Dr Christopher Kendall welcomed to the Perth registry of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia – providing much needed additional resources

Well-regarded Perth Barrister, Dr Christopher Kendall, will be officially welcomed to the Perth registry of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia today, Monday 29 January 2018.

The appointment of Dr Kendall, announced by the former Commonwealth Attorney-General, The Hon George Brandis in December 2017, now provides the Court with two judges in the Perth registry.

The Federal Circuit Court is Australia’s largest federal court with 70 judges and over 100,000 applications filed each year nationally. It is well-known as the workhorse of the federal court system with an extremely high workload and a wide-ranging jurisdiction which includes (but is not limited to) the areas of migration, industrial relations, bankruptcy and human rights. As family law matters in Western Australia are dealt with in the Family Court of Western Australia, the Federal Circuit Court deals exclusively with general federal law matters in this State. Last financial year, 727 applications were filed in the Perth registry of the Court, considerably more than five years ago with 438 filings. The most significant area of growth has been in migration. Five years ago, 97 migration applications were filed and last financial year that figure grew to 386. The level of growth is expected to continue, particularly in the area of migration.

Chief Judge Will Alstergren will host the ceremonial sitting of the Court to officially welcome Dr Kendall. The Commonwealth Attorney-General, The Hon Christian Porter MP will be in attendance, along with members of the judiciary and representing the profession; Matthew Howard SC, President of the Western Australian Bar Association and representing the Australian Bar Association; and Ms Hayley Cormann, President of the Law Society of Western Australia and representing the Law Council of Australia.

“We are delighted to have an additional appointment to the Court’s registry in Perth and we enthusiastically welcome Dr Kendall,” Chief Judge Alstergren said.

“The last appointment to this Court in Perth was Judge Lucev in 2006 who has been the sole judge in this registry for nearly 12 years, and so it is especially pleasing to have an additional judge to assist His Honour with the relentless and heavy workload.”

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**Media contact:** Denise Healy, National Media and Public Affairs Manager, Federal Circuit Court of Australia  
**Telephone:** 03 8600 4357 or 0409 743 695  
**Email:** denise.healy@familycourt.gov.au
“It is an exciting period in the history of the Federal Circuit Court. Since its establishment in 2000, the Court has grown from a bench of 16 judges to now having 70 judges located in all capital cities and some regional locations. It began with quite a narrow jurisdiction and a small number of filings but now manages the largest number of filings in the federal court system.

“With its success however have come new challenges. It has been well publicized and is known amongst the profession that the workload has become onerous and detrimental to the people who come to the Court to have their dispute dealt with quickly and efficiently.

“It is my goal to reduce delays and provide better access to justice for the Australian community by implementing a range of initiatives that will address those issues,” Chief Judge Alstergren announced.

Some of those initiatives include:

- Conducting a series of call-overs nationally to identify cases that can be mediated, settled or referred to trial,
- Improving case management processes,
- Creating a single point of entry for all family law matters, and
- Working closely with the Federal Court of Australia and Family Court of Australia to increase the role of Registrars, harmonise Court Rules and implement consistent practices.

Dr Kendall was previously the Deputy President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and has extensive experience in administrative law, intellectual property law, trade practices law, refugee and immigration law, human rights law and comparative constitutional law.

“I am deeply honoured to have been appointed to this position. I recognise that it is a privilege and that it brings with it considerable responsibility. I trust that my educational and legal practice background will allow me to dispense justice in a manner that is fair, efficient and respectful,” Dr Kendall said today.

For more information on the Federal Circuit Court of Australia refer to the website.
For more information on Dr Kendall’s appointment refer to the media release.