



Mark Speakman
Attorney General
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

MEDIA STATEMENT

Sunday, 15 March 2020

UPDATE ON COURT ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS

I support the changes being implemented by NSW courts to minimise the spread of coronavirus, while keeping the courts as operational as possible.

From tomorrow (Monday, 16 March), all new Supreme and District Court jury trials will be suspended until further notice. Jury trials already underway will continue.

Visitors not involved in proceedings are asked to stay away from any NSW court building and measures will also be implemented to reduce contact between parties in current matters.

The Local Court will also implement greater use of Audio Visual Link (AVL) technology to minimise the number of people in court.

Court staff and participants will continue to be provided with the latest information on self-protection and hygiene. In addition, the Department of Communities and Justice will be working in partnership with NSW Health on further measures to reduce the impact of coronavirus.

I acknowledge this will cause inconvenience, which is why a range of additional options to mitigate disruptions are being discussed with heads of jurisdiction.

These include exploring:

- Ways to centralise bail applications in the Local Court at key locations.
- Having judge-only trials in the District and Supreme Courts, by consent, where possible.
- Filling judge's lists with matters other than jury trials. For example, sentencing matters may be an area where any backlog could be worked through.
- Measures to reduce physical contact between jurors in current trials.
- Pre-recording evidence from key witnesses, for use in jury trials when they resume.

For further details, visit:

http://www.supremecourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/coronavirus_covid19_announcement.asp

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