

MR2109

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## Family Court System Must Remain Properly Resourced

The Law Council of Australia is pleased that the Federal Government has continued to resource the family law system, pending the proposed restructure of the Family Law Courts.

Following the recent appointment of Stewart Austin to the Family Court in Newcastle, the Law Council believes it is vital that the Government maintains the current level of support for the family law courts.

According to the Law Council, delays in family law matters continue to worsen in a number of regions. It is feared that this will deteriorate further if vacancies are not filled in a timely way. Many, many families are just waiting to access the Family Law Courts to help them get on with their lives following their relationship breakdown.

The Law Council strongly encourages the appropriate use of primary dispute resolution resources and services which are available outside the court system. Focus should not be lost of the fact that the Family Law Courts provide a vital resource for those members of the community who are unable to resolve the issues arising on the breakdown of family relationships through non-court based interventions.

As members of Parliament consider the Government's proposal to restructure the Family Law Courts, the Law Council has strongly encouraged them to focus on what is best for the community.

Any new system must be based on providing the services which those using the Family Law Courts really need, and delivering these services in the most effective way. The Law Council believes that the community needs, and deserves, a court system which is efficient, timely, cost-effective, flexible, accessible and adequately resourced.

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