

Lawyering through COVID-19: A Dispute Resolution Perspective

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating once-in-a-lifetime challenges and change. For lawyers, creating a new work from home routine and establishing boundaries has been the critical first step in establishing a new normal. In this series, we talk to lawyers from different sectors of the industry about how they've adapted during the early weeks of this global pandemic.

Here, we talk with **Catherine Green and Melissa Perkin, Executive Directors** from the [New Zealand Dispute Resolution Centre](#).

This interview was conducted while the country was at Alert Level 1.

CATHERINE GREEN



MELISSA PERKIN



Executive Directors
New Zealand Dispute Resolution Centre

How prepared was your organisation to respond to the pandemic crisis in terms of your “work from home” arrangements and capabilities?

We had our systems set up in such a way that remote working was possible. In this regard, we have developed a bespoke online case management platform that enables our staff, external clients and their advocates to have continuous access to their case materials wherever they are located.

For our case management staff, we were required to purchase laptops for those staff who did not have them, but we managed to do that quickly and get them set up so all staff were able to work remotely by using a virtual private network, including

our reception staff. With the use of Zoom meetings and regular communications via WhatsApp, we were able to communicate regularly and effectively with all staff.

Our practitioners (arbitrators, mediators, adjudicators) often work remotely utilising technology to communicate with parties and to convene mediations, hearings, and other conferences. In many respects, it has been business as usual.

“ Our practitioners (arbitrators, mediators, adjudicators) often work remotely utilising technology to communicate with parties and to convene mediations, hearings, and other conferences. In many respects, it has been business as usual. ”