



10 February 2020

The Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia provide hundreds of families with opportunity to resolve their long-standing family law dispute during *Summer Campaign*

To address the backlog of family law cases, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia (the Courts) have launched a Summer Campaign, commencing this week in Melbourne on Wednesday 12 February 2020.

Up to 2000 cases have been identified as having been in the court system for over 18 months, with some four years-old. These cases will be listed and dealt with as part of a series of callovers in the Courts over the next three months in Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, Parramatta, Brisbane and Adelaide.

Between 20 and 25 cases involving parenting and/or property disputes will be listed before a judge each day. Six senior judges, including the Chief Justice and the Deputy Chief Justice, have been allocated to deal with those matters. The number of cases and days allocated to the Summer Campaign will vary in each location. In Melbourne, the callovers will take place in the Federal Circuit Court on 12-14, 20 and 21 February and in the Family Court, from 24-27 February. Approximately 480 cases will be listed over this period.

The campaign will provide an opportunity for families to resolve their dispute and they will be encouraged to reach an agreement through various forms of alternative dispute resolutions (ADR). For appropriate cases, court-employed Registrars will conduct family dispute resolution conferences, and will be assisted by family consultants. It is acknowledged that some cases, such as those involving issues of serious family violence or other complex issues, may not be suitable for ADR and will be promptly listed for trial.

The Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, the Hon Will Alstergren said that the Summer Campaign is one of many initiatives that the Courts have implemented in a serious effort to minimise the delays that families have experienced in the past several years.

“My absolute focus is on the people who come to our courts seeking a resolution to their dispute. The Courts have acknowledged that lengthy delays are unacceptable and we are taking action, and are working extremely hard to address this.

“Having appropriate matters resolve through ADR will clear those cases from the system and will enable the Courts to list other, more complex cases, for a trial within an earlier timeframe.

“As identified in the Courts’ recently released Practice Direction outlining the Courts’ [Core Principles in the Case Management of Family Law](#), the parties, lawyers and the Courts have an obligation to ensure the just, safe, efficient and timely resolution of matters at a cost to the parties that is reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances, of the case. The use of ADR helps to achieve this and allows families to resolve their dispute in a less litigious way and to move on with their lives in a positive direction.”

“The Courts look forward to continuing a positive professional relationship and working collaboratively with the state-based legal aid bodies, law societies and Bar associations,” Chief Justice Alstergren added.