



PRACTICE DIRECTION NO 3

VIRTUAL COMMISSION HEARINGS

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Introduction

Due to the State of Emergency declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020, and associated directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer to manage coronavirus (COVID-19), future hearings of the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants (the Commission) will be conducted via a virtual hearing room until further notice.

What is a Virtual Hearing Room?

A virtual hearing room brings the physical Commission hearing room to a virtual space. It is a digital method for hearings to be progressed without the need for participants to attend in person.

Parties to proceedings can access the virtual hearing through the Commission using its nominated video conferencing platform. Virtual hearings are formal Commission hearings and the hearing procedures outlined in this and other Practice Directions apply with all necessary adaptations.

How to use a Virtual Hearing room

Contact details and instructions for the virtual hearing will be provided by the Commission to parties with leave to appear prior to the hearing date/s.

Access to hearing

The Commission is committed to conducting hearings in public to the extent possible while balancing competing interests of Public Interest Immunity, relevant legislative restrictions and non-publication orders.

Appearances

Ahead of each hearing, parties are to email contact@rcmpi.vic.gov.au with the following information:

- Counsel name.
- Instructor name, and the names of all parties in and those with access to the live virtual hearing room (such as those in adjoining meeting rooms).
- Contact name and mobile phone number at each participant location, should any technical issues arise.



Media access to hearing

Media representatives accredited by the Commission will be able to view real time streaming of the virtual hearing via a restricted IP address with additional password protection. Instructions for accredited media to access the live stream will be provided by the Commission prior to the hearing date/s.

Public access to hearing

Streaming of Commission virtual hearings will be available to the public via the Commission's website with a 20 minute delay. Exhibits and transcripts will be published as soon as practicable after hearings.

Orders

Orders made during these hearings will be published on the Commission's website as soon as practicable www.rcmpi.vic.gov.au .

Exhibits

Any documents intended to be tendered during the virtual hearing must be produced to the Commission prior to the virtual hearing in line with Commission's Document Management Protocol.

Parties are required to provide a version of the document, redacted for any claims of Public Interest Immunity or current non-publication orders to enable it to be displayed on the live stream.

If any document is amended during the hearing (e.g. a witness amends a statement), the hand amended hard copy is to be provided to the Commission as soon as practicable following the hearing.

Witnesses

Witnesses will be sworn in or affirmed by a member of Commission staff authorised under the *Inquiries Act 2014*.

Each witness will give Evidence in Chief, whether by statement or orally or both, through their counsel or lawyer (if legally represented) before being questioned by Counsel Assisting the Commission.

The Commissioner will inform parties with leave to cross-examine of the order in which the witness will be examined at the conclusion of Counsel Assisting's examination. The counsel or lawyer of the witness may then re-examine the witness. Counsel Assisting may then re-examine the witness.