



New government initiative to provide family violence support services in family law registries throughout Australia

The Commonwealth Attorney-General, Senator the Hon. George Brandis QC, together with Legal Aid NSW, will today officially launch a new initiative at the Parramatta Registry of the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia.

The Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS) program will be delivered by the various state-based legal aid commissions in family law registries across Australia and will be providing parents with a coordinated range of front-line integrated legal duty and social support services to help families affected by family violence.

The Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Diana Bryant AO, is pleased to see that \$18.5 million of federal government funding has been allocated to the legal aid commissions to deliver this program.

“I congratulate the Government on this initiative and for providing the necessary funding to enable Legal Aid and other agencies to deliver a front-line service that will help families who have experienced family violence to navigate the federal and state court systems and obtain the support services needed.

I have often spoken about the need for early intervention and close management of family law cases, particularly when issues of family violence are prevalent. There are significant benefits to be gained in having timely access to quality information, not only for the courts, but for everyone involved. With qualified staff available to conduct screening and risk assessments, draft urgent applications and gather information and evidence around the family violence issues, this service will no doubt become of great assistance,” Chief Justice Bryant said.

Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, John Pascoe AC CVO, also supports the roll-out of this service.

“The Federal Circuit Court has worked closely with the various state legal aid commissions to establish this service within the Court’s family law registries. The Courts are committed to improving the way in which they deal with issues relating to family violence and I welcome the establishment of this service which will see a number of agencies working cooperatively to ensure better support and assistance is provided to those who need it most,” Chief Judge Pascoe said.