

MAGISTRATES COURT OF TASMANIA

CIRCULAR TO PRACTITIONERS

No 3 of 2019

Audio Conferencing - Use and Charges

This circular rescinds circular numbers 2/2000, 6/2000 and 4/2010.

The Magistrates Court of Tasmania allows parties to participate in court proceedings by audio conference. A party must obtain prior approval from the presiding magistrate in order to be allowed to appear by audio conference. Subject to obtaining that approval, audio conferencing is available in the criminal, civil, and coronial divisions.

Attending by telephone allows a party to participate in proceedings without having to attend the court in person. Audio conferences are generally only available for preliminary proceedings, directions hearings and interlocutory applications. Audio conferences are not designed for hearings/trials.

Parties may also be able to appear at conciliation conferences and/or mediations when not in the local area and at discretion of the conciliator, mediator or District Registrar.

Conditions of Audio Conferences

It is appropriate that the parties deriving the benefit of using the audio conferencing facilities be charged for the costs associated with the conference. As a result, the following charging policy will apply.

Audio conference charge –\$50 plus GST =\$55

For Tasmanian and interstate calls the audio conference charge covers both booking and the cost of the call. Additional charges apply for overseas calls.

A completed audio conference booking form must be lodged with the registry where the matter is proceeding, together with the audio conference charge, at least 2 clear business days before the court listing. Approved debtors may be invoiced.

The [audio conference booking form](#) is available on the Magistrates Court website.

A new booking form and audio conference charge must be submitted for each audio conference booking request.

The telephone number supplied must be a direct line to the person attending the conference and not via a call centre and/or reception.

When using a mobile phone the caller must ensure that they are in an area with good reception, and that there is no background noise such as wind, traffic, machinery etc. that may affect the audio quality.

Any person appearing before a court by audio conference must adhere to normal court protocols i.e. as if they were personally in the courtroom.

A person appearing by audio conference must be available at the appointed time and must remain available until the court contacts them. The audio conference may be one of several matters listed before the court and other matters may be dealt with first. A failure to answer when the court calls the nominated number may be considered a failure to appear before the Court and the matter may be dealt with in the party's absence.

Audio conference proceedings must not be recorded, without the magistrate's express permission (Section 11 *Court Security Act 2017*).

The audio conference charge is non-refundable.

Penelope Ikedife
Administrator of Courts

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