

VISITING LAWYERS' INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is to assist visiting lawyers to navigate the Neighbourhood Justice Centre and best support their clients. It provides an overview of court practices, etiquette, a list of onsite support services and facilities available at the centre.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NJC

Established in 2007, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) is Australia's first **community justice centre**. It serves residents of the City of Yarra.

The NJC incorporates a multi-jurisdictional court and a range of treatment and support services, as well as a Community Corrections office, lawyers, mediation, restorative justice practices, justice innovation, crime prevention, education and communications teams. Check our website for more information: www.neighbourhoodjustice.vic.gov.au

NJC COURT ETIQUETTE

While endeavouring to deliver justice with the least formality practicable, **regular court etiquette and processes** apply.

Please ensure you announce yourself to Registry on arrival and provide any documents that you intend to tender to the court as part of proceedings to be placed on the court file.

IMPORTANT: the magistrate prefers to read reports prior to hearing. Please file any reports you intend to rely on in court with Registry when you first make your appearance, or as early as possible. If it's a return of the matter, please file reports with Registry in advance, by at least 4pm the day before your hearing. Fax: 9948 8699 or email: njccoordinator@magistratescourt.vic.gov.au.

For criminal matters, your client is to sit next to you at the bar table and will often be asked questions directly by the court. For family violence/personal safety matters, your client is to sit in the front row directly behind you.

If the court is sitting, please bow when entering the court room and when the magistrate enters and leaves. Please stand when addressing the court unless it is a Children's Court matter.

Please seek leave to discuss matters with your client when court is sitting.

SUMMARY CASE CONFERENCING

A police prosecutor staffs the office adjacent to the court room to deal with any queries that may arise regarding your client's matter. In relation to summary case conferencing in advance of court, please send queries to: neighbourhoodjustice.caseconf@police.vic.gov.au

ONSITE SERVICES

Around 17 local treatment agencies provide integrated assessment, treatment and referral services to people referred through the NJC's justice processes, as well as to Yarra residents who self-refer.

If you would like to refer your client to any of these services, please ask Registry to contact the service you require.

Non-legal support services

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services
- Alcohol and other drug clinician
- Case management
- Court Network support
- Family violence support (for women)
- Financial counselling
- Housing support
- LGBTIQ family violence support
- Male family violence respondent worker
- Mental health outreach support
- Mental health clinician
- Newly-arrived migrant support
- Victim support

Other onsite services

- Community Correctional Services
- Fitzroy Legal Service
- Mediation
- Police prosecutions
- Victoria Legal Aid

Neighbourhood Justice Officer—Jay Jordens

The Neighbourhood Justice Officer (NJO) organises and facilitates Problem Solving Meetings, a voluntary out-of-court process to assist people with criminal charges to address the underlying causes of their offending.

Where a matter is not finalised, lawyers are required to participate with their client in the Problem Solving Meeting.

This process is most suited to people who have a range of co-existing psychosocial issues and are at high risk of serving a custodial sentence.

Find the NJO on the court floor or ask at Registry.

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DIGITAL SERVICE

MyCase (for criminal matters only)

When your client gives their appearance, they will be checked in on our MyCase system. This will enable you to see what stage your client's matter is up to on the the MyCase screen outside the court room

THE NJC'S JURISDICTION

All **criminal matters (adults or children)** where the accused fits at least one of the criteria below:

- resides in City of Yarra
- is homeless and offence allegedly occurred in City of Yarra
- is homeless or residing in short-term accommodation in the City of Yarra
- is an Aboriginal person (including non-City of Yarra residents who demonstrate a close connection for social or community support within the City of Yarra) and offence allegedly occurred in City of Yarra

All **family violence/personal safety matters** which meet one of the following criteria:

- main cause of action occurred in City of Yarra
- either party resides in City of Yarra, is homeless or is an Aboriginal person (including non-City of Yarra residents who demonstrate a close connection for social or community support within the City of Yarra)

MATTERS HEARD IN THE NJC COURT

- Criminal charges (except sex offences)
- Family violence/personal safety intervention order applications
- Children's Court, criminal charges
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal applications
- VCAT residential tenancies applications, guardianship and other civil disputes.

The NJC does not hear contested matters for either the criminal or family violence cases.


FACILITIES AT THE NJC

If an **interpreter** has been booked for your client, they will wait in meeting room 11 on Level 2.

All **interview rooms** on the court floor are available for lawyers to meet with their clients (unless otherwise noted). Please vacate rooms once the client conference is over. Additional meeting rooms are available on ground floor.

Quiet Rooms located in a secure area of the building are available for your client if they fear coming into contact with the other party in intervention order matters. Please ask Registry.

The **NJC Canteen** on the court floor provides free tea, instant coffee and hot chocolate. Hot meals, espresso coffee and snacks can also be purchased from the canteen.



Neighbourhood Justice Centre

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