



NEW SOUTH WALES

THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF THE LOCAL COURT

13 November 2014

Ms Jane Needham SC
President
New South Wales Bar Association
Selborne Chambers
B/174 Phillip Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Needham

Thank you for your letter of 10 November 2014 concerning the predictability of Court Sitting hours and the correlation with the impact on working parents. I agree with you in today's society this is an issue that needs to be acknowledged.

So far as the sittings of the Local Court are concerned, the arrangements sanctioned by the Chief Justice in relation to sittings of the Supreme Court are acceptable to the Local Court. As a matter of practical experience sitting of the Local Court should, where possible, commence at 9.30am and not extend beyond 4pm. There will be occasions when circumstances dictate a departure from the norm, particularly in relation to sittings past 4.00pm. Invariably however, the decision to sit on is one that should only be taken with the informed agreement of the parties, and court staff (who also have issues surrounding child care and other commitments).

Nonetheless as a matter of principle the Court will adopt the agreed terms set out in your letter. To that end the details of your correspondence, the arrangements sanctioned by the Chief Justice, and confirmation of my agreement will be published in the next Chief Magistrate's Circular, to be issued on 17 November 2014.

Thank you for raising this important issue with me.

Yours sincerely


Judge Graeme Henson
Chief Magistrate