



Children's Court Victoria

MEDIA STATEMENT

Following the [Media Release and Statement](#) issued by the Chief Justice of Victoria and Chair of the Courts Council, the Hon. Anne Ferguson on 20 March 2020, the Children's Court of Victoria issues the following statement regarding its operations.

The Children's Court of Victoria plays a critical and specialist role in the administration of justice for the children, young people and families of the State of Victoria.

The Children's Court remains open and operational at all venues.

The Children's Court has today announced a number of modified procedures effective from **Monday 23 March 2020** to reduce the need for physical appearances before the Court and to increase social distancing at all Court venues in the interests of the health, safety and wellbeing of all court-users.

These modified procedures include the following:

- Maximising the use of technology and audio-visual links where possible, including for children held on remand in youth detention centres;
- Prioritising urgent applications (e.g. bail applications);
- Continuing the operation of the Fast Track Remand Court which actively case-manages the criminal cases where children are on remand;
- Adjourning all matters where children are charged on summons for a period of 12 weeks, unless the Court directs otherwise;
- Suspending the operations of the Children's Koori Court to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the Elders and Respected Persons who are integral to Children's Koori Court proceedings;
- For child protection proceedings, enabling child protection practitioners to file all applications and court documents electronically;
- Not requiring parties or child protection practitioners to attend Court in person where their legal representatives have instructions and are able to contact their client by phone;

- Children placed in secure welfare may appear by audio-visual link;
- Prioritising child protection cases where a child is placed in out-of-home care; and
- Prioritising Family Violence intervention order applications.

The following notice has been placed at Court entrances on 20 March 2020 ([CSA Notice](#)) for the purpose of maintaining the security, good order and management of Court premises in the interests of all court users.

Further details of the Court's responses are outlined in the Court's [COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan](#) on its website and its [Public Notice: COVID-19 Measures](#) which outlines practical information for legal practitioners and court users.

Quote from the President of the Children's Court, Judge Amanda Chambers:

"The Children's Court of Victoria plays a critical and specialist role in the administration of justice for the children, young people and families of the State of Victoria.

These measures have been introduced to continue the vital operations of the Children's Court, whilst protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our Court users, staff and the broader community."

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