



County Court
VICTORIA

Pronunciation of names and forms of address

Notice to practitioners

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Details

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1. Objective

- 1.1 The County Court of Victoria recognises that the correct pronunciation of names and forms of address, including pronouns, is a matter of respect and is an important component of ensuring public confidence in the proper administration of justice. As such, the Court seeks to facilitate a simple process by which legal practitioners can provide, and the Court can seek, guidance and clarification.
- 1.2 This Notice to the Practitioners takes effect from the date it is issued and, to the extent practicable, applies to proceedings whether commenced before or after that date.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Notice applies to all divisions of the Court.

3. Responsibility of legal practitioners

- 3.1 Where reasonably practicable prior to any hearing, legal practitioners should consider whether any names associated with their client's matter may be difficult to pronounce and provide the Court with the correct phonetic pronunciation for those names. This includes, but is not limited to, counsel, parties, witnesses, interpreters, solicitors and entities.
- 3.2 A practitioner may provide guidance as to the pronunciation of names by inserting the phonetic spelling of the name in square brackets directly after the name.
- 3.3 For example:
"The Plaintiff intends to call Professor Tim Soutphommasane [Soot-pom-ma-sarn] as an expert witness in X v Y".
- 3.4 A practitioner may provide guidance as to forms of address and pronouns for anyone associated with their client's case.
- 3.5 For example:
"The Defendant's form of address is Mx Smith [they/them]."
- 3.6 Practitioners may provide such guidance to the Court at the time of filing by an accompanying note or at a later time to the judge's associate by email or in written submissions.
- 3.7 Prior to a hearing, if the Court asks parties for appearances and other preliminary information, a practitioner should, where appropriate, provide the Court with the correct pronunciation of names and forms of address.
- 3.8 If appropriate, when announcing appearances at the commencement of a hearing, practitioners may verbally provide guidance as to the pronunciation of their name and their form of address.

4. Clarification by the Court

- 4.1 Should the Court wish to clarify the correct pronunciation of any name or form of address before or during a hearing, an associate may contact the parties via their solicitors. A judicial officer may also seek clarification during the running of the case by asking for clarification. Practitioners must therefore know the correct pronunciation of all names, forms of address and pronouns of those associated with their client's matter.