

State Coroner's Memorandum No2.

Management of court listings at Lidcombe during the COVID-19 pandemic

The NSW State Coroner, Teresa O'Sullivan, has advised the following procedures will apply in relation to the conduct of coronial proceedings at the Lidcombe Forensic Medicine and Coroners Court Complex (FMCCC), for matters listed from 1 June 2020.

The aim of these directions is to ensure compliance with COVID-19 physical distancing protocols in order to reduce the risk of infection at the FMCCC and in the community.

The operation of the Forensic Medicine and Coroners Court Complex at Lidcombe is essential and business continuity regarding the admission, examination and release of deceased persons is paramount.

1. From 1 June 2020 physical attendance at courts at the FMCCC will be permitted.
2. Court proceedings may continue to be heard using technology to enable remote appearance by any witness, legal representative, party or family member, where it can be arranged.
3. Everyone entering the FMCCC foyer will be asked three screening questions regarding their COVID-19 risk and asked to have their temperature taken.
4. Entry will be denied to anyone refusing to answer the screening questions or have their temperature taken.
5. Entry will be denied to anyone with a temperature of 38 degrees or above or to anyone answering positively to one of the screening questions.
6. There will be strict limits on the number of people allowed in each court, depending on the size of the court.
7. There will be strict limits on the number of chairs at the Bar Tables and the distance between them.
8. The court officers and Sheriffs will be able to provide advice on seating arrangements and limits. There will also be signs on each court clearly stating the number of people permitted in each court.
9. In some cases it may be necessary to use two courts in order to comply with the limits.
10. The media will be able to use the multipurpose rooms on Level 1 if available. There will be limits on the number of people allowed in the multipurpose rooms and physical distancing must be complied with. Please contact the Department of Communities and Justice Media Unit for further information.
11. Members of the public wanting to attend an inquest should contact the Coroners Court Registry on (02) 8584-7777 or by email to make arrangements for remote access.

These procedures will continue to be reviewed and modified if needed. The State Coroner will review the procedures at the end of July 2020.

20 May 2020