

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Colleagues,

Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia launch new urgent COVID-19 Lists

As you will be aware, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia ('the Courts') have seen a significant increase in urgent applications filed since restrictions have been imposed as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These increases have the potential to overload particular Registries and Duty Lists and, if not properly managed, may lead to increased risks for children and vulnerable parties.

As a result, the Courts have established two dedicated, national specialist lists named the COVID-19 Lists. The Lists are aimed at dealing with urgent applications caused directly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Lists will commence operation tomorrow, **29 April 2020**.

A streamlined filing process has been established. Two National COVID-19 List Registrars have been appointed to oversee the Lists on a national basis, assessing the cases filed and, if they meet the criteria, allocating a first Court date within 3 business days. If the application is part of an existing proceeding and assigned to a Judge, the docketed Judge will be consulted prior to listing and may hear the application. Otherwise, it will be assigned to a Judge or Registrar nationally to be heard electronically.

Both the Deputy Chief Justice and I will be overseeing and monitoring the performance of the Lists.

If applications do not meet the criteria, but they are urgent they will go into the normal abridgement list. If they are not urgent they will be treated like any other application and be referred to the Duty Lists.

Please see the attached [Joint Practice Direction 3 of 2020 – The COVID-19 List](#) for more information. The JPD will be made available on a dedicated page on each Court's Website as well as a template affidavit for each Court and a covering letter for urgency by close of business today.

I would like to especially thank Angela Lynch for her inspiration in starting these Lists, as well as Hayley Foster, Helen Matthews and Tania Clarke for their co-operation and advice.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this important initiative for Australian families.

My very best wishes,



The Honourable Justice Alstergren
Chief Justice
Family Court of Australia
Chief Judge
Federal Circuit Court of Australia

Enclosure: Joint Practice Direction 3 of 2020 – *The COVID-19 List*

The Hon. Justice William Alstergren
Chief Justice
Family Court of Australia
Chief Judge
Federal Circuit Court of Australia
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I acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.