



Magistrates' Court of Victoria

Practice Direction

No. 4 of 2020

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE TRIBUNAL

1. The Magistrates Court of Victoria is committed to serving our community as we face COVID-19. **All our Courts across the State remain open.** After hearing from health experts, it is however necessary that we reduce the number of people in our court buildings and this requires us to change some aspects of our practice to ensure the health and safety of our judiciary, staff and all court users. We see these as temporary measures while we ensure we have sustainable solutions for the months ahead. This practice direction applies from 9am 24 March 2020.

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VoCAT) applications

2. VoCAT will continue to process all applications for assistance from victims of crime at all courts throughout Victoria.
3. For urgent requests for assistance, please email your local court VoCAT registrar.
4. Contact with VoCAT by email would be preferred in relation to submitting documents, seeking updates, notifying readiness to proceed.

Directions hearings

5. All directions hearings will be held by telephone and recorded by the Tribunal. Legal practitioners should notify the Tribunal of the most appropriate phone number to call.

Listed hearings

6. All listed hearings will be adjourned, with a nominal date of 15 June 2020.

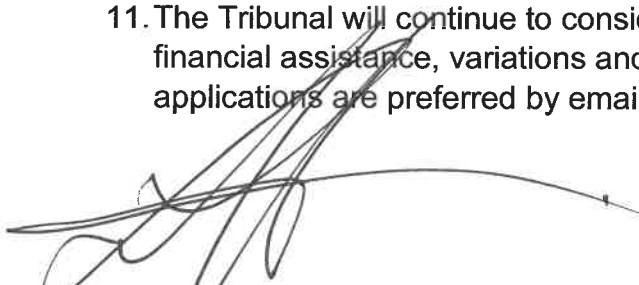
7. Parties will not be required to attend the Tribunal on 15 June 2020.
8. Prior to that date the tribunal will notify all parties of the adjourned hearing date.

Remote counselling and assessments

9. The Tribunal has authorised psychological counselling, where funded by the Tribunal, to be undertaken by phone or remotely.
10. The Tribunal has authorised psychologists/counsellor to undertake **urgent** report assessments by phone or remotely.

Interim awards

11. The Tribunal will continue to consider applications for interim awards of financial assistance, variations and payments, as they are lodged. Such applications are preferred by email where possible.



Judge Lisa Hannan
Chief Magistrate

Date: 23 March 2020