



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

17 August 2021

MEDIA STATEMENT

COURT ARRANGEMENTS For COVID-19 Alert Level 4 (Delta Variant)

The Government announced today that all of New Zealand will move to Alert Level 4 from 11.59 pm on 17 August 2021. The length of this lockdown is at least 7 days for Auckland and Coromandel regions, and for at least 3 days for the rest of New Zealand.

This media release announces the arrangements for all courts under these Alert Level settings.

INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEDNESDAY 18TH AND THURSDAY 19TH AUGUST 2021

Courts remain an essential service throughout all COVID-19 alert levels.

Non-priority proceedings adjourned for the next 48 hours

All matters which are not “priority proceedings” will be adjourned for the next 48 hours across all courts.¹ This includes jury trials.

The registries will be in contact with counsel and parties to provide revised hearing dates in due course. For the Court of Appeal, adjourned proceedings are likely to be able to be heard on Friday 20th or Monday 23rd.

Contact 0800 COURTS or the registry if you require further information.

Priority proceedings will continue to be heard

On Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th August, all courts will only hear “priority proceedings”. Priority proceedings are, broadly speaking, those which fall into the following categories:

- Liberty of the individual;
- Personal safety and wellbeing; or
- Matters in which resolution is time-critical.

A list of specific matters which fit this definition can be found in each court’s protocols.

Contact 0800 COURTS or the registry if you require further information.

¹ Except for *Chen v NZ Transport* in the Environment Court, which will be heard this week.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMENCING FRIDAY 20TH AUGUST 2021

Commencing Friday 20th, the Court of Appeal, High Court and District Court will hear matters in accordance with the relevant Alert Level protocols.

For the Supreme Court, Māori Land Court, Environment Court, Employment Court, and Waitangi Tribunal, hearings on Friday 20th are adjourned. Priority proceedings will, however, continue to be heard. Thereafter, matters will be heard in accordance with the relevant Alert Level protocols.

Hearings will occur using remote participation, unless in-person attendance is unavoidable. Contact 0800 COURTS or the registry if you require further information.

JURY TRIALS

Most jury trials will be adjourned for the length of the COVID-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown. However, those which have reached the stage of deliberation are adjourned for the next 48 hours only. The registries will be in contact before Friday 20th with jurors and counsel to advise them of arrangements.

FILING AND PAYMENT OF FEES

The courts will continue to receive filing of court documents and payment of fees in all proceedings, in accordance with usual arrangements for electronic filing and payment. Parties can [File and Pay online](#).

Courts (including registry counters) will be closed to the public. Individual courts may have arrangements for filing of documents by drop-box – see the courts' protocol for further details.

REVISED ALERT LEVEL 4 PROTOCOLS

The Alert Level 4 protocols for all courts are being revised and will be published on the [Courts of New Zealand](#) website as soon as possible.

LIMITATION ON ATTENDANCE AT COURT

Wherever possible, all hearings will take place by remote participation. Where an in-person court hearing must take place, attendance in court will be strictly limited.

The registry will provide information to parties on how to connect to a hearing. If you are unable to attend remotely, you can apply in writing to the presiding judge for permission to attend in-person.

MEDIA

Media can attend hearings remotely. See the [Courts of New Zealand website](#) for more information.

MASKS

Masks are to be worn at all times within the courthouse, unless permission is given by a judge.

NEXT STATEMENT

The Chief Justice will issue a further statement later this week.

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