# What do I call the judge?

### Addressing judicial officers in Victoria

This guide makes it easy to know what to call a judge, magistrate or member of a tribunal when you are speaking or writing to them. It is important to remember that what you call them depends on the court or tribunal they are appointed to. It also depends on whether you are in court, outside court or at a social occasion.

## What do I call the judge?

### In court

When speaking to a member of a court or tribunal address them as ‘Your Honour’. Judicial registrars, and some VCAT positions where you use ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’, are exceptions to this.

#### In court, use ‘Your Honour’

If you are in a court or tribunal and called to address the judge or tribunal member, you should stand when you are spoken to or when speaking to them.

### Outside court

What you call members of courts and tribunals outside court will depend on the occasion. If you are unsure, ‘Sir’, ‘Madam’ or ‘Judge’ are all acceptable.

#### Formal social occasions

When speaking to a member of a court or tribunal at formal social occasions, a range of addresses can be used. For members of the Supreme Court of Victoria, use their position followed by their surname. For example, ‘Justice Brown’, compared to ‘Your Honour’ for a magistrate and ‘Judge’ for the State Coroner.

#### Informal social occasions

It can be difficult to know the correct etiquette when speaking to members of courts or tribunals at informal social occasions. If you are unsure, ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’ or ‘Judge’ are all acceptable. ‘Judge’ is not generally used for magistrates and tribunal members. If in doubt you can always ask them.

### In writing

When addressing a member of a court or tribunal in writing include their position and surname. In some circumstances you can also use their title, such as ‘The Honourable’ or ‘His/Her Honour’.

#### Envelopes and name tags

On envelopes, name tags and similar identifiers for events, full titles are used. You also include any honours (post nominals) the person holds after their surname.

Her Honour Judge Blake AO

State Coroner

Coroners Court of Victoria

Address

The Honourable Justice Matoulas

Supreme Court of Victoria

Address

#### Beginning a letter

When writing a letter to a member of a court or tribunal, use their position followed by their surname. For example, when addressing a judge of the Federal Court of Australia you write ‘Dear Justice Shaw’. For a judge of the County Court you use ‘Dear Judge Capuano’. For a VCAT member ‘Dear Member Nguyen’ is used.

If you are part of a legal team, a witness or a party you should avoid speaking to the judge, magistrate or tribunal member except in the courtroom or tribunal. You should also avoid writing to them.

## What do I call a retired judge?

Many retired judges keep a title based on the position they held at the court. When speaking to a retired judge, as a courtesy you can use the title ‘Judge’.

### In writing

When writing to, or making name tags for, a retired judge, their title will depend on the court where they sat.

#### Federal judges

Retired judges of the High Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1 and Division 2) keep the title ‘The Honourable’ for life. For example, on envelopes and name tags use ‘The Honourable Katharine Brooke’. To begin a letter, as a courtesy use ‘Dear Justice Brooke’.

#### State judges

Generally, retired judges of the Supreme Court keep ‘The Honourable’ as part of their formal title. For example, ‘The Honourable Savitri Drake’ would be used to address an envelope or similar stationery. To begin a letter, as a courtesy you use ‘Dear Justice Drake’.

When writing to retired judges of the County Court, use ‘His Honour Michael Finch’. This form of address can be used on envelopes and name tags too. To begin a letter, as a courtesy use ‘Dear Judge Finch’.

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* Supreme Court of Victoria
* County Court of Victoria
* Magistrates’ Court of Victoria
* Children’s Court of Victoria
* Coroners Court of Victoria
* Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
* High Court of Australia
* Federal Court of Australia
* Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia

## What do I call the judge?

### State

#### Supreme Court of Victoria

|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chief Justice** | Your Honour | Chief Justice | Dear Chief Justice | The Honourable Chief Justice *surname* |
| **President of the Court of Appeal** | Your Honour | President *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname*, President of the Court of Appeal |
| **Judge (including Judges of Appeal)** | Your Honour | Justice *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname* |
| **Associate Judge** | Your Honour | Associate Justice *surname* | Dear Associate Justice *surname* | The Honourable Associate Justice *surname* |
| **Judicial Registrar** | Judicial Registrar | Judicial Registrar *surname* | Dear Judicial Registrar *surname* | Judicial Registrar *surname* |

1 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Supreme Court of Victoria

#### County Court of Victoria

|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chief Judge** | Your Honour | Chief Judge | Dear Chief Judge | The Honourable Chief Judge *surname* |
| **Judge** | Your Honour | Judge *surname* | Dear Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Judge *surname* |

2 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the County Court of Victoria

#### Magistrates’ Court of Victoria

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **Chief Magistrate** | Your Honour | Chief Magistrate | Dear Chief Magistrate | The Honourable Chief Magistrate Justice *surname* |
| **Deputy Chief Magistrate** | Your Honour | Your Honour | Dear Deputy Chief Magistrate | Deputy Chief Magistrate *surname* |
| **Magistrate** | Your Honour | Your Honour | Dear Magistrate *surname* | His/Her Honour Magistrate *surname* |
| **Judicial Registrar** | Judicial Registrar | Judicial Registrar *surname* | Dear Judicial Registrar *surname* | Judicial Registrar *surname* |

3 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria

#### Children’s Court of Victoria

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **President** | Your Honour | Judge | Dear Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Judge *surname*, President of the Children’s Court of Victoria |
| **Magistrate** | Your Honour | Your Honour | Dear Magistrate *surname* | His/Her Honour Magistrate *surname* |
| **Judicial Registrar** | Judicial Registrar | Judicial Registrar *surname* | Dear Judicial Registrar *surname* | Judicial Registrar *surname* |

4 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Children's Court of Victoria

#### Coroners Court of Victoria

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **State Coroner** | Your Honour | Judge | Dear Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Judge *surname* |
| **Deputy State Coroner** | Your Honour | Your Honour | Dear Deputy State Coroner | Deputy State Coroner *surname* |
| **Coroner** | Your Honour | Your Honour | Dear Coroner *surname* | Coroner *surname* |

5 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Coroners Court of Victoria

#### Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **President** | Your Honour | Justice *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname*, President of VCAT |
| **Vice-President** | Your Honour | Judge *surname* | Dear Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Judge *surname*, Vice-President of VCAT |
| **Deputy President** | Sir or Madam | Deputy President *surname* | Dear Deputy President *surname* | Deputy President *surname* |
| **Senior Member** | Sir or Madam | Senior Member *surname* | Dear Senior Member *surname* | Senior Member *surname* |
| **Member** | Sir or Madam | Member *surname* | Dear Member *surname* | Member *surname* |

6 Overview of how to address members of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

### Federal

#### High Court of Australia

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **Chief Justice** | Your Honour | Chief Justice | Dear Chief Justice | The Honourable Chief Justice *surname* |
| **Justice** | Your Honour | Justice *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname* |

7 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the High Court of Australia

#### Federal Court of Australia

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **Chief Justice** | Your Honour | Chief Justice | Dear Chief Justice | The Honourable Chief Justice *surname* |
| **Justice** | Your Honour | Justice *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname* |

8 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Federal Court of Australia

#### Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **Chief Justice** | Your Honour | Chief Justice | Dear Chief Justice | The Honourable Chief Justice *surname* |
| **Justice** | Your Honour | Justice *surname* | Dear Justice *surname* | The Honourable Justice *surname* |

9 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1)

#### Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In court** | **Outside court** | **Beginning a letter** | **Addressing an envelope** |
| **Chief Judge** | Your Honour | Chief Judge | Dear Chief Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Chief Judge *surname* |
| **Judge** | Your Honour | Judge | Dear Judge *surname* | His/Her Honour Judge *surname* |

10 Overview of how to address judicial officers of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2)