



## **Supreme Court & National Court**

### **Practice Direction No 2 of 2020**

### **COVID-19 Teleconference Sitings**

**This Practice Direction is issued after consultation with the Chief Justice**

**Pursuant to the PNG Judiciary COVID-19 Response Notice issued by the Chief Justice on Wednesday 18 March 2020, I now issue the following instructions on the use of teleconference sittings.**

1. During the State of Emergency imposed by the Executive Government, the Judiciary will be conducting hearing for matters that are considered urgent or for specific purposes only as approved.
2. A list of judges as approved by the Chief Justice will preside over such matters in Courtrooms 8, 9 and 1 as approved.
3. Courtrooms 8 and 9 are now equipped with telephone conferencing equipment which will now be utilised for case hearing over the phone line.
4. Protocol for access to listing of a matter;
  - a. A new matter or existing matter is brought to the attention of the Registrar or a Deputy Registrar as being urgent.
    - i. This will be done by way of e-filing or filing through email
    - ii. An appropriate letter expression urgency must also be sent to the Registrar.
  - b. The request is brought to the attention of the Deputy Chief Justice.
  - c. Once approved the matter is placed on a list of matters to be heard on a given day.
  - d. Matters are listed 20 minutes apart by the Registry commencing at 9:30 am or 1:30 pm or as directed by a Judge.
  - e. Lawyers or litigants are advised by the Registry of the date and time of hearing.
  - f. Lawyers or Litigants are required to provide a phone number of a landline to which the court will call. Where landline is not available the lawyer or litigant can provide a number for a mobile phone provided;
    1. The mobile phone is one where it is capable of having sufficient frequency

2. The mobile phone is fully charged
    3. The mobile phone is located at a place where the mobile reception is very clear, and the frequency does not fluctuate.
  - g. Ten minutes prior to a hearing the lawyer and or the litigant must be ready to receive a call from the Court.
  - h. The associate to the presiding judge will call the lawyer or litigant whose case appears first on the list at or around 9:20 am
    - i. The case will proceed thereafter;
    - ii. Lawyers and litigants second on the list of cases and others thereafter listed must be ready to receive a call from the Court twenty minutes or so thereafter.
    - iii. The practice is the same at 1:20 pm.
  - i. Where a matter is adjourned to a later date during the SOE, appropriate directions will be issued by the Court.
5. Protocol for the conduct of the hearing;
  - a. A lawyer or litigant who is called upon to use the teleconference facilities must;
    - i. On answering the call state, his or her name and her role in the case.
    - ii. Must wait for the other party to respond in the same manner if also called upon by the Court.
    - iii. Both lawyers and litigants after being introduced must wait to be called upon by the presiding judge to address the Court.
    - iv. When speaking the lawyer or litigant must again identify himself or herself before addressing the Court to assist with correct identification of the speaker for transcription purposes.
    - v. This protocol should be followed until the hearing is concluded.
6. Orders- decisions
  - a. At the end of the proceedings, the Lawyer/ Litigant granted any order or decision must send a draft to the associate for endorsement unless the Court is able to release a signed version of the order before the day's end.
  - b. After endorsement by the associate, the Registrar will sign and issue a sealed copy of the order- decision to all concerned.

Dated the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020



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Ian V Augerea  
Registrar