



FAMILY COURT
OF AUSTRALIA



Family Court of Australia | **Annual Report 2006–2007**

Family Court of Australia Annual Report 2006-07

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Chief Executive Officer

Family Court of Australia

GPO Box 9991

Canberra ACT 2601

Cover photographs:

- Adelaide Registry
- Melbourne Registry

Other photographs:

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- Page 18: From the launch of Finding a Better Way
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- Page 110: Janet Kitcher Award recipients 2006
- Page 122: Refurbished client services area – Brisbane registry

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17 September 2007

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Attorney-General
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Attorney-General

I have pleasure in forwarding to you the Annual Report on the operations of the Family Court of Australia for the financial year ending 30 June 2007.

The report is submitted in accordance with Section 38S subsections (1) and (3) of the *Family Law Act 1975*, which requires the Court to prepare and furnish you with a report of the management of the administrative affairs of the Court during the preceding 12 months.

This is the Court's 18th Annual Report.

Yours sincerely

Diana Bryant
Chief Justice

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READER'S GUIDE

The purpose of this annual report is to inform the Attorney-General, the Parliament, Court clients and the general public about the performance of the Family Court of Australia during the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, including achievements against the Court's objectives.

This report provides information on the Court's performance in relation to its stated outcome:

Serving the interests of the Australian community by ensuring families and children in need can access effective high quality services.

- Part 1:** The Chief Justice's Review – comprises the Chief Justice's overview highlighting significant issues and initiatives the Court has undertaken during the reporting year.
- Part 2:** Overview of the Court – provides basic information about the Court, including its role, functions and powers, governance and organisational structure, projects and initiatives and planning.
- Part 3:** Report on Court performance – provides information and commentary on the Court's workload and performance results. This chapter includes information on performance measured against the Court's two output groups: Resolution and Determination.
- Part 4:** Appeals – contains statistical and narrative information on the Appeals Division of the Court, including its constitution and general trends in appeals throughout the reporting year.
- Part 5:** Significant and Noteworthy judgments – contains summaries of some of the important decisions (Full Court and first instance) made by the Court during the reporting year.
- Part 6:** Other reporting – provides information on human resource management within the organisation, the Court's staff and activities relevant to the general administration of the Court.
- Part 7:** Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2007 – contains the audited financial statements of the Court for the reporting year.

The appendices in Part 8, commencing on page 177 include a report on the Court's resources for outcomes, more detailed information on the Court's committees, the activities of the judiciary, particularly the Chief Justice, including participation in conferences and other speaking engagements, and contact details for the Court's registries.

The following tools may assist in finding information in the report – the table of contents at page v, glossary of terms at page 191, the compliance index at page 195 and the alphabetical index at page 197.

An electronic version of this annual report is available from the Court’s website at www.familycourt.gov.au.

Further information about the Court is also available from its website at www.familycourt.gov.au or from www.familylawcourts.gov.au.

Enquiries, comments or requests for more information about the Court’s services or this annual report may be addressed in the first instance to:

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIS	Appeals Information System
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
AWA	Australian Workplace Agreement
CA	Certified Agreement
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCP	Children’s Cases Program
CEI	Chief Executive Instruction
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CJ	Chief Justice
CJPAC	Chief Justice’s Policy Advisory Committee
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
CRP	Child Responsive Program
CSS	Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme
DIAC	(Federal) Department of Immigration and Citizenship
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EL	Executive Level of the Australian Public Service
FBT	Fringe Benefits Tax
FC	Family Consultant
FCC	Family Consultant Circuit
FCoA	Family Court of Australia
FCWA	Family Court of Western Australia
FMAA	Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997
FMC	Federal Magistrates Court
FMO	Finance Minister’s Order
FOI	Freedom of Information

FRC	Family Relationship Centre
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HR	Human Resources
ICSDP	Integrated Client Service Delivery Program
IFLO	Indigenous Family Liaison Officer
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IT	Information Technology
JC	Judicial Circuit
JRC	Judicial Registrar Circuit
LAT	Less Adversarial Trial
MAC	Management Advisory Committee
MHSP	Mental Health Support Project
NEC	National Enquiry Centre
NSO	National Support Office (Canberra)
OPA	Official Public Account
PDS	Performance Development System
PSM	Public Service Medal
PSS	Public Sector Superannuation Scheme
RC	Registrar Circuit
RFD	Reserve Force Decoration
SES	Senior Executive Service of the APS
SRC	Senior Registrar Circuit
SRL	Self Represented Litigant

CHIEF JUSTICE DIANA BRYANT



Justice Bryant has been the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia since July 2004.

Prior to her appointment, Chief Justice Bryant was the inaugural Chief Federal Magistrate of the Federal Magistrates Court (FMC), having held that office since May 2000.

For the 10 years preceding her appointment to the FMC, Chief Justice Bryant practised at the Victorian Bar where she specialised in family law and de facto property disputes. She was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1997.

Chief Justice Bryant holds Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees. She was admitted as a legal practitioner in Victoria in 1970.

The Chief Justice is based in Melbourne.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RICHARD FOSTER PSM



Richard Foster has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Family Court of Australia since May 2000.

Mr Foster has spent his entire working life in court administration across many jurisdictions.

Prior to his current appointment Mr Foster spent six years as Executive Director, Courts and Tribunals in Western Australia's Department of Justice. Previous to his move to Perth, Mr Foster worked in a range of capacities within the South Australian court system.

Mr Foster is one of Australia's most senior court administrators and has extensive experience at senior management level working in the 'third arm of Government'. In January 2006 he was awarded the Public Service Medal for outstanding public service in the administration of courts in Australia.

Richard Foster is based in Canberra.