



Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 24 September 2020

VIDEO TECH WITNESSING DOCUMENTS TO CONTINUE IN HAWKESBURY

Video conferencing technology will continue to be available for witnessing important legal documents such as wills, powers of attorney and statutory declarations under a new law passed by NSW Parliament, said Ms Robyn Preston MP, Member for Hawkesbury.

“This law enables arrangements introduced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce face-to-face contact to continue. These arrangements allow a witness to see the signatory signing a document in real time over an audio-visual link (AVL),” Ms Preston said.

“People in Hawkesbury have already had the opportunity to take advantage of video conferencing technology to complete these transactions safely and efficiently and I’m thrilled that this practice can now continue.”

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the new law enables the remote witnessing of documents via video conferencing technology to continue until the end of 2021.

“The safety and wellbeing of NSW residents is a priority which is why we changed the way these documents can be witnessed,” Mr Speakman said.

“Countless legal documents are signed every day in front of one or more witnesses but video conferencing technology enables these important forms to be completed efficiently and without the risk of face-to-face interaction.”

Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello said in the absence of the extension, these arrangements would have terminated this month.

“Agility and the use of technology is critical in a COVID world. This digital option is safe, secure and makes life easier for customers,” Mr Dominello said.

“Extending remote witnessing arrangements will also allow us to assess whether these reforms should be continued in the longer term.”

Under the extension, a witness can sign a document, or a copy of the document, to confirm they witnessed the signatory’s signature via AVL. This could be done on a hard copy, which is scanned and sent to the witness or on an identical counterpart of the document the signatory signs.

Traditional methods of signing and witnessing these documents remain in place.