



FEDERAL COURT
OF AUSTRALIA



2018–2019 CORPORATE PLAN

Covering the reporting period
2018–19 to 2021–22



ACTION ▶ CIRCUIT ▶ COURT ▶ DIGITAL ▶ JUDGMENT ▶ FAMILY ▶
FEDERAL ▶ IMPARTIAL ▶ INTERNATIONAL ▶ LAW ▶ NATIONAL ▶
PRACTICE ▶ REGIONAL ▶ RESPONSIVE ▶ TRANSFORMING ▶ SKILLED ▶

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased, in my capacity as the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar of the Federal Court of Australia (the accountable authority), to present the 2018–19 Corporate Plan for the 2018–19 to 2021–22 reporting period, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

This Corporate Plan is our principle planning document and outlines the strategic direction, challenges and priorities for the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, the National Native Title Tribunal and Corporate Services.

This is an important document which focuses on planning future work and how we will achieve our goals against our stated purpose. We operate in dynamic environments, so this plan will be reviewed each year, allowing us to continue to refine and adapt our efforts and ensure that we remain on track.

I look forward to working closely with each court and the National Native Title Tribunal to implement the plan for the benefit of all Australians.



Warwick Soden

Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar

31 July 2018

ENVIRONMENT

The three courts and the National Native Title Tribunal (Tribunal) undertake regular reviews of their operating environment, challenges and risks to determine performance goals and operational plans each year. A review of the external environment suggests that the key environmental drivers during the period of this plan are government policy, technological change and social and economic change.

Government policy

The work of the courts and the Tribunal is influenced by government policy and legislative change. These changes can impact the volume and type of workloads, and jurisdiction. As a result, the courts and the Tribunal agility to structure resources and systems, to ensure we can respond to change in the most cost effective way, is essential.

Significant structural change to the courts was announced by Government on 30 May 2018 which, subject to passage of legislation, will have a substantial impact on the Family Court of Australia (FCoA), Federal Circuit Court of Australia (FCC) and the Federal Court of Australia (FCA). The proposed reform includes the amalgamation of the FCoA and FCC into a single new 'Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia' and the establishment of a new Family Law Appeals Division in the FCA.

The structural change, designed to achieve a faster resolution of family law disputes, will be accompanied by a move to a streamlined entry for all federal family law matters, and a common case management approach and a harmonised set of rules, procedures and practices for the new court. Additional funding has been provided to assist the courts in the development of rules, procedures, practices and the case management approach.

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) is currently conducting a wide ranging review into the family law system. The final report of the ALRC, due in March 2019, is likely to recommend significant reforms of relevance to the family law courts.

Forward estimates project a deficit economy for the next financial year. Ongoing budget cuts and the drive for greater public sector efficiencies and accountability,

in conjunction with each courts' objective to provide enhanced access to justice, will result in the need to deliver more services at a reduced cost or the same cost. This will require significant management and prioritisation of resourcing over the next four years.

The Government has signalled its intent to move forward on a range of proposed reforms to the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). In December 2017, the Attorney-General and Minister for Indigenous Affairs released an options paper, which canvassed recommendations from:

- the ARLC's report on Connection to Country: Review of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth)
- the Council of Australian Government's Investigation into Land Administration and Use, and
- the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations' Technical Review of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*.

The focus of the options paper is on reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the native title system to resolve claims, better facilitate agreement-making around the use of native title land, and promote the autonomy of native title groups to make decisions about their land and to resolve internal disputes. The options canvass a new dispute resolution function for the Tribunal.

It is anticipated that a native title amendment bill will be tabled in Parliament in the latter part of 2018.

The courts and the Tribunal have an ongoing commitment to relentless improvement, with many programs to improve efficiency already in place. For the courts, these programs encompass changes to the way that cases are managed and provision of alternative dispute resolution processes, in addition to technological innovations.

Technological change

Technological change continues to play a significant role in driving strategy. Whilst technological advances have provided opportunities to improve the experience of court users and automate processes and increase efficiency, they have also created significant pressure on resourcing and funding ongoing development.

The introduction of the Government's Digital Transformation Agenda provides standards for digital development, as well as a goal to create public services that are 'simple, clear, faster and customer-centric'. The courts and the Tribunal are already on the path to achieve this goal and further work will be conducted over the life of this plan.

Mobile technologies are fast becoming the key drivers of technological change for the courts and the Tribunal, however as the use of digital technologies increases, the courts and the Tribunal will need to achieve a balance with our statutory obligations. Additional challenges include accuracy, data security and timeliness of information provided through these platforms. The pace of technological change and innovation creates opportunities for us to improve the experience of court users across multiple platforms.

Further digital innovation is anticipated over the life of this plan, with additional funding to support the evolution of the digital court program and changes necessitated by its intersection with the Government's proposed structural reforms, the implementation of a digital file for family law proceedings and the introduction of artificial intelligence projects to facilitate improvements in service delivery, consolidation of services and reductions in cost. Our challenge is to capitalise on these opportunities as the lifecycle of new technologies continues to become shorter.

Social and economic change

The expectations and types of court users, clients and stakeholders are expected to change significantly over the next four years. With the ongoing development of 'big data', tailored services and communications, convenience and personalisation are now expected by the stakeholder groups serviced by the courts and the Tribunal. Whilst technology provides a lower cost option to meet this need, defining stakeholder needs and developing tailored responses creates significant workload.

Business, government and commercial organisations also expect the legal profession to conduct business with them electronically. The courts and the Tribunal need to position themselves to continue to respond to this expectation and identify the most effective technology platform to address their needs. For the FCC and Tribunal, this also includes maintaining a balance between leveraging the benefits of technology to improve access, but also ensuring it meets the needs of clients in remote areas where access to technology can be not only cost prohibitive, but more importantly, inaccessible in some areas.

The work of the courts has also been impacted by economic and social change. For example, judge's workloads have increased as a result of increases in unrepresented litigants and, in the FCA, class actions. In addition, the FCC has seen a significant rise in migration filings that is placing a strain on the Court. This trend is expected to continue over the four years of the plan.

The Tribunal continues to be impacted by the increase in the determination of native title claims. This has placed greater emphasis on the challenges facing Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) and how native title holders can leverage economic development from the recognition of their native title rights and interests. Compensation claims have also increased in number, following the FCA decision in *Griffiths v Northern Territory of Australia (No 3)* [2016] FCA900. Further, as the resolution of native title claims in settled areas proceeds, tenure analysis is becoming increasingly complex. The Tribunal has been actively involved in assisting stakeholders to identify more efficient and timely ways to capture and analyse current and historical tenure.

Community awareness and focus on matters involving family violence and allegations of child abuse remains high, with resulting impacts on the FCoA and the FCC. Consideration of whether, and if so what, reforms to the family law system are necessary in relation to family violence and child abuse is one of the terms of reference of the ALRC's review of the family law system.

Cases involving mental illness and substance abuse have also increased, as have cases relating to international family law (including Hague Convention abduction matters and the 1996 Protection Convention), as well as medical procedures for which court approval is required. These are complex matters that present strategic challenges for each court.

RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The Federal Court of Australia (FCA) promotes a Risk Management Framework that supports the identification, analysis, assessment, treatment, monitoring and review of all strategic, professional, reputational, personnel, political and operational risks. These include risks to our stakeholders and emerging risks.

The Risk Management Plan has been developed in accordance with the methodology set out in *Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009)* and the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 2014*.

We have adopted seven broad criteria for establishing risk management priorities. These are:

1. **Strategic risks**—risks that affect performance against identified strategic priorities.
2. **Financial risks**—risks that affect the financial outcomes of the entity or have detrimental financial impact.
3. **Risks to reputation**—risks that affect the reputation of the entity and its ability to perform, or which may impair the community's trust with the courts and judicial system.
4. **Operational risks**—risks that affect the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar's management of and accountability for performance, including the entity's service delivery obligations, regulatory framework and business relationships.
5. **Legal liability risks**—risks arising from current or pending litigation to which the entity is a party of.
6. **Property and security**—risks that affect the security of all courts' and the Tribunal's resources (including property) and visitors to its premises.
7. **Personnel risk**—risks that affect staff ethical behaviour, the integrity of decisions, processes and information, or affect the health and safety of personnel.

Risks are reviewed at least each quarter and the risk register is updated after each review. Managing risks effectively and efficiently allows the FCA to achieve its objectives. The importance of training and awareness programs in risk management is recognised, and consequently, the FCA is committed to ensuring all staff receive regular training and information on risk management and their responsibilities.

The FCA participate in Comcover's annual Risk Management Benchmarking Program, which is designed to assess the maturity of a risk framework against the nine elements of the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy (the Policy), using a risk maturity model.

Additionally, Comcover's annual Risk Management Benchmarking Survey benchmarks the FCA risk management framework and capabilities against other participating agencies. The overall performance of the FCA risk management program has improved from the 2017 performance.

Oversight

The Audit Committee is established in accordance with s 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The CEO must establish and maintain an Audit Committee, with the functions and responsibilities required by s 17 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.

The functions of the committee are to:

- provide independent assurance of the effectiveness of the entity's Risk Management Framework
- review compliance with the entity's Risk Management Policy
- monitor the implementation of the entity's Risk Management Plan
- review compliance with finance law, including financial and performance reporting
- review risk reports periodically (quarterly and annual reports)
- review the internal control programs and advise whether key controls are appropriate and are operating effectively
- monitor and understand the potential impact of emerging risks on the entity's ability to achieve its objectives, and
- provide assurance that the entity has well-designed business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place and are tested periodically.

As part of the FCA's continuous improvement approach and adopting best practices, the Risk Management Plan undergoes a periodic internal audit, either in its totality or specific sections (for example, fraud). The audit findings and recommendations are then reviewed and action plans are put in place to address the areas for improvement. The Audit Committee monitors quarterly, the implementation of the audit recommendations and respective action plans and advises on the suitability of the action plans proposed by management.

The table below provides some examples of the risks faced by the courts.

RISKS	AREA OF RISK	RISK DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION STRATEGY
Strategic	Disconnected future strategies	Risk for the courts and Tribunal of conflicting strategic agendas with government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and consultation with key stakeholders, particularly Minister, Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Finance and key government agencies
Financial	Funding/ financial resources	Insufficient financial resources to support the essential requirements of the courts and the Tribunal to deliver services to their customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust budgeting and disciplined financial management practices • Communication/consultation with key stakeholders, particularly Minister, Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Finance and key government agencies • Continued refinement of e-services to drive work practice efficiencies and better, quicker, less expensive services to customers
Reputation	Inadequate guidance provided to judicial staff regarding media liaison practices	Reputational damage to the courts which could lead to a lack of public confidence in the judicial system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance provided to judicial and other relevant staff regarding media liaison practices • A media management guide is provided to assist judges, their staff and registry staff in handling situations where there is media interest • Official statements are reviewed prior to release

RISKS	AREA OF RISK	RISK DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION STRATEGY
Operational	Technological management	Information Technology (IT) tools and systems are unable or unavailable to support the judiciary, staff and customers of the courts and the Tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing refinements to the Electronic Court File (ECF) improving functionality (diminishing risks arising from double handling of data and not recording properly) • Business continuity and IT disaster recovery testing • Continued and active investigation of transformational opportunities, such as ECF, electronic consent orders and examination of how the courts' case management procedures could be more robust through IT support • Ongoing review of systems (including case management applications) across the courts and the Tribunal to ensure they are technically sound and operate with a very high level of data integrity
Legal liability	Legal compliance	The courts and the Tribunal are subject to litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement and contract management is carefully undertaken and supervised to protect the entity • Internal policies and procedures about how to comply with federal and state legislation, as well as the procedural rules of the courts are in place and are easy to understand and obtain
Property and security	Security management	Attacks/threats to staff, judges and members of the public in court premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of safety and security protocols • Sheriff and Marshal oversee security functions • Building Management Committee oversees security function at each location • Metal detection and security cameras at each court • Daily testing of scanning equipment against the standard • Limited access to the secure areas in each building
Personnel	Calibre of personnel	Difficulty in recruiting skilled/experienced professional support staff, registrars and family consultants and the loss of key personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting and monitoring of resources • Review of registry practices to best support case management pathways • Implement workforce planning and an integrated learning and development framework. This includes specialist services and culturally competent staff to assist carry out necessary functions

FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Accountable authority

PURPOSE

Contribute to the social and economic development and wellbeing of all Australians by applying and upholding the rule of law to deliver remedies and enforce rights

PROGRAM 1.1 – FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

OUTCOME 1	PURPOSE	DELIVERY	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
Apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the Federal Court of Australia and parties in the National Native Title Tribunal through the resolution of matters according to law and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court and Tribunal	Decide disputes according to law as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible	Exercising the jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Australia Supporting the operations of the National Native Title Tribunal	TIMELY COMPLETION OF CASES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of cases completed within 18 months of commencement Judgments to be delivered within three months

PROGRAM 2.1 – FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

OUTCOME 2	PURPOSE	DELIVERY	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
Apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the Family Court of Australia through the resolution of family law matters according to law, particularly more complex family law matters and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court	Help Australians resolve their most complex family disputes by deciding matters according to the law, promptly, courteously and effectively	Exercising the jurisdiction of the Family Court of Australia	TIMELY COMPLETION OF CASES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearance rate of 100% 75% of judgments to be delivered within three months 75% of cases pending conclusion to be less than 12 months old

PROGRAM 3.1 – FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

OUTCOME 3	PURPOSE	DELIVERY	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
Apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the Federal Circuit Court of Australia through more informal and streamlined resolution of family and general federal law matters according to law, through the encouragement of appropriate dispute resolution processes and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court	Provide a simple and accessible alternative to litigation in the Family Court and Federal Court. Provide efficient and effective registry services to assist the respective courts to achieve their stated purpose	Exercising the jurisdiction of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia	<p>TIMELY COMPLETION OF CASES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of final order applications disposed of within 12 months 90% of all other applications disposed of within six months 70% of matters resolved prior to trial <p>TIMELY REGISTRY SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of counter enquiries served within 20 minutes 80% of National Enquiry Centre telephone enquiries answered within 90 seconds 80% of email enquiries responded to within two working days 75% of applications lodged processed within two working days

PROGRAM 4.1 – COMMONWEALTH COURTS CORPORATE SERVICES

OUTCOME 4	PURPOSE	DELIVERY	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
Improved administration and support of the resolution of matters according to law for litigants in the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia and parties in the National Native Title Tribunal through efficient and effective provision of shared corporate services	Provide efficient and effective corporate services to the Commonwealth courts and the National Native Title Tribunal	Providing efficient and effective corporate services for the Commonwealth courts and the National Native Title Tribunal	<p>EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE CORPORATE SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate services to be provided within the agreed funding Performance benchmarks as set out in the memorandum of understanding between the courts to be met



FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

COLLABORATIVE ▶ COMMERCIAL ▶ DIGITAL ▶ EXPERTISE ▶ LAW ▶
FRAMEWORK ▶ PERFORMANCE ▶ JUDGES ▶ PRACTICE ▶ SKILLFUL ▶
JURISDICTION ▶ REFORM ▶ FLEXIBLE ▶ TRANSFORMING ▶ SIMPLIFIED ▶

BACKGROUND

The Federal Court of Australia (FCA) was created by the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth) and began to exercise its jurisdiction on 1 February 1977. It assumed jurisdiction formerly exercised in part by the High Court of Australia and the whole jurisdiction of the Australian Industrial Court and the Federal Court of Bankruptcy.

The FCA is a superior court of record and a court of law and equity. It sits in all capital cities and elsewhere in Australia from time to time. The Court's jurisdiction is broad, covering almost all civil matters arising under Australian federal law and some summary and indictable criminal matters.

The Court's workload has been organised by reference to nine National Practice Areas (NPAs) and where applicable, sub-areas, based on established areas of law. The NPAs are:

- Administrative and Constitutional Law and Human Rights
- Admiralty and Maritime
- Commercial and Corporations
- Federal Crime and Related Proceedings
- Employment and Industrial Relations
- Intellectual Property
- Native Title
- Taxation, and
- Other Federal Jurisdiction.

The Chief Justice is the senior judge of the Court and is responsible for managing the business and administrative affairs of the Court. He is assisted by the CEO and Principal Registrar who is appointed by the Governor-General on the nomination of the Chief Justice.

The FCA has a substantial and diverse appellate jurisdiction. It hears appeals from decisions of single judges of the Court, decisions of the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) in non-family law matters, decisions of the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island and certain decisions of state and territory supreme courts exercising federal jurisdiction.

The objectives of the FCA are to:

- decide disputes according to law—as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible and, in so doing, to interpret the statutory law and develop the

general law of the Commonwealth, so as to fulfil the role of a court exercising the judicial power of the Commonwealth under the Constitution

- provide an effective registry service for the community, and
- manage the resources allotted by Parliament efficiently.

The FCA has had responsibility for the corporate administration of the National Native Title Tribunal (Tribunal) since July 2012. From 1 July 2016, the *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016* merged the corporate services of the Family Court of Australia and the FCC with the FCA into a single administrative entity – known as the Federal Court of Australia.

The Act makes provision for the courts to share corporate services including Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance and other functions. Under the arrangement, each court remains independent to fulfil its statutory obligations. Heads of Jurisdiction continue to be responsible for managing the administrative affairs of their respective courts (excluding corporate services) with assistance from a CEO and Principal Registrar.

▲ Our Purpose

To decide disputes according to law as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible.

▲ Our Values

Prompt, courteous, effective, efficient, accountable.

We are committed to upholding the Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles and to comply with the Code of Conduct. We are impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

GOALS

The FCA's goals are based on three strategic objectives that will guide operations over the next four years and assist the Court achieve its stated purpose. Our performance against this plan will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement in our Annual Report.

This plan reflects the purpose and goals of the Court, as well as the Court's vision and culture of relentless improvement. The Court has a track record of innovation and forward thinking and it will continue a number of long-term projects, aligned with its strategic objectives, during 2018–19 and beyond. These include international projects led by the judiciary, extending the reforms of the National Court Framework (NCF) and digital file and the implementation of Digital Hearings.

Significant change will also impact the Court in 2019 with the proposed reform that, subject to the passing of legislation, will see the establishment of a new Family Law Appeal Division in the FCA. Updated performance criteria will be provided in the 2019–20 Corporate Plan.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Efficient and just dispute resolution.
2. Provide leadership in international jurisprudence.
3. Contribute to the Australian legal system—strengthening relations with court users.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The key outcome measure for the Court is contained in the Portfolio Budget Statements. Across its jurisdiction, the Court will apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the FCA and parties in the Tribunal through the resolution of matters according to law and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court and the Tribunal.

The Court maintains two time goals to measure the performance of its work. All strategies and tactical plans are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals.

Our Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve the following targets:

1. eighty-five per cent of cases completed within 18 months of commencement, and
2. judgments to be delivered within three months.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and just dispute resolution

The Court began the process of reinvigorating its case management approach in 2015 with the introduction of the NCF. The NCF is an innovative approach to case management, involving the development of a structure to facilitate the delivery of quality judgments, by experienced judges, in a timely manner and for a reasonable cost. It is consistent with our vision to build an internationally respected court.

The NCF reforms have been successfully implemented in respect of the judicial work of the Court, including organising and managing the Court's work by reference to nine NPAs, the introduction of a national allocation system for judicial work and national direct-to-chambers duty judge arrangements and ensuring nationally consistent and simplified practice through a suite of new national practice notes, including the Central Practice Note, which were issued in October 2016.

The NCF reforms are now being extended to apply to the important legal work undertaken by the Judicial Registrars of the Court, including how that work is allocated and managed nationally.

At the heart of these reforms is restructuring the allocation and management of registrars' work to allow for a truly national court and consistent national arrangements to facilitate the just and efficient disposition of registrars work, and to leverage the skills and experience of registrars to better support judges in complex mediation and case management, to support the efficient disposition of cases.

With the implementation of digital files for all new matters in the Court, Digital Hearings are a further initiative by the Court to provide efficient and just dispute resolution and to reduce litigation costs.

A successful pilot for Digital Hearings was conducted in 2015–16. The pilot studied how judges and litigants interact digitally in the courtroom and identified the workflows necessary to support these interactions. The next phase of Digital Hearings will be implemented during 2018–19. Consultations have commenced with key stakeholders about the changes.

The Court will continue to develop its business intelligence work, with the overall aim of turning the Court's data into information that can better inform the Court's administrative decisions.

The FCA's ambitious digital strategy is not about replicating current paper processes in digital form, rather it is an enabler of a broader reform agenda—an agenda centred on the NCF and related changes in practice and procedure and the redesign of the Court's registry services.

The review of registry services will position the Court to deliver a model for the delivery of client, digital and in-court support that is financially viable and, to the extent it can be, future-proofed – designed for the next 10 years, not just the next financial year – with an agile technology and people infrastructure to ensure it can respond to change, whether anticipated or not.

Necessary to this will be a workforce strategy that aligns the skills of our people with the broader strategy, focusing on serving the needs of those who use the Court (for example, litigants, citizens, business users, visitors, witnesses and legal professionals).

Over the four years of this plan, the FCA will focus on the following strategies:

1. Extend the NCF.
2. Implement digital hearings.
3. Redesign registry services.

PRIORITIES ► *Efficient and just dispute resolution*

In 2018–19, the FCA will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Extension of the NCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the NCF to the work undertaken by Judicial Registrars, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and implementing a national allocation system for registrar-related work modelled on the NCF allocation system for judges implementing nationally consistent and simplified practice for registrar-related work implementing a direct-assistance support model for registrars developing an NCF Reporting Framework for registrars based on the NCF Reporting Framework for judges 	June 2019															
Digital hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the mechanism that forms the basis of digital hearings 	Dec 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot the mechanism across suitable NPAs 	June 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue consultation with the legal profession about the ideal digital hearings practices and procedures 					Ongoing											
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convert Native Title paper files to electronic files 	June 2019															

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Redesign registry services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage the digitisation of court processes and procedures, by reviewing the current approach to the provision of registry services to ensure the Court: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides exemplary and consistent services to court users, through the development of a user centric, financial sustainable model, including the sharing of services across the other federal courts identifies opportunities for business improvement within the Court and across the other federal courts; for example, the way services are provided to self-represented litigants and the way technology is used to improve the accessibility of courts 																

June 2019

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Provide leadership in international jurisprudence

The Court's international programs support its vision to promote judicial independence and leadership and assist in developing court services, with particular emphasis on Asia and the Pacific regions.

The Court's international development projects are funded externally by a range of donors including the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the United Nations Development Programme. This funding is separate to the FCA's allocated budget process.

The Court works closely with other jurisdictions to develop relationships with its international counterparts. This includes partnering with judiciaries around the world to provide technical expertise to collaborate on reforms and developments and hosting international delegations.

The Court currently has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with courts in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Myanmar. In September 2018, the Court will sign a further MOU with the High Court of the Solomon Islands. Each MOU is with the 'apex' courts and has strategic and thematic priorities which form the basis of the collaborations in order to strengthen the provision of justice in the partner countries. In addition, the Court manages the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative involving 14 Pacific

countries. The initiative commenced in 2016, initially for three years, with the possibility of a two-year extension. The initiative is designed to strengthen governance and the rule of law by enhancing the professional competence of judicial and court officers, along with the processes and systems that they use. Over the years, it has transitioned from a regional training and capacity building program, to a targeted development project, based on improving law and justice outcomes for beneficiaries at local, national and regional levels.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCA will focus on the following strategies:

1. Enhance the capacity of judicial and court officers through international collaboration and cooperation.
2. Advance relations with courts with which the Court has an existing MOU; the Court currently or has previously collaborated with; and other courts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Priorities for 2018–19 include: continue to collaborate pursuant to existing MOUs with courts; continue to foster an understanding of global legal issues; develop new judicial relationships within the Asia-Pacific region; and increase global awareness of the Court's international programs.

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Contribute to the Australian legal system—strengthen relations with court users

This strategy takes into account the changing needs and expectations of court users and the wider choices available through digital technologies, including the rapid development of artificial intelligence and big data applications. It will continue to be aligned with the Government’s Digital Transformation Agenda and the evolving whole-of-government initiatives and strategies that it encompasses.

The FCA will continue to create user-focused services that overcome barriers created by geography, culture, language and socioeconomic circumstances.

The FCA aims to develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of court users and improve access to justice. These approaches extend to the communication channels we use, as well as providing procedures which are clear, consistent and understandable. The Court's strategy has been crucial to the achievement of this goal. Over the next year, work will continue to identify and deploy additional services and technologies to enhance the intuitiveness and responsiveness of digital communications for different court users.

The FCA also engages in a wide range of activities with the legal profession and community that support the Australian legal system. The Court’s judicial officers continue to contribute to the work of law reform bodies as well as educational and legal community-based organisations. This work ensures that the Court develops positive relationships with, and gains the support of, the legal sector and the Australian public.

The Court also provides opportunities for members of the legal profession to discuss existing and emerging issues, provide feedback to the Court and act as a reference group for proposed changes. It is essential to the Court’s and the Australian legal system’s reputation nationally and internationally, that these relationships continue.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCA will focus on the following strategies:

1. Continue to enhance the online strategy.
2. Contribute to the legal profession through liaison and education.
3. Continue initiatives for court user education.

PRIORITIES ► *Contribute to the Australian legal system—
strengthen relations with court users*

In 2018–19, the FCA will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Continued enhancement of the online strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement improved web and digital services 	June 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to align services with the Digital Transformation Agenda 	Ongoing															
Continued initiatives for court user education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tailored resources and educational materials via different channels to assist the court users 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national management plan for the service arrangements for self-represented litigants and implement an ongoing review of the plan 	Ongoing															
Contribute to the legal profession through consultation and educational services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with educational providers and professional bodies to identify needs 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver seminars, lectures and training to improve access to justice, education on new services and other topics of relevance, including artificial intelligence and big data issues 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular forums with the profession to identify needs and receive feedback 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing user groups and establish user groups in all key areas of practice for each NPA 	Ongoing															

RESOURCING

FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

The table below illustrates the financial and staffing resources applied by the FCA over the four years of this plan.

	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000	2021–22 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses				
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	600	600	600	600
Administered total	600	600	600	600
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	67,710	68,052	68,351	68,351
S74 retained revenue receipts	2,919	2,919	2,919	2,919
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	14,057	14,057	14,057	14,057
Departmental total	84,686	85,028	85,327	85,582
Total expenses Federal Court of Australia	85,286	85,628	85,927	86,182
Average staffing level (c)	340			

Note: Departmental appropriation splits and totals are indicative estimates and may change in the course of the budget year as government priorities change.

- Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of liabilities assumed by other entities.
- Excludes judges.
- This includes funding the Tribunal as component 1.1.2 in FCA PBS (Outcome 1).



FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

FAMILY ▶ ACCESSIBLE ▶ NATIONAL ▶ APPLICATIONS ▶ FINAL ORDER ▶
PROPERTY ▶ INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ▶ SUPERIOR ▶ CONSENT ▶
JUDGES ▶ LAW ▶ MEDIATION ▶ COMPLEX ▶ CHILDREN ▶ MAGELLAN ▶

BACKGROUND

The Family Court of Australia (FCoA) is a superior court of record established by Parliament in 1975 under Chapter III of the Constitution. The FCoA operates under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and through its specialist judges and staff, helps Australians to resolve their most complex family disputes.

The FCoA exercises appellate and trial level jurisdiction. At trial level, the Court deals with the most complex parenting and financial cases and hears cases arising under the regulations implementing the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction. It has a substantial appellate jurisdiction and hears appeals from decisions of single judges of the Court and from the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) in family law matters.

The Chief Justice is the head of jurisdiction and is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the Court. The Chief Justice is assisted by the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar who is appointed by the Governor-General on the nomination of the Chief Justice.

The purpose of the FCoA as Australia's superior court in family law is to help Australians resolve their most complex family disputes by deciding matters according to the law, promptly, courteously and effectively.

The Court achieves this by:

- determining cases with the most complex law, facts and parties
- covering specialised areas in family law, and
- providing national coverage as the appellate court in family law matters.

▲ Our Purpose

To help Australians resolve their most complex family disputes by deciding matters according to the law, promptly, courteously and effectively.

▲ Our Values

Innovative, impartial, respectful, efficient and accountable.

We are committed to upholding the Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles and to comply with the Code of Conduct. We are impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

GOALS

The FCoA assists Australian families in the determination of the most complex family law disputes domestically and internationally, consistent with the rule of law and procedural fairness. The Court achieves this through effective judicial and non-judicial processes and high-quality judgments, while respecting the needs and sensitivities of separating families.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes.
2. Efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The key outcome measure for the Court is contained in Outcome Two of the Portfolio Budget Statements. That is, to apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the FCoA through the resolution of family law matters according to law, particularly more complex family law matters and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court.

The FCoA maintains three goals related to timely completion of cases. Strategies and priorities are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals. The Court's Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve timely completion of cases.

This will be measured by the following:

1. clearance rate of 100 per cent
2. seventy-five per cent of judgments to be delivered within three months, and
3. seventy-five per cent of cases pending conclusion to be less than 12 months old.

NOTE: From 1 January 2019, subject to the passing of legislation, the FCoA and the FCC will amalgamate to become the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. Updated performance criteria will be provided in the 2019–20 Corporate Plan.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes

The work of the FCoA is extremely demanding, with judges hearing the most complex and difficult family law matters involving allegations of family violence and/or child abuse; questions of international family law (relating to the Hague 1980 Child Abduction Convention and/or 1996 Child Protection Convention); applications related to special medical procedures (such as stage two treatment for gender dysphoria in children); and complex property matters including those involving accrued jurisdiction and third parties.

Whilst the Government has been proactive in amending the Act to provide better protection and broaden the definition of family violence, the FCoA's ability to manage workloads in order to provide timely hearings and well informed outcomes requires considerable management attention in a very tight fiscal environment. Identification and allocation of resources to address these issues are a priority.

Strategies to address family violence issues are a priority for the FCoA. Family violence features in a significant proportion of matters filed. It is a complex issue which is further complicated by a range of scenarios:

1. The intersection of parenting orders made by the FCoA and family violence orders, including apprehended violence orders or intervention orders and criminal sanctions made in other jurisdictions.
2. The consequence of a victim of family violence having to be involved in private litigation with their former partner following an acrimonious separation, particularly if there has been a history of violence.
3. The need to make interim parenting orders which may have to last more than 12 months before a final hearing can be provided and where there are contentious issues about safety which cannot always be readily determined at an interim hearing.
4. The crucial need for adequate risk assessment at the earliest opportunity when an application has been filed.
5. Where the alleged perpetrator cannot afford a lawyer and is ineligible for legal aid, the need to manage cross-examination of the alleged victim sensitively whilst according procedural fairness to both parties.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCoA will focus on the following strategies:

1. Strengthen the role of the FCoA as a specialist court for complex family law matters.
2. Review and develop the role of registrars so they are specialists in their field.
3. Improve strategies to address family violence, particularly in complex family law disputes.

PRIORITIES ► *Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes*

In 2018–19, the FCoA will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Review and enhance the role of family law registrars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the role of registrars to ensure they provide specialist services to families with complex family law needs 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise the role of registrars by increasing delegations and enhancing case management practices 																
Improve strategies to address family violence, particularly in complex family law disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a family violence chapter aimed at self-represented litigants, for inclusion in or with the Court Network's 'The Family Law Courts in Australia' booklet 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review of the Family Violence Best Practice Principles and Family Violence Plan 																

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters

The strategy recognises that services need to be accessible and tailored to the needs of a diverse range of users. These may include unrepresented litigants, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and those who present with complex issues related to family violence, mental health and/or drug and alcohol issues. To this end, the FCoA will continue to focus on providing efficient and effective services to a broad range of litigants involved in complex family law disputes.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCoA will focus on the following strategies:

1. Continuously look for efficiencies and business improvements in processes and operations.
2. Improve the efficiency of the Court through digital innovation.
3. Improve processes, particularly in dealing with complex family law matters, with a particular focus on child safety and family violence.

PRIORITIES ► *Efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters*

In 2018–19, the FCoA will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Enhance the efficiency of the FCoA through digital innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staged roll-out of a digital court file 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance eFiling to ensure that as many documents can be electronically lodged as possible 	June 2019															
Look for efficiencies and business improvements in court processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate digital processes for the efficient resolution of consent orders 	Ongoing															
Improve processes in dealing with complex family law matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage and collaborate with other jurisdictions, agencies and service providers to improve and enhance services provided to Australian families. 	Ongoing															

RESOURCING

FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

The table below illustrates the financial and staffing resources applied by the FCoA over the four years of this Plan.

	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000	2021–22 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses	300	300	300	300
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	100	100	100	100
Administered total	400	400	400	400
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	32,788	32,749	32,856	32,948
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	11,943	11,943	11,943	11,943
Departmental total	44,731	44,692	44,799	44,891
Total expenses Family Court of Australia	45,131	45,092	45,199	45,291
Average staffing level (c)	92			

Note: Departmental appropriation splits and totals are indicative estimates and may change in the course of the budget year as government priorities change.

- a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of liabilities assumed by other entities.
- c) Excludes judges.



FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

NEGOTIATION ▶ CONSULTATION ▶ COPYRIGHT ▶ CIRCUIT ▶ FAMILIES ▶
DISPUTE RESOLUTION ▶ GENERAL ▶ INFORMAL ▶ DIVORCE ▶ JUDGES ▶
ENQUIRY CENTRE ▶ REGISTRIES ▶ SKILLED ▶ RESOLVE ▶ NATIONAL ▶

BACKGROUND

The Federal Circuit Court of Australia (FCC) was established under the *Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999* (Cth). The FCC provides a simpler and more accessible alternative to litigation in the Family Court of Australia (FCoA) and the Federal Court of Australia (FCA) and helps to relieve the workload of the superior federal courts.

The provisions of the *Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999* (Cth) enable the FCC to operate as informally as possible in the exercise of judicial powers, use streamlined procedures and make use of a range of dispute resolution processes to resolve matters without judicial decisions.

The FCC deals with a high volume of matters and delivers services to regional Australia through its regular circuit court program. Its jurisdiction includes family law and child support, administrative law, admiralty, bankruptcy, consumer, human rights, industrial, intellectual property and migration.

On 1 July 2016 the FCC became responsible for the provision of family law registry services to the FCC and the FCoA. Registry services also include the National Enquiry Centre (NEC). The FCA continues to provide registry services for the courts' general federal law matters.

Our Purpose

To provide a simple and accessible alternative to litigation in the FCoA and FCA.

To provide efficient and effective registry services to assist the respective courts to achieve their stated purpose.

Our Values

Efficient, innovative, accountable, accessible and progressive.

We are committed to upholding the Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles and to comply with the Code of Conduct. We are impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

GOALS

The FCC's Corporate Plan is based on three strategic objectives. These are reviewed each year by the administration and the judiciary to ensure that they remain relevant to our operating environment.

The FCC aims to be an innovative, agile organisation which is responsive to the needs of all litigants. The foundation for this strategy is our charter to provide simpler and more accessible alternatives to litigation, with a particular focus on increasing accessibility in regional and rural areas.

This plan consolidates our current strategies and builds on our commitment to innovation to ensure that the Court is equipped to respond to the challenges ahead.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Efficient access to justice.
2. Improved business systems.
3. Transformation of service delivery.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The key outcome measure for the Court is contained in Outcome Three of the Portfolio Budget Statement. That is, to apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the FCC through more informal and streamlined resolution of family law and general federal law matters according to law, through the encouragement of appropriate dispute resolution processes and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court.

The Court maintains two goals related to timely completion of cases and the timely delivery of registry services to measure the performance of its work. All strategies and tactical plans are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals.

Our Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve the following targets:

1. Timely completion of cases will be measured by the following:

- ninety per cent of final order applications disposed of within 12 months
- ninety per cent of all other applications disposed of within six months, and
- seventy per cent of matters resolved prior to trial.

2. Timely provision of family law registry services will be measured by:

- seventy-five per cent of counter enquiries served within 20 minutes
- eighty per cent of NEC telephone enquiries answered within 90 seconds
- eighty per cent of email enquiries responded to within two working days, and
- seventy-five per cent of applications lodged processed within two working days.

NOTE: From 1 January 2019, subject to the passing of legislation, the FCoA and the FCC will amalgamate to become the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. Updated performance criteria will be provided in the 2019–20 Corporate Plan.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient access to justice

The Court’s broad jurisdiction and less formal legislative mandate creates significant challenges in streamlining and simplifying access for court users.

Current judicial resourcing and an increase in certain aspects of workload for the Court, particularly in migration matters, provide the impetus to improve productivity through the development of streamlined processes and resources to support court users.

In 2017, family law matters constituted 91 per cent of all applications filed. As such, family law is a particular focus area for strategy.

The Court has a track record of innovation in the area of family law and collaborates with other agencies to improve processes and improve access. Since the introduction of the *Notice of Risk* in 2015, the Court has driven efforts to improve the interface between the child welfare and family law systems through developing partnerships and information exchange mechanisms with local and state providers.

A further example of the Court’s innovation is the development and implementation of a fully electronic

divorce file. Approximately 45,000 divorce applications are lodged each year, with upwards of 70 per cent of those applications now being lodged electronically. Any hard copy applications are converted to a digital format ensuring that all divorce files are now electronic. These changes improve access to justice for litigants by further enabling online services.

The Court pays particular attention to ensuring court users in rural and regional areas have access to justice. This strategy seeks to maximise the scheduling of judicial resources and effectively manage property and other resources to reduce cost and improve efficiency to ensure that rural and regional Australians have access to the Court.

The Court has developed a program of sittings in rural and regional locations called circuits. Approximately 20 per cent of the Court’s family law workload is based in circuit locations. Strategies to improve the efficiency and value of circuits, as well as better analysis of workloads, are priorities. These strategies seek to provide convenient, localised service whereby matters can be dealt with in the one location. eFiling enables court users to file documents electronically, reducing the need to attend a registry.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCC will focus on the following strategies:

1. Improve the scope for information sharing and collaboration with other agencies to improve access and service delivery to court users.
2. Improve the cost effectiveness and efficient management of circuits.
3. Identify opportunities to provide self-service options for court users.

PRIORITIES ► *Efficient access to justice*

In 2018–19, the FCC will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22							
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN				
Collaborate with agencies and service providers to improve access and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards enhanced collaboration with agencies and service providers to facilitate information sharing when risks are alleged in family law proceedings 																				
		Ongoing																			
Continue to enhance rural and regional mediation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine the process of referrals to mediation provided via the Administered Appropriation 																				
		Ongoing																			
Analyse circuit workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further refine data requirements and reports to enable a review of circuit workloads 																				
		Ongoing																			
Identify opportunities to expand eFiling and online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the benefits of the Commonwealth Courts Portal, eFiling and other online services 																				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the capacity to enable the eFiling of all applications types 																				
		Ongoing																			

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Improved business systems

The work of the Court is characterised by the high volume of trial work across a diverse range of jurisdictions in family and general federal law.

With the move to a shared corporate services environment, it is important to develop a common understanding of the Court’s practices and the key supporting systems and business processes. This includes work done in judicial chambers, including interaction with parties during litigation and the support provided by the registries in both family and general federal law.

Analysis of work undertaken in judicial chambers has already led to the automation of the production of court orders providing significant benefits in terms of efficiency, accuracy and time.

It is equally important that the judges have access to relevant and timely information about their workload. The management of judicial time in a high volume trial court requires accurate information on key parameters to assist the Court in meeting its key performance indicators.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCC will focus on the following strategies:

1. Review business processes critical to judicial functions.
2. Realise the benefits of the automation of order production and processing.
3. Implement real time business intelligence reporting to monitor and manage workloads for the judiciary.

PRIORITIES ► Improved business systems

In 2018–19, the FCC will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Review of business processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project plan 	Dec 2018															
Evaluate critical business system improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a roadmap for review 	Dec 2018															
Refine reporting requirements for business intelligence tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise reporting requirements 	Dec 2018															

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Develop and implement focused training for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement online induction and training for registry service officers 	Dec 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out the Family Violence and Disability eLearning packages 	Dec 2018															

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Transformation of service delivery

The Court provides a range of services to court users and the judiciary, ensuring access to skilled staff, timely information and courtrooms that function effectively. The Court’s vision to provide access in a broad geographic area across a diverse caseload creates significant challenges to balance resources and services with cost. The evolution to a digital environment, in accordance with Government policy, requires consideration of alternative methods of service delivery.

A family law registry services strategy was developed in 2015 to identify ways to improve service delivery. This reinforces the FCC’s commitment to identify technologies and processes to improve communication channels and streamline case management for court users and provide support to the judiciary.

Over the four years of this plan, the FCC will focus on the following strategies:

1. Leverage technology to improve service delivery to court users and the judiciary.
2. Standardise and simplify processes to improve our efficiency and responsiveness to court user’s needs.
3. Partner with State and Commonwealth agencies to enhance service delivery in regional and rural areas.

PRIORITIES ► *Transformation of service delivery*

In 2018–19, the FCC will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Identify opportunities to expand the use of online services to integrate court user needs, improve access and reduce cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope the requirements with users 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a project plan 																
Create a virtual registry to improve access and reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify and improve access to court-related information 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce systems to initiate applications and make payments 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify other transactions that can be web enabled 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication methods using technology to remind litigants of court events 																
Scope the potential for using social networking technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to use social media to provide users with updated court information 																

RESOURCING

FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

The table below illustrates the financial and staffing resources applied by the FCC over the four years of this Plan.

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Administered expenses				
Administered item	1,580	1,581	1,587	1,592
Special appropriations				
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	200	200	200	200
Administered total	1,780	1,781	1,787	1,792
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	92,123	92,008	91,426	92,791
S74 retained revenue receipts (a)	640	640	640	640
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	637	637	637	637
Departmental total	93,400	93,285	93,703	94,068
Total expenses Federal Circuit Court	95,180	95,066	95,490	95,860
Average staffing level (c)	526			

Note: Departmental appropriation splits and totals are indicative estimates and may change in the course of the budget year as government priorities change.

- a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of liabilities assumed by other entities.
- c) Excludes judges.



NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE TRIBUNAL

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

NATIVE ▶ TITLE ▶ TRIBUNAL ▶ COLLABORATIVE ▶ COUNTRY ▶ LAND ▶
SHARED FUTURE ▶ KNOWLEDGE ▶ ASSISTANCE ▶ GOVERNANCE ▶
DETERMINATION ▶ CLAIMANT ▶ REGISTER ▶ CULTURAL ▶ HERITAGE ▶

BACKGROUND

The *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) established the National Native Title Tribunal (Tribunal) as an independent body with a wide range of functions.

The Act is a special measure for the advancement and protection of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders (Indigenous Australians) and is intended to advance the process of reconciliation among all Australians.

The purpose of the native title scheme, established by the Act is to:

- provide for the recognition and protection of native title
- establish a mechanism for determining claims to native title, and
- establish ways in which future dealings affecting native title (future acts) may proceed.

The Tribunal has numerous functions designed to assist in serving that purpose. In particular, the Tribunal has responsibilities in connection with the processing of applications for determinations as to the existence or non-existence of native title over identified parcels of land, and with applications for compensation payable pursuant to the Act.

The Tribunal has functions in connection with future acts as defined in s 233 of that Act. It also assists persons involved in proceedings under the Act, including dispute resolution.

Section 109 of the Act provides:

1. The Tribunal must pursue the objective of carrying out its functions in a fair, just, economical, informal and prompt way.
2. The Tribunal, in carrying out its functions, may take account of the cultural and customary concerns of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, but not so as to prejudice unduly any party to any proceedings that may be involved.

3. The Tribunal, in carrying out its functions, is not bound by technicalities, legal forms or rules of evidence.

The President of the Tribunal is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the Tribunal, with the assistance of the Federal Court of Australia (FCA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Principal Registrar, who may delegate his powers under the Act, to any of the Native Title Registrar, Deputy Registrar or staff assisting the Tribunal.

The CEO also has powers of delegation under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth) and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

The President may direct the FCA CEO and Principal Registrar regarding the exercise of his or her power to assist the President in managing the administrative affairs of the Tribunal.

▲ Our Purpose

The purpose of the Tribunal is to perform the functions conferred upon it by the Act in accordance with the directions contained in s 109, ethically, efficiently, economically and courteously, thus advancing the purposes underlying the Act, particularly reconciliation amongst all Australians.

GOALS

Each year, the Tribunal reviews its strategies and priorities, having regard to its statutory functions. The Tribunal presently expects changes in those functions as the result of anticipated statutory amendments. It is expected that there will be an increased emphasis upon post-determination dispute resolution.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. To increase contact with stakeholders, particularly representative bodies, governments at all levels and prescribed bodies corporate, with emphasis upon identification of their needs and development and demonstration of its capacity to satisfy such needs.
2. To develop staff capacity by specialised training, including cross skilling and by fostering staff understanding of the wider role of the Tribunal in fulfilling the purpose of the Native Title Act.
3. To develop amongst non-Indigenous staff a clearer understanding of the needs and problems of Indigenous Australians, as well as of their cultures and aspirations.
4. To increase significantly the number of Indigenous staff working in the Tribunal.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Tribunal strives to be an externally focussed organisation, responsive to stakeholder needs, and conscious of the role conferred upon it by Parliament.

The Tribunal will look to stakeholders for their assessments of its performance. It will also, where possible, identify relevant statistics concerning performance, maintain such statistics and publish them.

Performance criteria for the Tribunal is part of Outcome 1, Program 1.1 (Federal Court of Australia).

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Increase contact with stakeholders

This strategy underpins the Tribunal’s commitment to be service-focussed and responsive to the needs of stakeholders, relying on recent market research. The Tribunal will focus on core statutory functions. It will identify innovative ways in which to improve collaboration with stakeholders and it will seek to ensure that its services are appropriate and delivered respectfully.

Better communication, simplification of processes, and improved culture and innovation are at the heart of this strategy. Technology, internal reorganisation and the development of new products will assist us in implementing it, as will ensuring that the skills and capabilities of staff are aligned with the Tribunal’s commitment to service excellence.

Technology and the development of new products will be an important enabler to achieve the strategy, as will ensuring that the skills and capabilities of staff are aligned with a commitment to service excellence.

Over the four years of this plan, the Tribunal will focus on the following strategies:

1. Ensure consistent service delivery with a focus on service excellence.
2. Improve service delivery through innovation and a focus on the needs of key clients and stakeholders.

PRIORITIES ► Increase contact with stakeholders

In 2018–19, the Tribunal will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Ensure consistent service delivery with a focus on service excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop internal knowledge, capability and culture to focus on service excellence 																
		Ongoing															
Improve service delivery through innovation and a focus on the needs of key clients and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas of service delivery where the use of technology can improve efficiency of resources Continue to develop tailored and culturally appropriate services in response to client and stakeholder feedback 																
		Ongoing															

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Develop staff capacity

Several recent senior staff departures have offered an opportunity for re-organisation. In these circumstances, the Tribunal will take the following steps in 2018–19:

- identify and clarify the various functions conferred upon the Tribunal by the Act
- identify available specialised human resources within and outside the Tribunal
- develop new Brisbane premises
- redesign the teams performing the Tribunal’s functions in order to facilitate a higher degree of specialisation amongst staff members whilst offering them opportunities for multi-skilling
- identify and train new leaders to replace recently departed senior staff, and
- develop clear lines of responsibility, accountability and communication within the Tribunal as a whole.

The goal is to build a capable, tolerant, respectful, culturally sensitive and diverse team. Staff members are universally enthusiastic, talented and generally attuned to the Tribunal’s goals. However an unduly fluid structure has led to a loss of coherence, and the need for development of a more conventional system of leadership, supervision, delegation and reporting. A new structure has been devised. Over the next year, it will be adopted and adapted as necessary.

Over the four years of this plan, the Tribunal will focus on the following strategy:

1. Restructure teams.

PRIORITIES ► *Develop staff capacity*

In 2018–19, the Tribunal will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22				
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	
Restructure teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing commitment to provide a culturally safe and respectful workplace 																	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Tribunal premises 																	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign teams with clear lines of responsibility 																	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for leadership development 																	

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Develop cultural awareness

In conjunction with the FCA, the Tribunal will develop a new reconciliation action plan and participate in the development of an indigenous employment strategy. Both documents will consolidate the Tribunal’s commitment to developing cultural awareness and diversity within our workforce and to building relationships with the communities which we serve.

Whilst formal steps are essential in any plan to foster an appropriate workplace culture, informal steps are also of great value. When Indigenous and non-Indigenous people work together, their shared experiences should contribute to achieving the desired outcomes.

Further, stakeholders should see that the Tribunal values all of its staff, and that they work harmoniously together. By opening the workplace to the scrutiny of stakeholders and, to some extent, the general public, the Tribunal will seek to demonstrate best practice in our workplace relationships.

Over the four years of this plan, the Tribunal will focus on the following strategies:

1. Develop a new Reconciliation Action Plan.
2. Develop an Indigenous employment strategy.

PRIORITIES ► *Develop cultural awareness*

In 2018–19, the Tribunal will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19		2019–20		2020–21		2021–22	
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Develop a new Reconciliation Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the FCA to deliver this document 					Ongoing			
Develop an Indigenous employment strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete this strategy in conjunction with the FCA human resources section 					Ongoing			

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Increase Indigenous staff numbers

Presently, Indigenous participation in the Tribunal’s workforce is concentrated in the Brisbane and Cairns offices. The Tribunal has, however, recently appointed an Indigenous lawyer in the Perth Office. It presently expects to employ two Indigenous graduates as research assistants, possibly located in Brisbane and Perth. Every attempt will be made to recruit other Indigenous staff where practicable.

Over the four years of this plan, the Tribunal will focus on the following strategy:

1. Increase overall number of Indigenous staff within the Tribunal.

PRIORITIES ► Increase Indigenous staff numbers

In 2018–19, the Tribunal will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22							
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN				
Increase overall number of Indigenous staff within the Tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply strategies to all recruitments 																				
		Ongoing																			



COMMONWEALTH COURTS CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

AMALGAMATED ▶ COMMUNICATIONS ▶ ASSETS ▶ eSERVICES ▶ FINANCE ▶
HUMAN RESOURCES ▶ LAW COURTS ▶ PROPERTY ▶ PROCUREMENT ▶
STAFFING ▶ BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE ▶ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ▶

BACKGROUND

In the 2015–16 Budget, the Australian Government announced that the corporate services of the Family Court of Australia (FCoA) and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia (FCC) would be amalgamated with the Federal Court of Australia (FCA) into a single administrative body with a single appropriation.

The *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016* established the amalgamated body, known as the FCA, from 1 July 2016. This approach preserves each court’s functional and judicial independence, whilst improving their financial sustainability.

Corporate Services includes communications, finance, human resources, information technology, library, procurement and contract management, property, risk oversight and management and statistics.

The shared corporate services body is managed by the FCA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Principal Registrar. The FCA CEO consults with heads of jurisdiction and the other CEOs in relation to the performance of this function. Details relating to corporate services and consultation requirements are set out in a MOU.

Corporate Services generates efficiencies by consolidating resources and infrastructure, streamlining processes and reducing duplication. The savings gained from reducing the administrative burden on each of the courts will be reinvested to support the core functions of the courts.

The objectives of Corporate Services are to:

- provide accurate, accessible and up-to-date information and advice
- standardise systems and process to increase efficiency
- build an agile and skilled workforce ready to meet the challenges and changes, and
- create a national technology framework capable of meeting the needs of the courts into the future.

Our Purpose

To provide efficient and effective corporate services to the Commonwealth courts and the National Native Title Tribunal.

Our Values

Competent, reliable, honest, integrity, respectful of others.

We are committed to upholding the Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles and to comply with the Code of Conduct. We are impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical.

GOALS

The key objective for Corporate Services over the next 12 months is to focus on the continuing provision of high level corporate service to the courts and the National Native Title Tribunal (Tribunal).

A major area of focus will be on the development of the Digital Court Program (DCP), a series of technology-related projects that aim to streamline core business systems, create flexibility and operational efficiency, support the courts' ongoing digital transformation and improve service delivery.

In addition, Corporate Services will continue to look at consolidating resources, streamlining services and reducing unnecessary duplication.

The challenge will be to remain focussed on delivery of services to the courts and the Tribunal whilst the amalgamation of systems and services continues. Lower costs will need to be achieved through consolidation of resources and greater productivity.

From 1 January 2019, subject to the passing of legislation, the FCoA and the FCC will amalgamate to become the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. This proposed reform may alter some of the Corporate Services' priorities for 2018–19, however these will be refined as more information becomes available.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Efficient and effective corporate services.
2. Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce.
3. Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The key outcome measure for Corporate Services is contained in the Portfolio Budget Statements. This is, improved administration and support for the resolution of matters according to law for litigants in the FCA, FCoA and the FCC and parties in the Tribunal through efficient and effective provision of shared corporate services.

The ability of the team to meet budget and projected average staffing numbers are the metrics that will be used to measure performance.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and effective corporate services

The goal to amalgamate corporate services functions of the three courts and the Tribunal is to improve efficiency, create a culture of high performance and provide value for money services.

Amalgamation has provided an opportunity to consolidate the experience of Corporate Services staff to identify the most effective policies and procedures, to develop nationally consistent services that support the work of the judiciary and registries.

Over the four years of this plan, Corporate Services will focus on the following strategies:

1. Benchmark finance processes to identify efficiencies and eliminate duplication.
2. Further refine business processes to streamline the functions of corporate services.

PRIORITIES ► *Efficient and effective corporate services*

In 2018–19, Corporate Services will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Refinement of business policies and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review opportunities to streamline finance processes and procedures to generate efficiencies 	June 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress implementation of best practice 	Dec 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a five year strategic property plan 	Jan 2019															
Develop a risk and compliance framework to better support and manage the risks of the entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to enhance and refine business continuity plans, risk registers and risk and compliance procedures, building on the established framework 	March 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training documentation and training programs developed and implemented for areas of risk and compliance 	Dec 2018															

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Drive efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve further efficiencies through consolidating or restructuring contracts as existing contracts expire 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop improved procurement processes through simplification of processes and provision of online training and templates/ tools 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve registry security plans, modernise and renew all security equipment and systems 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver new property projects in Newcastle and Rockhampton 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a property functional requirements brief for modern technologically advanced courtrooms, chambers, mediation suites and registries 																

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce

Amalgamation of the Corporate Services teams necessitated changes to the structure and culture of the organisation. In addition, with the increasing applications of technology to the work of the courts and the Tribunal, it is expected that the nature and type of work performed by Corporate Services and registry staff will impact on capability requirements.

A new Enterprise Agreement was accepted by 96 per cent of eligible staff on 5 June 2018. The move from two agreements to one, covering all staff, will assist in harmonising policies across all courts and the Tribunal and allow a consistent approach to all employment matters.

The Tribunal has worked closely with the Court to find synergies and harmonise approaches to employment practices and this will continue. A particular focus will be given to cultural training and development and programs that will assist all staff to work together with a common cultural underpinning.

Innovation is a key capability in order to deliver efficiencies, reduce costs and keep pace with change. To respond we will require a skilled, agile and engaged workforce.

Over the four years of this plan, Corporate Services will focus on the following strategies:

1. Build and sustain an engaged workforce who are passionate about working together to achieve the vision.
2. Identify capability requirements resulting from the new structure.
3. Strengthen the leadership group.
4. Create a high performance culture.

PRIORITIES ► Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce

In 2018–19, Corporate Services will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Develop a strategy and structure to support the courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design an organisational structure in line with recommendations from the organisational review 																
	Ongoing																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence work towards implementing a shared registry model 																
		June 2019															

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Merge processes and policies to develop best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review key policies and programs to rationalise and update following the implementation of a single enterprise agreement across the entity 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement preferred models based on above review 																
Corporate Services workforce plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership development 																

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions

During the next four years, Corporate Services will continue to identify and develop digital services to support improvements in registry functions, judicial work and enhance online access for the legal profession and other court users.

The first two years of the amalgamation has seen considerable work completed in modernising the information technology systems and infrastructures. This has included the rollout of personal computing (PC) equipment to all judges and staff, supporting contemporary Windows and MS Office applications. Judges have been provided tablet PCs and touch screen monitors in chambers and courtrooms. The Skype for Business application has been expanded to all judges and staff across the entity.

A key focus for 2018–19 will be the completion of the projects to consolidate data centres and unify secure internet gateway services. The consolidated data centres will be established on new server infrastructure commissioned in 2017–18. The consolidation effort will seek to reduce the total servers under management, by either retiring servers or shifting server functions to cloud services as part of the hybrid cloud architecture developed in 2017–18.

Further investment is required to modernise network equipment and maintain appropriate equipment lifecycles for courtroom technologies, including video conferencing. This will be balanced against greater demand for video conferencing across all courts.

This strategy aims to optimise technology for case management by increasing online accessibility for the legal community and, where appropriate, members of the public. It also supports the judiciary and court officers to manage and decide cases according to the law as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible.

Over the four years of this plan, Corporate Services will focus on the following strategies:

1. Modernise technology to improve quality and range of services.
2. Maintain a quality, contemporary and efficient IT environment.
3. Improve the courts' key business systems.

PRIORITIES ► *Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions*

In 2018–19, Corporate Services will progress the following projects:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Ongoing digital transformation through the delivery of the DCP to drive more efficient and streamlined practices across the courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance family law eFiling to support digital court file 	Oct 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an initial digital file in the family law jurisdiction 	Mar 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish new platform for consolidated eLodgment across general federal and family law 	June 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate general federal law electronic court files to digital court file 					30 June 2020											
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and enhance the courts case management system 	Phased rollout over the next 2–3 years															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new document management system 	Phased rollout over the next 2–3 years															
Optimise digital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate and complete the first stage of a project that delivers a common web platform for the courts and tribunal 	June 2019															

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN	JUL-SEPT	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	APR-JUN
Domino application migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the remaining FCoA/FCC Domino applications and retire or migrate to a new platform 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retire Domino platform 																
Data centre consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate family law business applications to new data centre 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retire AON Building data centre 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate/retire all other workloads and retire remaining Canberra data centres 																
Network and secure internet gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unify the two secure internet gateways into a single infrastructure 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise wide area network redesign 																
DevOps capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand CI/CD automated deployment tool set from family law to general federal law applications 																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create suite of regression tests on test automation toolset 																

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	2018–19				2019–20				2020–21				2021–22			
		JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN	JUL–SEPT	OCT–DEC	JAN–MAR	APR–JUN
Voice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct approach to market for new voice system 	Dec 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate services to new system 		June 2019														
Artificial intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and further develop the Artificial Intelligence and Big Data pilot application to support routine registry administrative decisions 	June 2019															
Courtroom technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernise courtroom technology 	Ongoing															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand number of video conference enabled courtrooms 	June 2019															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unify courtroom video conference networks 	June 2019															
Skype for Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess MS Teams as possible cloud replacement for Skype for Business 	Dec 2018															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate Skype for Business to a service cloud model 	Mar 2019															

RESOURCING

COMMONWEALTH COURTS CORPORATE SERVICES

The table below illustrates the financial and staffing resources applied by Corporate Services over the four years of this Plan.

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	64,606	65,784	60,174	60,522
S74 retained revenue receipts (a)	335	380	412	412
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	53,927	53,842	53,917	54,074
Total expenses Corporate Services	118,868	120,006	114,503	115,008
Average staffing level	123			

Note: Departmental appropriation splits and totals are indicative estimates and may change in the course of the budget year as government priorities change.

- a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses and resources received free of charge.

COMPLIANCE TABLE

The table below lists matters to be included in the Corporate Plan under s 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth) and their relevant page numbers.

	Page Number				
	Federal Court of Australia	Family Court	Federal Circuit Court	National Native Title Tribunal	Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services
Introductory statement	2	2	2	2	2
Purpose	8,11	8,21	9,28	37	9,44
Environment	3–4	3–4	3–4	3–4	3–4
Performance	8, 12	8, 22	9, 29	38	9, 45
Capability	13–18	23–25	30–34	39–42	46–53
Risk and oversight management	5–7	5–7	5–7	5–7	5–7