

Hemant
fyi-request-16723-6e972bbf@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Hemant

Official Information Act 1982 request

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 12 September 2021. Your request was for the following information:

Can you please let me know what work is being done in order to enable virtual jury trials - either where the juries are each at a different location or in locations that are socially distanced

In response to your question, there are no plans to enable virtual jury trials. However, in our role of supporting the operation of the Courts, the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) has made modifications in each courtroom to allow jury trials to proceed safely with appropriate physical distancing in the court, jury assembly and jury retiring rooms. In some courtrooms, there will be additional screens between rows of jurors, where possible. More information on the health and safety measures in our courts can be found at justice.govt.nz/covid-19-information

Additionally, the Ministry completed work on the Jury Amendment Rules 2020 (the Rules) last year. The Rules allow modifications to the legislated preliminary balloting processes, when required, to meet physical distancing requirements. For more information on the Rules, you may wish to refer to the proactively released paper published on the Ministry's website at justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Proactive-release-Jury-Amendment-Rules-2020-SECURED.pdf

While the Ministry is responsible for supporting the operation of the Courts, the judiciary is responsible for conducting the business of the Courts. For instance, any jury trials held in the High Court and District Court during any COVID-19 Alert Levels are guided by the judicial protocols. Details of how these Courts are operating at different COVID-19 Alert Levels can be found at courtsfnz.govt.nz/publications/announcements/covid-19/court-protocols

If you require any clarification of the information contained in this response please contact Alison Horwood, Media Manager, Media and External Relations, by calling (04) 918 8836; or emailing media@justice.govt.nz

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the Office of the Ombudsman by writing to PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143; calling 0800 802 602; or emailing info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



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Jacquelyn Shannon
Group Manager, Courts and Tribunals, Regional Service Delivery

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