



**CHIEF JUSTICE'S CHAMBERS
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA**
Owen Dixon Commonwealth Law Courts
305 William Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: +61 3 8600 4355
Facsimile: +61 3 8600 4350

25 August 2020

Mr Sam Pandya
President
Law Institute of Victoria
Level 13, 140 William Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

By Email: president@liv.asn.au; ccocco@liv.asn.au

Dear Mr Pandya

Federal Circuit Court of Australia general federal law and migration hearings during Victorian Stage 4 Restrictions

I write to confirm that the Federal Circuit Court of Australia continues to remain open during the Victorian stage 4 restrictions. The Courts' operations continue via Microsoft Teams, and also by telephone in certain circumstances. Unless otherwise notified, all hearings in general federal law and migration will proceed as listed. Hearings will be conducted by Judges, Registrars and staff from their homes if possible but otherwise they will be in the Court buildings if a case is required to proceed and working from home is not reasonably practicable.

The Courts respect and support the purpose of the restrictions in place in Victoria and will do all they can to accommodate hearings being conducted with members of the profession, parties and witnesses appearing from their homes whenever it is reasonably practicable and safe to do so.

However, I confirm that the work performed by the Courts and members of the profession in the areas of migration and general federal law is priority work, owing to both its subject matter and the volume of work which the Court has to undertake, and as far as possible the profession should be given every courtesy to attend their chambers or offices when it is not reasonably practicable to work from home.

If members of the profession are unable to attend their places of work shortly before and during hearings when it is otherwise necessary to do so there is a risk that access to justice for litigants may be impacted.

I understand that it is an extremely difficult time for the profession and we will do all we can to accommodate the challenges which may arise, especially where parties and practitioners are appearing from home. It is imperative that the Courts, including their Judges and staff, together



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with the profession, do all they can to continue to provide essential services for Victorians, and to do so safely.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Alstergren', is written over the typed name.

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