

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF NEW ZEALAND  
AUCKLAND REGISTRY**

**I TE KŌTI MATUA O AOTEAROA  
TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU ROHE**

IN THE MATTER                      of the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006

AND

IN THE MATTERS                    of candidates for admission as Barristers and  
Solicitors

Date of Minute:      13 October 2021

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**MINUTE OF MOORE J**  
**[Special procedures for admission ceremonies under**  
**elevated COVID-19 Alert Levels]**

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[1] This Minute is issued in relation to all admission ceremonies (“ceremonies”) scheduled in the Auckland High Court for the balance of this calendar year. Ceremonies are scheduled for 22 October 2021, 29 October 2021 and 26 November 2021.

[2] Under Alert Levels 3 and 4 all civil proceedings are required to be conducted remotely.<sup>1</sup> At the present time Auckland is at COVID-19 Alert Level 3. How long Auckland will remain at that level is impossible to predict at this time. This Minute and the protocols contained in it are intended to give all those participating in ceremonies presently scheduled or to be scheduled in the future, some measure of certainty.

[3] The Court is acutely conscious of the significance which admission to the bar represents and how important it is not only to candidates, whanau, family and friends but also to the profession. Admission Day is a very special occasion for all sorts of reasons. What follows is the Court’s attempt, albeit necessarily involving a compromise, at striking a balance between observing our obligations under elevated alert levels and meeting the reasonable expectations of candidates and their supporters.

[4] Thus, as a consequence, and irrespective of the particular COVID alert level then in force, the following procedures will apply to all ceremonies undertaken in this Court on or before 31 December 2021:

- (a) each ceremony will be conducted remotely;
- (b) each ceremony will be restricted to a maximum of 15 candidates;
- (c) at each ceremony the presiding Judge will sit in this Court’s historic No. 1 Courtroom with their Court Taker and will be remotely connected to the candidates and their moving counsel;

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<sup>1</sup> Protocol: COVID-19 Alert Level 3 and 4, Hon Justice S E Thomas, Chief High Court Judge, 23 August 2021.

- (d) candidates and moving counsel will join the ceremony remotely although they may do so from different, physical locations;
- (e) on Monday 18 October 2021 the Registry will be in contact with each candidate who has filed an application for admission, to advise:
  - (i) the date and time of the candidate's admission ceremony; and
  - (ii) details of how candidates, moving counsel, whanau, family and friends will connect to the ceremony; and
- (f) the dress code for candidates and moving counsel may be either ceremonial attire, that is wig, gown and bands/bibs; or formal business attire. The latter option is offered in recognition of the likelihood that the hiring of ceremonial attire may be difficult at this time. Particular cultural attire may be included, such as korowai and/or taonga etc.

[5] There will be no in-person/in-Court admission ceremonies undertaken by this Court this year. Any candidate who wishes to be admitted in-person may opt out of the remote ceremony process. In that event they are to forthwith advise the Registry of their wish to opt out and their application will not be heard at any remote ceremony this year. It is expected that the earliest in-person/in-Court ceremony will take place in this Court in either the first or second quarter of 2022.

[6] Finally, the Court is well aware that for some, perhaps many, it is disappointing that a virtual admission ceremony will take place in lieu of a formal, in person Court hearing held in the Victorian splendour of the No. 1 Court, the oldest working Courtroom in the Commonwealth. In an attempt to redress that concern, the Court is examining various options for those affected. These may include opportunities for candidates, moving counsel, whanau and supporters to attend the Court for photographs to be taken inside and outside the historic precinct and for those Judges who presided at the virtual ceremonies to attend in person in ceremonial regalia. If there is sufficient interest in this initiative, it is likely these events will take place in

the first part of next year, COVID-19 permitting. I shall ensure all candidates are kept appraised of developments.

[7] I direct that a copy of this Minute is to be placed on the Courts of New Zealand website and copies forwarded to the New Zealand Law Society, Auckland District Law Society and the New Zealand Bar Association.

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**Moore J**