

31 July 2020

Ms Margery Nicoll
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Law Council of Australia
DX 5719
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: alexandra.wormald@lawcouncil.asn.au

Dear Ms Nicoll

FEDERAL COURT PROCEDURAL REFORMS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Thank you for the memorandum dated 1 July 2020 inviting the Law Society of Western Australia to provide feedback on the above and for the extension of time to provide that feedback.

The memorandum notes that:

To assist in the improvement of virtual hearings beyond the COVID-19 measures, there is a need for Federal Courts and the legal profession to further develop guidance materials and training in areas of:

- *technological competency for judicial officers and court staff;*
- *standard practice directions for the use of technology at all levels;*
- *guidelines for legal practitioners for using appropriate levels of connectivity; and*
- *protocols for practitioners/litigants/witnesses dialling in to remote court events.*

The Law Society considers that protocols for members of the public to observe remote court events should also be developed. It seems there are a number of different arrangements currently in place and some consistency would be desirable. Presently, some hearings may be viewed via a link provided in the court list, whereas most others require a person to contact the presiding judicial officer's associate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter. If you have any queries please contact Mary Woodford, General Manager Advocacy on (08) 9324 8646 or mwoodford@lawsocietywa.asn.au.

Yours sincerely



Nicholas van Hattem
President