



3 September 2020

MEDIA STATEMENT

RESUMPTION OF JURY TRIALS IN AUCKLAND FROM 7 SEPTEMBER 2020

This statement explains that jury trials will resume in Auckland from Monday 7 September 2020 and provides information as to the arrangements put in place to keep jurors safe while Auckland remains at Alert Level 2 with extra restrictions.

Jury trials to resume in Auckland

The Chief Justice has announced that jury trials will resume in the Auckland High Court, Auckland District Court and Manukau District Court from Monday 7 September 2020.

Arrangements in place

This decision follows a review of health and safety arrangements for jurors by the judiciary and the Ministry of Justice. In the Auckland and Manukau District Courts, members of the profession have seen the arrangements and any suggestions they have made have been considered. Similar arrangements are in place for the Auckland High Court.

All courts nationwide have arrangements to provide safe distancing for all participants including jurors, no matter where they are in the courthouse. From next week, these arrangements will include Perspex screens placed within the jury box as an added level of protection for jurors in the Auckland area.

Since 31 August 2020, all people in Auckland courthouses have been asked wear to masks. Masks are provided at the security screening stations.

The Ministry of Justice's health and safety arrangements for Alert Level 2 can be found at [MOJ Health and Safety at Alert Level 2 \(Sept\)](#). Alert Level 2 physical distancing arrangements are in place throughout all courthouses. Supplies of gloves and hand sanitiser are also available for all participants at court.

Photographs of distancing arrangements and the use of Perspex screens within jury boxes are attached.



Jurors asked to attend as per their summons

People who are summoned to appear at the Auckland High Court, Auckland District Court and Manukau District Court on Monday 7 September 2020 are requested to attend in accordance with their summons or any later instructions from registry staff.

Important service

Jury trials recommenced throughout New Zealand on 3 August 2020 and have continued outside Auckland during the recent increase in Alert Levels.

The Chief Justice says that due to the commitment of all those participating, jury trials have been able to run successfully in both the District Court and High Court outside of Auckland under Alert Level 2 conditions. She thanks those who have answered their jury summons since trials resumed.

The Chief Justice also wants jurors to have confidence their health and safety is of the utmost importance when attending court.

“Careful preparations have been taken by the Ministry of Justice to ensure high levels of protection are in place for jurors when jury trials resume in Auckland on Monday,” Chief Justice Dame Helen Winkelmann says.

“Jurors should have confidence in answering their jury summons and it is important they do so. Jurors make a vital contribution to the delivery of justice in their communities. Jury service is a demonstration of commitment to those communities as we all adapt to the challenges of COVID-19.”

Notes for editors

Auckland

The courts have a Business Continuity Plan for jury trials at Alert Level 2 which is working well throughout the rest of the country. It addresses physical distancing in the court precincts and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Jury trials did not restart in Auckland as soon as it moved to Alert Level 2 because of the additional restrictions in that city. The judiciary and Ministry of Justice wished to review arrangements against those additional restrictions.

It was also necessary for counsel to return to their offices and to prepare adequately for trial. Briefing of witnesses is particularly challenging when everyone is expected to stay at home.



Te Tumu Whakawā o Aotearoa | The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann | Chief Justice of New Zealand

Courts are classified as a category A business or service under the [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Alert Level Requirements\) Order 2020](#). This means physical distancing of 1-metre is required (cl 15). Limits on gatherings under the Order do not apply to the courts. QR codes are displayed and contact tracing records are kept.

Rest of the country

Mask wearing is encouraged in courts in the rest of the country. Perspex screens are being progressively rolled out.

Helen Winkelmann
Chief Justice | Te Tumu Whakawā

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Perspex screens in expanded jury boxes (front view)





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Examples of distancing for jurors in expanded jury box



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