



ATTORNEY-GENERAL HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP

MEDIA RELEASE

29 June 2010

APPOINTMENTS TO THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, today announced the appointment of Judge Ann Ainslie-Wallace, Ms Margaret Cleary, Mr William Johnston and Mr Ian Loughnan as judges of the Family Court of Australia.

“All four appointees come to the Court with rich and diverse backgrounds in the law. Their considerable experience will be a great asset to the bench of the Family Court,” Mr McClelland said.

Judge Ainslie-Wallace will be assigned to the Family Court’s Appeal Division. Her experience on the bench of the District Court of New South Wales in a variety of civil cases will be invaluable to her appellate work. Judge Ainslie-Wallace will be assigned to the Sydney Registry.

Ms Cleary has practised at the New South Wales Bar since 1986. She has specialised in children’s family law cases and has considerable arbitrating and mediating experience. Ms Cleary will be assigned to the Newcastle Registry following the transfer of Justice Ryan to the Sydney Registry.

Messrs Johnston and Loughnan are Judicial Registrars of the Family Court based in the Sydney Registry and have had a long involvement with the Family Court. Messrs Johnston and Loughnan will be assigned to the Court’s Parramatta Registry.

The appointments were made in accordance with the Government’s transparent and merit-based judicial appointments policy, following calls for expressions of interest and nominations which resulted in 45 candidates being considered for appointment.

Candidates were assessed for appointment by an expert panel comprising Family Court Chief Justice Diana Bryant, the Hon Ian Callinan AC, former Justice of the High Court of Australia, the Hon Richard Chisholm AM, former Judge of the Family Court of Australia, and a senior official from the Attorney-General’s Department.

Short biographies of the appointees are attached.

Media Contact: Adam Siddique 0407 473 630

Judge Ann Ainslie-Wallace

Judge Ainslie-Wallace holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of New South Wales and was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1978. Judge Ainslie-Wallace was appointed an acting judge of the District Court of New South Wales in 1996 and has been a judge of that Court since 1997. She is currently a Deputy Chair of the New South Wales Medical Tribunal. Judge Ainslie-Wallace's interest in family law stems from her practice as a barrister, in which her principal area of practice was family and children's law.

Ms Margaret Cleary

Ms Cleary holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney and was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1981. Ms Cleary worked as a Legal Clerk with the Corporate Affairs Commission of New South Wales between 1978 and 1981, and as a solicitor with John Allanson & Associates between 1982 and 1986. She was admitted to the Bar in 1986 and has specialised in serious children's family law cases. Her work has also included property cases and appellate work.

Mr William Johnston

Judicial Registrar Johnston holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Australian National University. After being admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1972 he worked as a practising solicitor in regional New South Wales. Mr Johnston subsequently worked as an officer of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in Canberra between 1973 and 1980. He joined the Family Court in 1980 as a Deputy Registrar, becoming the Court's Principal Registrar in 1986. In 1989 Mr Johnston returned to legal practice as a specialist family law solicitor. He has served in his current position of Judicial Registrar since 1990.

Mr Ian Loughnan

Judicial Registrar Loughnan holds a Diploma in Law with the NSW Barristers Admission Board and was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1981. Early in his career, Mr Loughnan held various clerical and administrative positions with the Family Law Division of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and with the Family Court. From 1982 until 1984 he was Deputy District Registrar of the Federal Court of Australia; Deputy Registrar in Bankruptcy, and Deputy Registrar of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Mr Loughnan was Deputy Registrar and Principal Registrar of the Family Court from 1984 until 1995. He was appointed to his current position of Judicial Registrar of the Family Court in 1995.