



CHIEF JUSTICE'S CHAMBERS
FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA
Law Courts Building
Queens Square, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: +61 29230 8438

25 March 2020

Dear Presidents

Federal Court of Australia – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Update 10

I have little fresh information for you today.

The Court is advancing its capability in relation to remote hearings.

A number of judges are using the Teams facility.

There have been teleconference problems. They are largely not the fault of the court but rather AAPT capacity issues.

Yesterday we published a Special Measures document that sought to clarify a number of matters. We will have to amend it. In particular s. 10.2 was less than perfectly drafted. We will make sure in the re-phrased paragraph 10.2 we will make clear the importance of first going to the docket judge. If that is unsatisfactory or inappropriate the paragraph will deal with approaching the National Operations Registry (NOR).

One of the issues that is constraining the use of the Microsoft Teams product is the equipment restrictions that we have on some court rooms that mean that there is a limited capacity to provide timely and reliable transcript. We are working on this equipment capacity but when this equipment is not available, Teams can still be used but the transcript will be delayed and may be inferior. In any event a recording is to be made available. I am urging my judges to emphasize to the profession the quality of their note taking as well as to ensure that hearings are disciplined in who is speaking so that there is a minimum interruption and overlaying of competing conversations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Allsop'.

The Hon James Allsop
Chief Justice

