to-face. We are thankful to all parties for their adherence to these protocols to date.

Due to further evolution in the pandemic conditions, however, and the way that risks associated with COVID-19 are being addressed in the community and comparable organisations, the Commission is now in a position to adjust these settings.

Effective from Monday 10 October 2022, participants attending in-person dispute resolution events will no longer be required to have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination or produce a negative RAT before attending the Commission premises, however this testing will continue to be encouraged.

The Commission is currently reviewing our position on mask wearing and will advise users should these requirements change in the near future.

Procedural Direction PIC 10 will be updated to reflect the changes shortly.

Parties who have already received correspondence regarding confirmed in-person event listings from 10 October 2022 will be contacted regarding these changes.

The Commission is not making changes to the safety requirements for in-person medical assessments at this stage, due to the higher risk-profile of these assessments that are conducted in close quarters, however we will reassess these controls in the near future.

The Commission remains committed to reviewing our arrangements and adjusting them as necessary as the pandemic situation develops. Thank you for your ongoing cooperation with our COVID-safety requirements.

ON 21 FEBRUARY 2022 THE PIC'S COVID-18 RESPONSE PAGE WAS AMENDED TO READ:

The Personal Injury Commission's response to COVID-19

The Personal Injury Commission is continuing to deliver important services for injured workers and injured road users during the coronavirus pandemic. It is important that our people, those who use our services, our decision makers and our stakeholders are protected. The Commission is monitoring the Covid-19 situation and continues to respond quickly to changes in pandemic conditions as they happen.

Medical assessments

Medical assessments are being managed in the following way:

- In-person medical assessments resumed on 21 February 2022.
- The Commission will continue conducting the majority of psychiatric medical assessments via videoconference. In instances where a psychiatric examination must proceed in person, it will be conditional on the requirements of Procedural Direction PIC 11 as for all in-person examinations.
- Other assessments that can proceed by videoconference will be arranged with agreement of the parties and approval from the Medical Assessor.
- Interpreter services, if required, will be provided by telephone or videoconference.

From 1 February 2022 medical assessments must be conducted in compliance with the:

- amended [Procedural Direction PIC11 – Medical Assessments Procedure – COVID-19](#), and
- updated [Protocol for Medical Assessments During Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

These have been refreshed to include the requirement for claimants/workers attending in-person medical assessments to submit to a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) administered at the premises of the Medical Assessor, shortly before the scheduled assessment. The claimant/worker must also be vaccinated with at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination, with the second dose undertaken at least 14 days before the date of the in-person assessment. Support persons will only be able to attend in person in exceptional circumstances, with approval by the Commission President or Principal Registrar.

Hearings

- In most cases, hearings are continuing to be conducted virtually.
- Note that hearings may need to be rescheduled should any of the participants fall ill.
- Legal representatives are requested to advise the Commission at the earliest opportunity if a hearing will not be able to proceed as scheduled due to participants being ill so that it can be rescheduled.
- Claimants and workers are encouraged to participate in virtual hearings from their place of residence, wherever possible.

- If an in-person hearing is sought for a particular matter, an application needs to be made to the Commission President. [Procedural Direction PIC10 – Hearings during COVID-19](#) sets out the circumstances that need to be addressed, although parties can bring any matter to the President’s attention when making such an application.
- [Read more about arrangements for hearings.](#)

Lodging applications and documents

- All applications, forms and documents must be [lodged via the Commission’s online portals](#).
- Requests to review physical files will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. [Please email requests to review files](#).

Personal Injury Commission office

- Please note that in line with Public Health Orders, the Commission’s office at 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst has been closed since 28 June 2021 with all staff working remotely and our reception unstaffed. The office will remain closed while it undergoes refurbishment.
- Read more about [how to contact the Commission](#).

HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

For further information, [visit the HCA's website](#).

ON 8 FEBRUARY 2021 THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

The following Practice Direction takes effect from 8 February 2021:

-Practice Direction No. 1 of 2021 – Opening of the Registry ([PDF](#)) ([DOCX](#))

The Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra Registry staff are currently working remotely.

All enquiries for the Registries should be made by email (not telephone) to:

Sydney.Registry@hcourt.gov.au

Melbourne.Registry@hcourt.gov.au

Canberra.Registry@hcourt.gov.au

Video Connection Hearings - PROTOCOL

The High Court has issued a protocol for practitioners participating in Video Connection Hearings ([PDF](#)) ([RTF](#))

FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

For further information, [visit the FCA's website](#).

The information and practice notes can be found on the Federal Court of Australia's [Practice Notes](#) page.

ON 22 JULY 2022 THE FEDERAL COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING UPDATED ANNOUNCEMENT

22 July 2022: Special Measures Information Notes

Special Measures Information Notes are currently under review with matters currently being heard face to face unless the Court directs otherwise.

ON 24 FEBRUARY 2022 THE FEDERAL COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING UPDATED ANNOUNCEMENT

24 February 2022: Online and telephone services only for all court registries

There will be no face-to-face services in court registries, unless otherwise approved by the Head of Jurisdiction.

We are still open to support litigants and the profession through a range of online and phone services. These precautionary measures will assist to reduce the need to travel.

Please note that the Federal Court of Australia requires all attendees to:

- be double vaccinated
- QR check-in on arrival
- use hand sanitiser before entering the court
- wear masks at all times except for speakers, and
- if you are unwell please remain at home.

In exceptional circumstances where these conditions cannot be met, and at the discretion of the presiding Judge, the Court may develop a protocol on a case by case basis, to ensure the safety of court staff and parties.

Developments will be monitored and arrangements may change at short notice based on government health advice and restrictions.

ENQUIRIES: [1300 720 980](tel:1300720980)

FEDERAL CIRCUIT AND FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

For more information, visit [the FCFCOA's website and news updates](#).

ON 6 MAY 2022 THE COURT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[FCFCOA Special Measures Information Notice: COVID-19 Hearing protocol](#)

Latest update, 6 May 2022: **Return to in-person final hearings by default when listed before local Judge, increase in-person interim hearing, confirmation of vaccination no longer required**

This protocol will apply to all hearings and other court events in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1) and (Division 2) (**the Courts**) from 9 May 2022 in the ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC and WA until further notice.

This protocol applies equally to the Courts' family law, migration law, and general federal law jurisdictions.

Overview of key changes in the Court:

- The Court will no longer be seeking confirmation of vaccination status from practitioners and litigants before they attend the Court;
- Whilst restrictions have eased in some States and Territories, including in relation to mask wearing indoors, mask requirements will be retained, as there is not yet consistency amongst the State and Territory regulations as to whether masks are or are not required in courts/justice/correctional settings. The COVID-19 Hearing Protocol does however provide scope for direction to be provided that a mask need not be worn, which may be appropriate for Court Child Experts, parties and children in Court Children's Service events, as well as the usual carve out for those speaking in court;
- Where a matter is listed for final hearing or interim/interlocutory hearing before a local Judge, the hearing will be conducted in-person unless directed otherwise by the presiding Judge;
- Where a matter is listed for final hearing before an interstate or non-local Judge, the final hearing will be conducted electronically unless otherwise approved by the Chief Justice/Chief Judge;
- Ordinarily, short hearings and procedural hearings listed before a Judge will be heard electronically, unless otherwise directed by the Judge, with the exception of Compliance and Readiness Hearings in family law, which will ordinarily be listed to proceed in-person;
- All short hearings and procedural hearings listed before a Senior Judicial Registrar, Judicial Registrar or Deputy Registrar will be heard electronically, including first return hearings, mentions, directions, judgment delivery, bankruptcy lists and divorce hearings, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Where a matter is listed for final or interim/interlocutory hearing to proceed in-person, a party seeking to appear electronically by video or telephone must file a Request to attend by electronic communication in the approved form (see rule 15.16 of the *Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Family Law) Rules 2021*).

ON 21 FEBRUARY 2022 THE COURT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

Online and telephone services only for all court registries (including Perth)

There will be no face-to-face services in court registries (including Perth), unless otherwise approved by the Head of Jurisdiction.

We are still open to support litigants and the profession through a range of online and phone services. These precautionary measures will assist to reduce the need to travel.

Please note that the Court requires all attendees to:

- be double vaccinated
- QR check-in on arrival
- use hand sanitiser before entering the court
- wear masks at all times except for speakers, and
- if you are unwell please remain at home.

In exceptional circumstances where these conditions cannot be met, and at the discretion of the presiding Judge, the Court may develop a protocol on a case by case basis, to ensure the safety of court staff and parties.

Developments will be monitored and arrangements may change at short notice based on government health advice and restrictions.

ENQUIRIES: 1300 352 000

ON 28 JANUARY 2022 THE COURT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[FCFCOA Special Measures Information Notice – COVID-19 Electronic Subpoena Inspection](#)

This Special Measures Information Notice sets out arrangements for the continued operation of subpoena inspections in the Dandenong, Dubbo, Melbourne, Newcastle, Parramatta, Sydney and Wollongong registries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 THE COURT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[Family Law Practice Direction – National COVID-19 List](#)

This Practice Direction applies to urgent or priority family law applications filed in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia which are filed as a direct result of, or in significant connection to, COVID-19. It expands the fast-tracked list in the Court (the National COVID-19 List) which deals with urgent or priority applications related to COVID-19 on a national basis.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL

For further information, visit the AAT's page [Impact of COVID-19 on our services](#).

See also the latest news here: <https://www.aat.gov.au/news>

ON 01 FEBRUARY 2022 THE AAT PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

[Visiting an AAT registry during COVID-19](#)

31/01/2022

All AAT registries are open to visitors, so you can visit us in person in any of our locations.

While our registries are open, to reduce the risks associated with COVID-19 you may prefer to [contact us](#) online or by telephone.

You can access our services remotely by:

- using our [online services portal](#) to lodge a new application (preferred method of lodgement) or submit a document for any case that has already been lodged with the AAT
- [emailing us](#) about your new or existing application
- [sending a general enquiry](#)
- [providing feedback](#) including compliments, complaints and suggestions.

We are available to answer telephone and email enquiries on weekdays (other than public holidays) from 8:30am to 5:00pm.

Visiting us in person

If you visit an AAT registry, you must follow any public health requirements in place in your state or territory. This may involve wearing a face mask or checking in using a QR code. You will also be asked to follow AAT COVID-safe procedures such as maintaining social distance.

All AAT registries operate from 8.30am to 5.00pm on weekdays (other than public holidays). Visit [our locations](#) to find registry addresses and other details.

If you are visiting us in person, please call ahead on 1800 228 333 to plan your visit.

Find more information at '[Impact of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) on our services](#)' or [contact us](#).

THE AAT'S 'IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON OUR SERVICES' PAGE STATES THE FOLLOWING:

Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on our services

COVID-19 special measures

Practice directions

The President has issued five special measures practice directions that set out how the AAT will operate while COVID-19 impacts our services. These are in effect from 29 April 2020 for the following divisions:

- [General, Freedom of Information and Veterans' Appeals](#)
- [Migration & Refugee](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#)
- [Small Business Taxation and Taxation & Commercial](#)
- [Social Services & Child Support](#)

Guides

- [Practitioner guide to virtual hearings using Microsoft Teams – Migration and Refugee Division](#)
- [Participants guide to ADR processes using Microsoft Teams](#)
- [User guide to video hearings using Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Tutorial video – providing submissions and documents in searchable PDF format](#)
- **COVID-safe declaration**
- [COVID-safe declaration for visitors to the AAT](#)

The AAT is an essential government service. We provide independent merits review of a wide range of administrative decisions made by the Australian Government.

We are implementing COVID-safe protective measures at our registries, but we remain available to deliver services.

If you attend an AAT registry, you will be required to follow public health requirements in your state or territory, which may involve wearing a face mask or checking in using a QR code system. You will also be asked to follow AAT COVID-safe procedures such as maintaining social distance.

While our registries remain open, you may prefer to contact us online or by telephone instead. You can do most of what you need to do with the AAT from your home, office or other location with internet access:

- Use our [online services portal](#) to lodge a new application (preferred method of lodgement) or submit a document for any case that has already been lodged with the AAT
- [Email us](#) about your new or existing application
- [Send a general enquiry](#)
- [Provide feedback](#) including compliments, complaints and suggestions

Visit australia.gov.au for essential COVID-19 information, including government measures and links to State and Territory health advice.

Common questions about temporary changes to our services

Can I go to my local registry to speak with someone about my case?

Our registries are open during our regular business hours (from 8:30am to 5:00pm weekdays, excluding public holidays).

We ask that you consider whether you need to visit us in person or whether you can [contact us](#) another way instead.

If it is necessary to visit us in person, you should call ahead on [1800 228 333](tel:1800228333) to plan your visit.

Should I visit the AAT to submit documents for an existing case?

You can [submit a document](#) online for any case that has already been lodged with the AAT.

If you are unable to submit your documents to us online, by [email](#) or by [post](#), you may visit one of our registries during business hours.

You should call ahead on [1800 228 333](tel:1800228333) to plan your visit.

Should I visit the AAT to submit documents for an existing case?

You can [submit a document](#) online for any case that has already been lodged with the AAT.

If you are unable to submit your documents to us online, by [email](#) or by [post](#), you may visit one of our registries during business hours.

You should call ahead on [1800 228 333](tel:1800228333) to plan your visit.

How will my hearing or conference go ahead if I can't visit in person?

Most of our hearings and conferences are still being conducted remotely by video conference or telephone. In limited circumstances, we are arranging in person hearings where they are required.

If you are required to attend a hearing or conference in person, and are unable to do so, call us on [1800 228 333](tel:1800228333).

How do I lodge my application?

We prefer [online lodgement](#) for new applications. This helps to make sure you meet any time requirements, especially as there may be postal delays during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The way you are able to lodge will differ depending on the type of government decision you want us to review. Find out how your case should be lodged on our [Apply for a review](#) page.

Are video and phone hearings open to the public?

Many AAT hearings are open to the public, even if they are held by video conference or phone.

If you want to observe a hearing but are not one of the parties, you will need to let us know. Read about changes to the way [members of the public attend AAT hearings](#), including how to request to attend a video or phone hearing.

How do I find out when your offices are open again?

Please continue to monitor this website for further news and updates.

FAIR WORK COMMISSION

For further information, visit [the Fair Work Commission's website](#).

ON 6 JUNE 2022, THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION'S COVID-19 PAGE WAS UPDATED WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Office closures

Updated 6 June 2022: Counters are open at all our offices.

Overview

We follow the latest government advice to keep people safe when they come to the tribunal or our offices.

From time to time, we may have to make changes at short notice.

We are doing our best to deal with all cases quickly, but some things are taking longer than normal. You may need to wait longer on the phone to speak to us and we may need a little more time to reply to emails.

The pandemic has also had an impact on requests to change [enterprise agreements](#) and [awards](#).

Office closures

Updated 6 June 2022: Counters are open at all our offices.

We encourage you to apply online or email documents to melbourne@fwc.gov.au. You can also send documents to your nearest [Commission office](#).

If you are not sure what to do, you can call us on 1300 799 675.

Coronavirus, vaccinations, and workplace law

We may be able to help if you have:

- a [dispute about JobKeeper](#)
- a [dispute about the COVIDSafe app](#) if you choose not to download or use it.

The **Fair Work Ombudsman** has information about [Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws](#). They can give you advice on topics including:

- [JobKeeper payments](#)
- [pay and sick leave entitlements](#)

- [stand downs from work](#)
- [school closures and taking care of a child](#)
- [other rights and responsibilities at work during the pandemic](#).

The **ATO** manages the [JobMaker hiring credit](#) scheme.

Vaccinations

All employers must minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. This is essential even where their employees have been vaccinated.

Information on vaccinations and what employees and employers can (and can't) do, is available from:

- The Fair Work Ombudsman – [COVID-19 vaccinations and the workplace](#)
- Safe Work Australia – general and industry-specific guidance and requirements at [COVID-19 vaccines information](#)
- The Department of Health – [Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#).

Urgent applications

To deal with the effects of Covid-19, some businesses need to change enterprise agreements or other instruments. If your application to vary an agreement is urgent, email it to COVID19Applications@fwc.gov.au.

Changes to some cases

The pandemic is affecting many different types of case. We will tell you if we change anything about your case.

We hold conciliation and mediation sessions by phone

Some cases have [conciliation](#) or [mediation](#) as part of their process. Instead of meeting in person, you can take part from home or where you work. You and your lawyer or representative can join by phone conference. You don't need to come to our offices.

We hold hearings and conferences by phone or videoconference

Where possible, we are holding [hearings and conferences](#) by phone or videoconference. When we contact you about a case, we will tell you how to take part.

As the restrictions ease, more hearings will be face-to-face. You should always follow the rules on wearing a mask in your state or territory. We may ask you to wear a mask during a face-to-face hearing, except when you are speaking.

Some cases are 'on the papers'

We may not organise a hearing if a Commission Member decides to deal with your case 'on the papers'. This means they will use the written materials you provide. You do not have to give evidence or submission in person.

If this happens, the Member will send you directions. 'Directions' tell you what evidence or submissions you need to give the Member. They use this to make a decision about your case.

We may delay some cases

It is not always suitable to hold a case by phone, videoconference or on the papers. We will postpone these cases until it is safe for them to take place face-to-face.

We ask for evidence and submissions by email

If we ask you for submissions or evidence (such as witness statements), please email them. The contact details are on the information we sent you about your hearing or conference. You can also contact us if you have any questions.

Some requirements for statutory declarations are different

You only need to fill out a [statutory declaration](#) if you are applying for a WHS entry permit. This is a rule in the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2011*, which has not changed. For all other applications, you need to submit a declaration instead. You must sign the declaration before you send it to us. You do not need a witness to sign it and you no longer need to fill out a statutory declaration.

Part of the appeals process has changed

When you apply for permission to appeal, you need to [create an appeal book](#). You should email this instead of sending a printed copy. Send the appeal book to melbourne@fwc.gov.au. The maximum email size is 10Mb.

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For further information, visit [the Copyright Tribunal's website](#).

THE TRIBUNAL RELEASED THE FOLLOWING COVID-19 NOTICE ON 18 MARCH 2020:

Filing of documents

At a registry

The Copyright Tribunal relies upon the registries of the Federal Court of Australia in relation to the over the counter filing of documents. Persons wishing to file documents in this manner should therefore look to notices or advice on the [Federal Court of Australia website](#) in relation to when a registry in a particular State is open.

Electronic filing

In the event of any registry closure, and for those who wish in any event to file electronically, a document may be filed via the following email address: query@fedcourt.gov.au. This email address will be monitored for any filings (with an updated email address to be provided in due course).

General Inquiries

General inquiries concerning the Tribunal should continue to be directed to the telephone numbers for the [Federal Court of Australia Registry](#) in the State or Territory concerned, according to any advice on the court's website.