



What is a Virtual Courtroom?

A Virtual Courtroom brings the physical courtroom to a virtual space. It is a digital method for court cases to be progressed without the need for participants to attend in person.

Parties to proceedings can access the Virtual Courtroom using video and telephone conferencing applications (see below).

Virtual courtrooms are still formal courtrooms. All usual court etiquette, protocols, procedures and restrictions apply.

How to connect to a Virtual Courtroom

Parties can connect to a Virtual Courtroom in the following ways:

1. **Video conference** – via a dedicated *Weblink* or by using a dedicated video conferencing service or device. Weblinks can be used from any device (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop) with an unrestricted internet connection and a web browser with audio and video capability (*a List of Compatible Browsers is provided below*).
2. **Telephone conference** – dialling into via a dedicated Virtual Courtroom number.

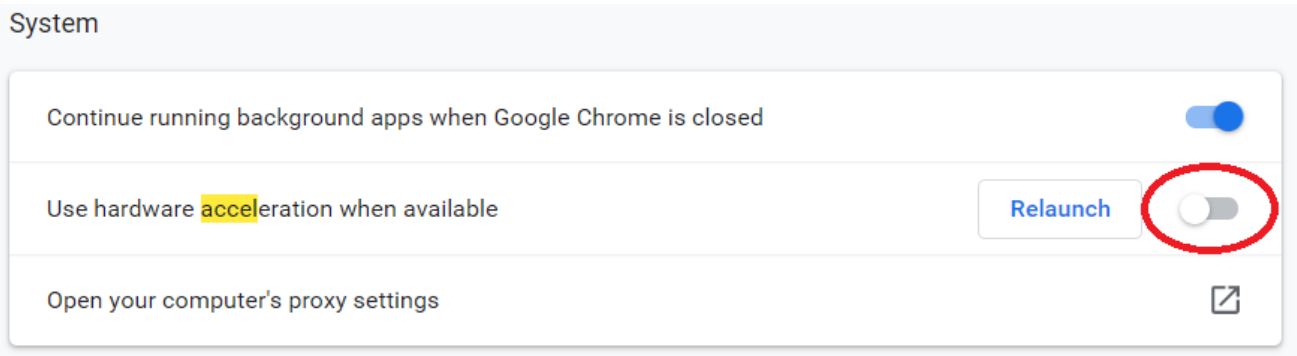
Contact details for the Virtual Courtroom will be provided by the Court prior to your appearance date.

List of Compatible Browsers

To connect using a *Weblink*, copy and paste the address provided into the following browsers (with minimum browser versions in brackets):

- Firefox (Version 74)
- *Google Chrome (Version 80)
- Chromium-based Microsoft Edge (Version 80)
- Apple Safari for macOS (Version 12 and 13)
- Apple Safari for iOS (Version 12.4 or 13.3)
- Yandex for Windows (Version 20)

***Google Chrome** - Due to changes to Google Chrome settings, you need to perform the following additional steps **PRIOR** to connecting to the virtual courtroom: *Settings> In the 'Search' field type 'Acceleration'> 'Use hardware acceleration when available' – TURN OFF – see below*



Testing your connection

Parties are **STRONGLY** advised to test the connectivity of their devices prior to appearing before a Virtual Courtroom using one of the following test links:

1. Weblink:
<https://avl.justice.nsw.gov.au/invited.sf?id=10091500&secret=Tla.N04VLX3odSANhwXrSA>
2. SIP Address: 10091500@justice.nsw.gov.au (for dedicated AVL suites)

In addition, participants may be contacted in advance of an appearance and asked to complete a test link with all participants.

Your connection instructions

Video conferencing using a 'Weblink'

1. Ensure your device has a working camera. Video conferencing requires a camera to be enabled.
2. It is **STRONGLY** recommended that participants use a headset + external microphone with their device to minimise audio interference issues. External speakers connected to devices are not recommended due to potential audio feedback issues.
3. Ensure that your device has reliable connectivity and coverage.
4. Please ensure that you are following the recommended browser requirements (set out above).
5. Click the *Weblink* provided immediately prior to your listed appearance time.

6. You will be asked to enter your name and details. Please use the following naming convention: *Surname – Party description* (Example: *Doe – Plaintiff* = representative John Doe – plaintiff's representative)
7. Click "Join Meeting".
8. Whilst waiting for your matter to be called, please ensure that the audio on your device is muted so that any background noise does not interfere with court proceedings.
9. End the *Weblink* when your matter is finalised.

Video conferencing using a dedicated video conferencing service or facility.

(This facility is available to practitioners using dedicated video conferencing equipment that typically are available in many offices suites or facilities).

1. Use the SIP address provided to connect your video conferencing equipment to the Virtual Courtroom prior to your listed appearance time.

Telephone conferencing

1. Dial the phone number provided to you immediately prior to your listed appearance time.
2. You will be greeted by the following audio message:
"Welcome to NSW Courts"
3. You will then be asked to enter a 'Meeting ID' followed by a hash (#) - the Meeting ID will be provided by the Court in advance.
4. Once you have entered the Meeting ID, you are 'live' in the Virtual Courtroom, all parties, including the Judge/Registrar can hear you, so please remain silent until your matter is called.
5. Whilst waiting for your matter to be called, please ensure that the audio on your device is muted so that no background noise can interfere with court proceedings.
6. End the call when your matter is finalised.

Protocols for the Virtual Courtroom

- *Be in a quiet and private location to limit interference from background noise.*
- *Ensure that there is sufficient internet coverage and connection on your device.*
- *Ensure all relevant materials to be relied upon have been made available to the Court beforehand.*
- *Observe all normal court etiquette and protocols in the Virtual Courtroom environment.*
- *It is STRONGLY recommended for all participants in the Virtual Courtroom to use headphones (+ microphone) on your device to minimise external noise interference. The use of external speakers is NOT recommended due to audio feedback issues.*
- *Once you are connected to the Virtual Courtroom, please mute the audio settings on your device to prevent any unintended interruptions to court proceedings.*
- *Refrain from speaking over each other as much as practical to accommodate the reduced social cues available, and to assist with the court's transcription process*

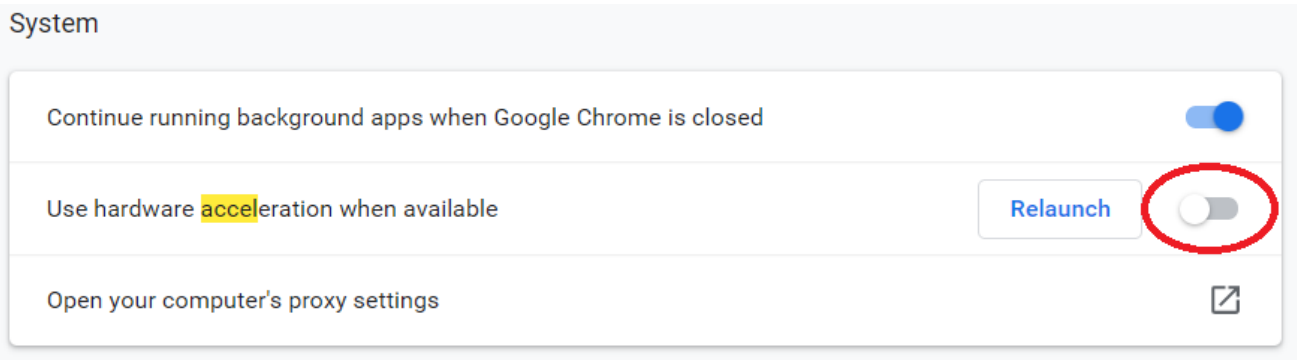
Frequently Asked Questions

I am using the Weblink and am being prompted to enter a 'meeting ID' and 'passcode', what should I do?

More than likely you are attempting to connect using an unsupported browser (e.g. Internet Explorer) or an out-of-date version of an approved browser. Please see the section above for recommended browsers and versions.

I am connecting to the virtual courtroom using Google Chrome on my computer and I am unable to see the courtroom, or my picture is 'freezing'.

Consider using alternative browsers (see list above). However, if you proceed to use Google Chrome, you need to perform the following additional steps PRIOR to connecting to the virtual courtroom: *Settings> In the 'Search' field type 'Acceleration'> 'Use hardware acceleration when available' – TURN OFF – see below*



If you are already connected to the virtual courtroom using the Google Chrome browser and are experiencing difficulties in seeing the courtroom (or your image is 'freezing'), follow these steps:

1. Disconnect your AVL connection to the virtual courtroom
2. In Google Chrome, go to *Settings*
3. Search for *Acceleration* in the search bar
4. Find the "Use Hardware Acceleration" setting and switch this OFF (see diagram above)
5. Close all instances/tabs of Google Chrome
6. Reopen Google Chrome and reconnect to the virtual courtroom via the AVL link.

If these steps present difficulties, consider using an alternative browser to Google Chrome (see list above) e.g. Safari, MS Edge.

I am connecting to the Virtual Courtroom and am experiencing audio feedback issues.

Audio feedback issues can be as a result of several issues. Typical sources include external speakers used by participants to amplify the sound on their connection devices (computer, laptop etc), Therefore it is recommended that you disconnect these devices. Other steps you can consider is to use a headset + microphone which will significantly minimise audio interference that may cause feedback.

Can I still attend court in-person?

Please check the current advice as published on the Supreme Court's website at www.supremecourt.justice.nsw.gov.au.

The Court will contact parties in relation to future listings to advise of the video and teleconference facilities available for their specific matter. Listings may alter at short notice and practitioners should refer to the Court's website for updates and review the daily listing notices.

Can non-related parties (e.g. junior clerks) join the telephone/video conference to observe?

The usual concept of open justice is applicable to the Virtual Courtrooms. However, the Court discourages the wide sharing of Virtual Courtroom contact information in order to minimise interruptions in the Virtual Courtroom environment.

In all cases, normal court protocols, etiquettes, procedures and restrictions apply. The public must put their calls on mute and silently observe so no background noise can interfere with court proceedings.

