



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

8 June 2020

Dear practitioners

**COVID-19 - movement to Alert Level 1**

I write to update you on court arrangements for Alert Level 1.

The Alert Level 2 protocols for all courts will be suspended from midnight tonight. New protocols are currently with the profession for consultation and will be posted by Wednesday afternoon.

Pending the posting of those protocols I can confirm that from tomorrow onwards physical distancing will not be enforced in courts. However current hygiene measures will be maintained, as will contact tracing.

Over the next couple of days, the Ministry of Justice will be finalising implementation of QR Code contact tracing. Until that is in place, paper-based contact tracing will be continued. For the first two days of Alert Level 1 (Tuesday and Wednesday) there may be delay at the entry to courthouses as manual tracing records are completed. We therefore encourage the profession to encourage clients to keep numbers of supporters attending at court to a minimum on Tuesday and Wednesday to avoid congestion at the entry and queuing.

Each court's protocol for Alert Level 1 will address arrangements for filing.

Nationwide, jury trials will begin in the District Court and the High Court in the first week of August (with late July in the District Court in Dunedin).

I thank the profession for its continued engagement with the judiciary as we have worked through the various operational challenges created by COVID-19. Our ability to continue to administer justice throughout this period is due to the work of and cooperation between the judiciary, the profession and the Ministry of Justice.

Hei konā mai i roto i aku mihi,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Winkelmann', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Helen Winkelmann  
**Chief Justice/Te Tumu Whakawā**