



Family Court of Australia | **Annual Report 2005–2006**



FAMILY COURT
OF AUSTRALIA

Family Court of Australia Annual Report 2005-06

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Chief Executive Officer
Family Court of Australia
GPO Box 9991
Canberra ACT 2601

Cover photographs:

- Top: Mural paintings, Adelaide Registry.
- Main: Adelaide Registry's Indigenous courtroom, 'Wadna Wadna Wodli' (place of decision-making), officially opened in May 2006.

Other photographs:

- Page xiii: Chief Justice Diana Bryant and CEO Richard Foster
- Page 7: Chief Justice Diana Bryant and Indigenous elders at the opening of Wadna Wadna Wodli
- Page 19: Medina Idress presented with graduation certificate from the 'Living in Harmony' education program
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- Page 109: Family Law Courts website — the online entry point to the Family Court and Federal Magistrates Court

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FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA
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12 September 2006

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 2006.

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 17th 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 2005 to 30 June 2006.

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, professional development 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 division – 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 judgments – contains detailed 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 the administration of the Court generally.

The audited financial statements of the Court are set out at the end of the report, commencing at page 111. The remaining appendices include 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, contact details for the Court's registries, and the Court's resources for outcomes. A complete list of appendices is provided in the table of contents.

The following tools may assist in finding information in the report – the table of contents at page v, glossary of terms at page 173, the compliance index at page 179 and the alphabetical index at page 181.

An electronic version of this annual report is available from the Court's website at www.familycourt.gov.au/presence/connect/www/home/publications/annual_reports/

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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Family Court of Australia

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Canberra ACT 2601

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Email: <communications.office@familycourt.gov.au>

Freedom of Information enquiries should be directed to:

FOI Coordinator

GPO Box 9991

Canberra ACT 2601

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
APS	Australian Public Service
ATO	Australian Tax Office
ATSI	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
AWA	Australian Workplace Agreement
CA	Certified Agreement
CCP	Children's Cases Program
CEI	Chief Executive Instruction
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CJ	Chief Justice
CLC	Commonwealth Law Courts
CRM	Child Responsive Model
DHA	(Federal) Department of Health and Ageing
DIMA	(Federal) Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
EL	Executive Level of the Australian Public Service
FC	Family Consultant ('Indigenous family liaison officer' post 1 July 2006)
FCoA	Family Court of Australia
FLC	Family Law Courts
FMAA	<i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i>
FMC	Federal Magistrates Court
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRC	Family Relationship Centre
GST	Goods & services tax
IFLO	Indigenous Family Liaison Officer (see 'FC')
IT	Information Technology
JC	Judicial circuit

JRC	Judicial Registrar circuit
LIH	Living in Harmony
MC	Mediation circuit
MO	Mediation/outreach
NEC	National Enquiry Centre
NSO	National Support Office (Canberra)
OH&S	Occupational health & safety
PAC	Policy Advisory Committee
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statement
PCI	Pending cases inventory
PDS	Performance Development System
PSM	Public Service Medal
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



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'.

Richard Foster is based in Canberra.

