



## **CORONERS COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Coronial inquests/inquiries into 2019-20 New South  
Wales Bushfire Season and related deaths**

**Virtual Courtroom Protocols and Procedures**

**August 2021**

## Virtual Courtroom

A Virtual Courtroom brings the physical courtroom to a virtual space. It is a digital method for court cases to be progressed without the need for participants to attend in person.

The use of this technology is at the Coroner's discretion, however, there is greater reliance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note that virtual courtrooms are still formal courtrooms and as such all usual court etiquette, protocols, procedures and restrictions apply.

## How to connect to a Virtual Courtroom

Parties can connect to the Virtual Courtroom in one of the following two ways:

1. *Video conference* – via a dedicated Weblink (using Cisco Webex). The Weblink can be used from any device (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop) with an unrestricted internet connection and a web browser with audio and video capability.
2. *Telephone conference* – dialling in via the dedicated Virtual Courtroom number.

The Court will provide you with connection details for the Virtual Courtroom prior to the relevant hearing date.

### **Audio/Video Link (AVL)**

3. Ensure your device has a working camera. Video conferencing requires a camera to be enabled.
4. It is recommended that you use a headset and external microphone with your device to minimise audio interference issues.
5. The Cisco Webex meeting platform is the preferred interface for the Coroners Court. You will need to download the Cisco Webex app (free of charge) to enable you to use the Weblink provided by the Court. It is recommended that this occur prior to the date the hearing commences.
6. Once you have downloaded the Cisco Webex app, click on the Weblink provided to you by the Court prior to your hearing.
7. You will be asked to enter your name. Then click on “*Join Meeting*”.

8. This will then bring up a page where you will be asked to enter your name, along with a Webex Meeting ID.
9. Once you have entered the Webex Meeting ID, you are 'live' in the Virtual Courtroom.
10. Whilst waiting for your hearing to start and during the course of the hearing, please ensure that the microphone on your device is muted so that no background sound is inadvertently transmitted into the Court.
11. Once your hearing has started, please follow the directions of the Coroner and Counsel Assisting.
12. If you wish to speak during your hearing, please unmute your device to do so, and then re-mute your device when you have finished.
13. When you have finished in the hearing, please disconnect the Weblink.

It is strongly recommended that you trial your connection on the day prior to hearing to make sure you are able to connect to the Courtroom link, and that on the day of the hearing you establish the AVL link no later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement of the hearing.

You may also wish to consider the following suggestions:

- Use a device which is independent and not connected to a work/company network unless your IT section can confirm there is no issue with accessing Cisco Webex.
- Use a Personal computer, as opposed to an Apple Mac, if possible.
- Use Chrome as the preferred compatible browser (Version 78 or later). Internet Explorer does not work well on this system and the Opera browser does not work.

### ***Telephone conferencing***

14. Dial the phone number provided to you by the Court prior to your hearing.
15. You will then be asked to enter a 'Meeting ID' followed by a hash (#) - the Meeting ID will also be provided to you by the Court in advance.
16. Once you have entered the Meeting ID, you are 'live' in the Virtual Courtroom.
17. Whilst waiting for your hearing to start and during the course of the hearing, please ensure that the phone is muted so that no background sound is inadvertently transmitted into the Court.
18. Once your hearing has started, please follow the directions of the Coroner and Counsel Assisting.
19. If you wish to speak during your hearing, please unmute your phone to do so, and then re-mute your phone when you have finished.

20. When you have finished in the hearing, please end the call.

## **Protocols for the Virtual Courtroom**

1. The AVL/teleconference details provided by the Court are confidential. You must not provide these details to any other person.
2. Ensure that you use a quiet and private location to limit interference from background noise.
3. Ensure that there is sufficient internet coverage and connection on your device.
4. Whilst waiting for your hearing to start, please ensure that the microphone on your device is muted so that no background sound is transmitted into the Court.
5. Once your hearing has started, please follow the directions of the Coroner and Counsel Assisting.
6. Ensure that you identify yourself before speaking and refrain from speaking over each other where possible to accommodate the reduced social cues available, and to assist with the court's transcription process.
7. Ensure all relevant materials to be relied upon have been made available to the Court beforehand.
8. Observe all normal court etiquette and protocols in the Virtual Courtroom environment.
9. Note that an audio-visual recording will be made of the Virtual Courtroom.

**If you have any questions about this document please contact Lincoln Chee, Director, on 8688 0101 or by email to [bushfires.legal@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushfires.legal@justice.nsw.gov.au).**