

# Part 4: Management and accountability



## Governance

Since 1990, the Federal Court has been self-administering, with a separate budget appropriation and reporting arrangement to the Parliament.

Under the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976*, the Chief Justice is responsible for managing the Court's administrative affairs. The Chief Justice is assisted by the CEO and Principal Registrar.

The *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* also provides that the Chief Justice may delegate any of his or her administrative powers to judges, and that the CEO and Principal Registrar may exercise powers on behalf of the Chief Justice in relation to the Court's administrative affairs.

In practice, the Court's governance involves two distinct structures: the management of the Court through its registry structure, and the judges' committee structure that facilitates the collegiate involvement of the judges of the Court. Judges also participate in the management of the Court through formal meetings of all judges. The registries and the judges' committees are discussed in more detail in this part.

### Judges' committees

There are a number of committees of judges of the Court. These committees assist with the administration of the Court and play an integral role in managing issues related to the Court's administration, as well as its rules and practice.

An overarching Operations and Finance Committee, chaired by the Chief Justice, assists the Chief Justice with the management of the administration of the Court.

An overarching National Practice Committee assists the Chief Justice in relation to practice and procedure reform and improvement in the Court.

The Chief Justice is also assisted by standing committees that focus on a number of specific issues. In addition, other ad hoc committees and working parties are established from time to time to deal with particular issues.

All of the committees are supported by senior court staff. The committees report to all judges at the biannual judges' meetings.

For more information about committees, see Appendix 14.

### Judges' meetings

National meetings of all judges are held on a biannual basis. A national judges' meeting was held by video conference in November 2021 and in-person in Adelaide in May 2022. The meetings dealt with matters such as the Court's Digital Court Program and other digital initiatives, enhancing legal support arrangements for judges and updates were provided from the various judicial committees.

### External scrutiny

The Court was not the subject of any reports by a Parliamentary committee or the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Court was not the subject of any judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals regarding its operations as a statutory agency for the purposes of the *Public Service Act 1999* or as a non-corporate entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

## Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services

### Overview

The Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services (Corporate Services) includes security, communications, finance, human resources, library, information technology (IT), procurement and contract management, property, judgment publishing, risk oversight and management, and business intelligence.

Corporate Services is managed by the Federal Court CEO and Principal Registrar who 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 an MOU.

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

## Objectives

The objectives of Corporate Services are to:

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

## Purpose

Corporate Services is responsible for supporting the corporate functions of the Federal Court, Federal Circuit and Family Court and the National Native Title Tribunal.

During 2021–22, the work of Corporate Services focused on supporting the evolving needs of judges and staff across all the courts and tribunals, while delivering on required efficiencies to meet reduced appropriations.

The following outlines the work of Corporate Services, including major projects and achievements, during 2021–22.

## The work of Corporate Services in 2021–22

### *Financial management*

As the Accountable Authority, the CEO and Principal Registrar of the Federal Court has overarching responsibility for the financial management of the three courts and Corporate Services, together forming the Federal Court of Australia entity.

The Federal Court has an Operations and Finance Committee, which is made up of judges from the Court as well as the CEO and Principal Registrar.

This committee meets periodically and oversees the financial management of the Court, with Corporate Services providing support.

### *Financial accounts*

During 2021–22, revenue from ordinary activities totalled \$380.346 million.

Total revenue comprised:

- an appropriation from government of \$298.390 million
- \$43.811 million of resources received free of charge, predominantly for accommodation occupied by the Court in Commonwealth Law Courts buildings and the Law Courts Building in Sydney
- \$36.057 million of liabilities assumed by other government agencies, representing the notional value of employer superannuation payments for the Courts' judges, and
- \$2.088 million from the sale of goods and services and other revenue and gains.

Total expenses as per the financial statements are \$377.933 million. This comprises \$109.460 million in judges' salaries and related expenses, \$138.928 million in employees' salaries and related expenses, \$43.951 million in property-related lease expenses, \$48.818 million in other administrative expenses, \$34.692 million in depreciation expenses and \$2.084 million for the write-down and impairment of assets and financial instruments and financing costs.

The net operating result from ordinary activities for 2021–22, as reported in the financial statements, is a surplus of \$2.413 million including depreciation expenses and the accounting impacts of AASB 16 Leases. Depreciation expenses in 2021–22 of \$34.692 million includes depreciation on right of use assets recognised under AASB 16 Leases. To reflect the underlying operating surplus of the Federal Court of Australia entity, in line with Department of Finance guidelines, depreciation expenses of \$34.692 million are excluded and principal payments of lease liabilities of \$19.209 million are included. This effectively reverses the impact of AASB 16 Leases on the underlying result and shows a net surplus from ordinary activities of \$17.896 million for 2021–22.

The surplus is an improvement on the budgeted break-even position due to judicial vacancies, the slower than expected appointment of a number of newly funded positions as a result of new government initiatives and the continued impact of COVID-19 on a number of operational expense areas.

The Federal Court has no other comprehensive income to report in 2021–22.

The next three-year budget cycle continues to challenge the entity to make further savings. With over 60 per cent of the entity's costs relating to property and judicial costs, which are largely fixed, the ability to reduce overarching costs is limited.

Equity increased from \$116.356 million in 2020–21 to \$137.476 million in 2021–22.

Program statements for each of the Court's programs can be found in Part 1.

### **Advertising and market research**

As required under section 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth), the Court must provide details of all amounts paid for advertising and marketing services. A total of \$155,284 was paid for recruitment advertising services in 2021–22. Payments for advertising the notification of native title applications, as required under the *Native Title Act 1993*, totalled \$91,872 over the reporting year.

The Court did not conduct any advertising campaigns in the reporting period.

### **Grant programs**

The Federal Court made no grant payments in 2021–22.

## **Corporate governance**

### **Audit and risk management**

The CEO and Principal Registrar of the Federal Court certifies that:

- fraud control plans and fraud risk assessments have been prepared that comply with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines
- appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting procedures and practices that comply with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines are in place, and
- the entity has taken all reasonable measures to appropriately deal with fraud relating to the entity. There were no instances of fraud reported during 2021–22.

The entity had the following structures and processes in place to implement the principles and objectives of corporate governance:

- a single Audit Committee overseeing the entity that met four times during 2021–22. The committee comprises an independent chairperson, three judges from the Federal Court, three judges from the Family Court, one judge from the Federal Circuit Court and one additional external member. The CEO and Principal Registrars for each of the Courts, the Executive Director Corporate Services, the Chief Financial Officer and representatives from the internal audit service provider and the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) attend committee meetings as observers
- internal auditors, O'Connor Marsden and Associates, conducted two internal audits during the year to test the entity's systems of internal control
- a risk management framework including a Risk Management Policy, a Risk Management Plan and a Fraud Control Plan
- internal compliance certificates completed by senior managers, and
- annual audit performed by the ANAO who issued an unmodified audit certificate attached to the annual financial statements.

TABLE 4.1: AUDIT COMMITTEE, 30 JUNE 2022

MEMBER NAME	QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF MEETING ATTENDED/ TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	TOTAL ANNUAL REMUNERATION
Ian Govey AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bachelor of Laws (Hons), Bachelor of Economics.</li> <li>■ Fellow, Australian Academy of Law.</li> <li>■ Chair, Banking Code Compliance Committee.</li> <li>■ Chair, Federal Court of Australia Audit Committee.</li> <li>■ Deputy Chair, Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions Audit Committee.</li> <li>■ Director, Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA).</li> <li>■ Director, Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII).</li> <li>■ Deputy Chair, ACT Community Services Directorate Audit Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Previously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ CEO, Australian Government Solicitor.</li> <li>■ SES positions in the Australian Public Service, including Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.</li> </ul>	4	\$22,400
Justice Nicholas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts.</li> <li>■ Previously a barrister practising in the areas of commercial law, intellectual property law and trade practices law.</li> <li>■ Appointed Senior Counsel in 2001.</li> <li>■ Appointed as a Judge to the Federal Court of Australia in 2009.</li> </ul>	4	\$0
Justice Murphy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ LLB, B Juris.</li> <li>■ Senior Partner of law firm (1990–95).</li> <li>■ Chairman of national law firm (2005–11) with responsibilities including financial forecasts, budgeting and risk management.</li> <li>■ Board Member, Vice President and President, KidsFirst (formerly Children's Protection Society) (2005–present) with responsibilities including financial forecasts, budgeting and risk management.</li> </ul>	2	\$0

MEMBER NAME	QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF MEETING ATTENDED/ TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	TOTAL ANNUAL REMUNERATION
Justice Farrell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ BA LLB (Hons) University of Sydney.</li> <li>■ Deputy President, Australian Competition Tribunal.</li> <li>■ Fellow, Australian Academy of Law.</li> <li>■ Honorary life member, Business Law Section, Law Council of Australia.</li> </ul> <p>Previously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ President, Takeovers Panel (2010–12).</li> <li>■ Member, Takeovers Panel (2001–10).</li> <li>■ Chairman, Business Law Section, Law Council of Australia (2008–09).</li> <li>■ Member, Executive, Business Law Section (2004–13).</li> <li>■ Chair, Corporations Committee (2000–03).</li> <li>■ Representative, Law Council, ASX Corporate Governance Council (2001–12).</li> <li>■ Partner, Freehill Hollingdale and Page (1984–1992, 1994–2000).</li> <li>■ Consultant, Freehills (2000–12).</li> <li>■ National Coordinator, Enforcement, Australian Securities Commission (1992–93).</li> <li>■ Acting member, Australian Securities Commission (1993).</li> <li>■ Non-executive director and member of the audit committee for profit companies and government entities in the electricity generation, international banking, clothing manufacture and retail sectors (over periods between 1995–2010).</li> <li>■ Non-executive director and member of the audit committee of not-for-profit entities the Securities Institute of Australia, the Australian Institute of Management, the National Institute of Dramatic Art and the Fred Hollows Foundation (over periods 1995–2017).</li> <li>■ Fellow, Australian Institute of Management.</li> <li>■ Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors.</li> </ul>	4	\$0
Justice Harper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ BA (Hons), LLB, PhD (Uni Syd).</li> <li>■ Member, Family Court Finance Committee.</li> <li>■ Member, Family Court Conduct Committee.</li> </ul>	4	\$0

MEMBER NAME	QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF MEETING ATTENDED/ TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	TOTAL ANNUAL REMUNERATION
Justice McEvoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ B.A; LL.B. (Hons); LL.M (Melb); S.J.D. (Virginia).</li> <li>■ Visiting Professor, University of Virginia School of Law.</li> <li>■ Finance Committee, Family Court of Australia.</li> <li>■ Board member; member of audit committee; Parenting Research Centre, 2010–16.</li> <li>■ Queen’s Counsel, Victoria, 2016–19.</li> <li>■ Barrister, Victorian Bar, 2002–19.</li> <li>■ Senior Associate, Freehills 1999–2002.</li> </ul>	2	\$0
Judge Driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bachelor of Arts/Law ANU.</li> <li>■ Chair, Federal Circuit and Family Court Legal Committee.</li> <li>■ Member, Federal Circuit and Family Court Finance Committee.</li> <li>■ Judge, Federal Magistrates Court and Federal Circuit and Family Court since 31 July 2000.</li> <li>■ Member, Australian Institute of Judicial Administration.</li> <li>■ Member, Law Council of Australia, Federal Litigation Section.</li> <li>■ Member, Judicial Conference of Australia.</li> <li>■ Previously held a number of Senior Executive Service positions in the Australian Public Service, Office of the Australian Government Solicitor.</li> </ul>	4	\$0
Justice Howard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bachelor of Laws.</li> <li>■ Fulbright Scholar.</li> <li>■ Member, Fulbright Scholarship Legal Assessment panel.</li> <li>■ Visiting Foreign Judicial Fellowship, Federal Judicial Center, Washington DC (2018).</li> <li>■ LAWASIA, Judicial Section Coordinating Committee.</li> <li>■ President, QUT Law Alumni Chapter (2014–18).</li> <li>■ Chair, LAWASIA Family Law Section (2011–14).</li> <li>■ Board Member, Centacare, Queensland (2004–12).</li> <li>■ Member, Advisory Board, St Vincent de Paul Society, Queensland (1992–94).</li> </ul>	0	\$0

MEMBER NAME	QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF MEETING ATTENDED/ TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	TOTAL ANNUAL REMUNERATION
David Donovan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ FCPA.</li> <li>■ Masters of Commerce; Graduate Certificate Professional Accounting.</li> <li>■ Fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants (FIPA).</li> </ul> <p>David Donovan is a Business Manager at the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. Previously, David was the Chief Finance Officer of the Commonwealth Government Digital Transformation Agency and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) where he led teams of finance professionals in all aspects of financial management. Prior to the AAT, David was employed across financial roles at the CSIRO, Department of Human Services and the National Health Performance Authority.</p>	3	\$0

The direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the audit committee for the entity can be found at [https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/about/corporate-information/audit-committee-charter/\\_nocache](https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/about/corporate-information/audit-committee-charter/_nocache).

### **Compliance report**

There were no significant issues reported under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* that relate to non-compliance with the finance law in relation to the entity.

### **Correction of errors in the 2020–21 annual report**

There are no errors to report.

### **Security**

The safety and security of all people who attend or work in the Courts and the Tribunal remains a high priority.

During 2021–22, \$6.2 million was expended for court security services, including the presence

of security officers, weapons screening, staff training and other security measures. This figure includes funding spent on security equipment maintenance and equipment upgrades.

A number of matters before the courts have required special arrangements to be made in order to accommodate the heightened security requirements sought by parties. A project to provide dedicated facilities which meet the security requirements for the most sensitive matters is currently nearing completion.

The Marshal and Sheriff continues to work very closely with the Commonwealth security agencies including the Australian Federal Police, as well as the police services of the states and territories on a range of matters including executing orders emanating from family law matters such as the recovery of children, the arrest of persons and the prevention of parties leaving Australia when ordered not to do so. A range of information exchange arrangements are in place and these arrangements improve our understanding of risks associated with individuals coming to court, and to judges and staff outside the entity's facilities.

The development of a security risk culture emphasising the integrated nature of personal, physical and information security continues through the security communications plan. The Court continues to develop its cyber security capacity and culture.

### **Purchasing**

The Court's procurement policies and procedures, expressed in the Court's Resource Management Instructions, are based on the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and best practice guidance documents published by the Department of Finance. The Court achieves a high level of performance against the core principles of achieving value for money through efficient, effective and appropriately competitive procurement processes.

#### ***Information on consultancy services***

The Court's policy on the selection and engagement of all consultants is based on the Australian Government's procurement policy framework as expressed in the Commonwealth Procurement Policy and guideline documentation published by the Department of Finance.

The main function for which consultants were engaged related to the delivery of specialist and expert services, primarily in connection with the Court's IT infrastructure, international programs, finance, property, security and business elements of the Court's corporate services delivery.

Depending on the particular needs, value and risks (as set out in the Court's Procurement Information), the Court uses open tender and limited tender for its consultancies. The Court is a relatively small user of consultants. As such, the Court has no specific policy by which consultants are engaged, other than within the broad frameworks above, related to skills unavailability within the Court or when there is need for specialised and/or independent research or assessment.

Information on expenditure on all court contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website at [www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au).

#### ***Consultants***

During 2021–22, five new consultancy contracts were entered into, involving total actual expenditure of \$521,763.91. In addition, six ongoing consultancy contracts were active during 2021–22, which involved total actual expenditure of \$162,235.21.

Table 4.2 outlines expenditure trends for consultancy contracts for 2021–22.

#### ***Competitive tendering and contracting***

During 2021–22, there were no contracts let to the value of \$100,000 or more that did not provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises.

During 2021–22, there were no contracts or standing offers exempted by the CEO and Principal Registrar from publication in the contract reporting section on AusTender.

#### ***Exempt contracts***

During the reporting period, no contracts or standing offers were exempt from publication on AusTender in terms of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

#### ***Procurement initiatives to support small business***

The Court supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and small business participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance's website at <https://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts/>

In compliance with its obligations under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, to achieve value for money in its purchase of goods and services, and reflecting the scale, scope and risk of a particular procurement, the Court applies procurement practices that provide SMEs the appropriate opportunity to compete for its business.

**TABLE 4.2: EXPENDITURE ON REPORTABLE CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS, CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD (2021–22)**

REPORTABLE CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS	NUMBER	EXPENDITURE \$ (GST INC.)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	5	\$521,764
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	6	\$162,235
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>\$683,999</b>

**TABLE 4.3: EXPENDITURE ON REPORTABLE NON-CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS, CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD (2021–22)**

REPORTABLE NON-CONSULTANCY CONTRACTS	NUMBER	EXPENDITURE \$ (GST INC.)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	234	\$25,407,395
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	250	\$40,762,636
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>\$66,170,031</b>

**TABLE 4.4: ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING A SHARE OF REPORTABLE CONSULTANCY CONTRACT EXPENDITURE, CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD (2021–22)**

NAME OF ORGANISATION	EXPENDITURE \$ (GST INC.)
Pricewaterhousecoopers Consulting (Australia) Pty Limited (ABN 20 607 773 295)	\$384,197
Nous Group Pty Ltd (ABN 66 086 210 344)	\$72,600
Centre for Judicial Studies Pty Ltd (ABN 77 088 423 394)	\$65,022
Diacher Pty Limited (ABN 44 006 170 958)	\$46,211
S Ajitkumar & Others (ABN 89 690 832 091)	\$46,003

**TABLE 4.5: ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING A SHARE OF REPORTABLE NON-CONSULTANCY CONTRACT EXPENDITURE CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD (2021–22)**

NAME OF ORGANISATION	EXPENDITURE \$ (GST INC.)
Built Pty Limited (ABN 24 083 928 045)	\$7,470,220
MSS Security Pty Limited (ABN 29 100 573 966)	\$6,590,292
Evolve FM Pty Ltd (ABN 52 605 472 580)	\$2,763,018
Macquarie Telecom Pty Limited (ABN 21 082 930 916)	\$2,485,107
Thomson Reuters (Professional) Australia Limited (ABN 64 058 914 668)	\$2,126,821

## Asset management

### *Commonwealth Law Court buildings*

The Court occupies Commonwealth Law Court buildings in every Australian capital city (eight in total). With the exception of two Commonwealth Law Courts in Sydney, the purpose-built facilities within these Commonwealth-owned buildings are shared with other largely Commonwealth Court jurisdictions.

From 1 July 2012, the Commonwealth Law Court buildings have been managed in collaboration with the building 'owners', the Department of Finance, under revised 'Special Purpose Property' principles. Leasing and building management arrangements are governed by whether the space is designated as special purpose accommodation (courtrooms, chambers, public areas) or usable office accommodation (registry areas).

An interim Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Court with Department of Finance for 2018–19 which continues to roll over monthly while the Court and Department of Finance negotiate a long-term agreement. The longer-term lease agreement MOU is expected to come into effect part way through 2022–23 financial year.

### *Registries – leased*

Corporate Services also manages some 15 registry buildings across the nation, located in leased premises. Leased premises locations include Albury, Alice Springs, Cairns, Dandenong, Dubbo, Launceston, Lismore, Newcastle, Rockhampton, Sydney, Townsville and

Wollongong. There are also arrangements for the use of ad hoc accommodation for circuiting in 25 other regional locations throughout Australia.

### *Regional registries – co-located*

The Courts co-locate with a number of state court jurisdictions, leasing accommodation from their state counterparts. The Court has Federal Court and Federal Circuit and Family Court registries in Darwin. The registries are co-located in the Northern Territory Supreme Court building under the terms of a Licence to Occupy between the Court and the Northern Territory Government.

### *Queens Square, Sydney*

The Federal Court in Sydney is located in the Law Courts Building in Queens Square, co-tenanting with the New South Wales Supreme Court. This building is owned by a private company (Law Courts Limited), a joint collaboration between the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments. The Court pays no rent, outgoings or utility costs for its space in this building.

### *Projects and capital works delivered in 2021–22*

The majority of capital works delivered in 2021–22 were projects addressing the urgent and essential business needs of the Courts. Projects undertaken or commenced included the following:

- Completed fitout of the new Sydney Corporate Services office and the relocation of Corporate Services from Queens Square to the new office.

- Completed the expansion of registrar accommodation at the Brisbane Commonwealth Law Courts.
- Completed the establishment of a new Indigenous liaison office in Alice Springs to better support the local community.
- Completed the modification of spaces in Perth to create a new mediation suite.
- Commenced construction for additional jury courtrooms and judges' chambers in the Queens Square Law Courts building in Sydney. Works are scheduled for completion early in the 2022–23 financial year.
- Commenced design works for the new Launceston registry including two courtrooms, judges' chambers, registry, mediation suite, safe room and child services. Works will commence early in the 2022–23 financial year and be completed within four months.
- Commenced concept design works to modify the Dandenong registry to increase the accommodation capacity for Registrars and Legal Case Manager facilities. Detailed design works will commence in early 2022–23, with construction estimated to be completed by the end of the financial year.
- Worked with the building owner, the Department of Finance, to complete painting works in the Perth Commonwealth Law Courts with planning underway for painting works in other Commonwealth Law Courts buildings.
- Worked with the building owner, the Department of Finance, for the upgrade of carpet throughout Melbourne Commonwealth Law Courts. The upgrades will continue through the 2022–23 financial year.
- Worked with the building owner, the Department of Finance, to progress key compliance, infrastructure and Disability Discrimination Act upgrades across a number of Commonwealth Law Courts which also continues in to the 2022–23 financial year.

### Environmental management

The Court provides the following information as required under section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

The Court, together with other jurisdictions in shared premises, ensures all activities are undertaken in an environmentally sustainable way, and has embedded ecologically sustainable development principles through its policies, procurement and contracting arrangements

#### *Monitoring of actual impacts on the environment*

The Court has an impact on the environment in a number of areas, primarily in the consumption of resources. Table 4.6 lists environmental impact/usage data where available. The data is for all the Federal Court jurisdictions over the last five financial years.

#### *Measures to minimise the Court's environmental impact: Environmental management system*

The Court's environmental management system has many of the planned key elements now in place. They include:

- an environmental policy and environmental initiatives outlining the Court's broad commitment to environmental management, and
- an environmental risk register identifying significant environmental aspects and impacts for the Court and treatment strategies to mitigate them.

#### *Other measures*

During 2021–22, the Court worked within its environmental management system to minimise its environmental impact through a number of specific measures, either new or continuing.

#### *Energy*

- Replacement of conventional florescent and halogen lighting with energy saving LED lighting.
- Replacement of appliances with energy efficient models.
- Review of electricity contracts to ensure value for money.

#### *Information technology*

- E-waste was recycled or reused where possible, including auctioning redundant but still operational equipment.
- Fully recyclable packaging was used where possible.

**TABLE 4.6: THE COURT'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/USAGE DATA, 2017–18 TO 2021–22**

ENERGY DETAILS	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Energy usage – privately leased sites (stationary) <sup>1</sup>	5483 GJ	4353 GJ	3,615 GJ	3,349 GJ	3,376 GJ
<b>Transport vehicles – energy usage<sup>2</sup></b>					
Petrol	146,216 L/ 1,251,442 km	119,476 L/ 1,058,735 km	123,787 L/ 1,231,264 km	134,781 L/ 1,303,959 km	124,998 L/ 1,266,811 km
Diesel	+ 54,250 L/ 553,917 km	+ 58,233 L/ 613,562 km	43,519 L/ 450,433 km	52,521 L/ 548,504 km	45,310 L/ 451,818 km
Dual fuel	+ 6099 L/ 61,559 km	+ 4,976 L/ 84,872 km	10,652 L/ 106,918 km	N/A	N/A
CO <sup>2</sup>	502.9 tonnes	461 tonnes	443 tonnes	470 tonnes	461 tonnes
<b>Paper usage – office paper (reams)</b>					
FCFCOA	27,192	27,049	28,651	21,917	15,654
FCA	7,825	8,787	5,866	4,734	5,215
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,017</b>	<b>35,836</b>	<b>33,812</b>	<b>26,651</b>	<b>20,869</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Finance reports for the Commonwealth Law Courts; these figures are for the leased sites only.

<sup>2</sup> The Courts utilise 9 hybrid vehicles previously reported under Dual Fuel. For the reporting year 2021–22, hybrid vehicles are reported under Petrol Vehicles. The Courts also utilised one electric vehicle (EV) for the period. Data for the km travelled was not available at the time of this report.

### Paper

- Matters commencing with the Courts are now handled entirely electronically. Over 107,105 electronic court files have been created, comprising almost 1,423,943 electronic documents, effectively replacing the use of paper in court files. This is an increase of 10,102 electronic court files and 141,482 electronic court documents from 2020–21.
- Family law eFiling also continues to be expanded, with over 95.8 per cent of divorce applications now being electronically filed. This is an increase of 2.8 per cent from 2020–21.
- Clients are encouraged to use the online Portal, and staff are encouraged to send emails rather than letters where feasible.
- Secure paper (e.g. confidential) continued to be shredded and recycled for all court locations.
- Non-secure paper recycling was available at all sites.
- Printers are initially set to default double-sided printing and monochrome.
- 100 per cent recycled paper (9,201 reams) comprises 44 per cent of total paper usage.
- The overall reams total 2021–22 has decreased by 5,785 reams. This is due to the increased use of electronic filing and communication were feasible, and ongoing working from home arrangements.

### Waste/cleaning

Provision for waste co-mingled recycling (e.g. non-secure paper, cardboard, recyclable plastics, metals and glass) forms a part of cleaning contracts, with regular waste reporting included in the contract requirements for the privately leased sites.

Printer toner cartridges continued to be recycled at the majority of sites.

Recycling facilities for staff personal mobile phones were permanently available at key sites.

Secure paper and e-waste recycling was available at all sites.

### Property

Fit-outs and refurbishments continued to be conducted in an environmentally responsible manner including:

- recycling demolished materials where possible
- maximising reuse of existing furniture and fittings
- engaging consultants with experience in sustainable development where possible and including environmental performance requirements in relevant contracts (design and construction)
- maximising the use of environmentally friendly products such as recycled content in furniture and fittings, low VOC (volatile organic compound) paint and adhesives, and energy efficient appliances, lighting and air conditioning
- installing water and energy efficient appliances, and
- the Court's project planning applies ecologically sustainable development principles from 'cradle to grave' – taking a sustainable focus from initial planning through to operation, and on to end-of-life disposal. Risk planning includes consideration of environment risks, and mitigations are put in place to address environmental issues.

### Travel

During COVID-19 restrictions, less travel was undertaken by officials and electronic meeting platforms were relied upon as an alternative. Although some staff travel is unavoidable, the entity will continue to support the use of video conferencing and other lessons learned on the practice of remote communications where feasible and practicable.

### Additional ecologically sustainable development implications

In 2021–22, the Court did not administer any legislation with ecologically sustainable development implications, nor did it have outcomes specified in an Appropriations Act with such implications.

## Management of human resources

### Staffing

At 30 June 2022, the Court engaged 1,247 employees under the *Public Service Act 1999*. This figure includes 765 ongoing and 482 non-ongoing employees.

The engagement of a large number of non-ongoing employees is due to the nature of engagement of judges' associates. Associates are typically employed for a specific term of 12 months and transition to other employment once their non-ongoing employment ends. This practice is reflected in the Courts' retention figures.

All employees of the Federal Court and the Federal Circuit and Family Court were designated to be employees of the Federal Court of Australia by the *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016*. Employees are also engaged by the Federal Court to support the operation of the National Native Title Tribunal.

More information is provided in Appendix 9 (*Staffing profile*).

### COVID-19

A key focus during 2021–22 continued to be on providing employees with a safe workplace throughout the pandemic. The Court followed the health advice provided by state and federal government bodies, as well as commissioning further expert advice as required.

The Court consulted with employees via employee representative bodies such as our National Consultative Committee and our Health and Safety Committee to ensure the Court appropriately tailored the COVIDSafe practices it implemented for its workplace.

Following the opportunity to work remotely throughout many stages of the pandemic, the Court has provided employees, where their role allows it, with the option of a hybrid work model. Employees can elect to work a proportion of each week from the Court's premises and from their homes. Employees have enjoyed the flexibility and improved work-life balance of working from home, and there has been no impact on the Court's operations.

### *Employee wellbeing*

The Court maintained its focus on supporting employee wellbeing and implemented a number of initiatives to support employees who may be facing professional or personal challenges. All employees can access a free and confidential counselling service via our Employee Assistance Provider, as well as the option of attending seminars on topics such as building resilience.

The Court engaged professional wellbeing providers to lead sessions for employees where employees experienced significant events such as extended lockdowns. These sessions focused on a broad range of topics, such as personal wellbeing to successfully managing home schooling. Employees were able to invite family and friends to certain sessions so their broader support network could also benefit from this training. The Court also offers a weekly online yoga session at no cost to all staff.

### *Diversity and inclusion*

The Court is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace, which includes ensuring its workforce reflects the broader communities in which our employees work. The Court focuses on ensuring it creates a safe and supporting environment in which employees can bring their true selves to work, as well as ensuring recruitment and other processes are strictly merit-based. From a gender diversity perspective, females now fill 59 per cent of positions at Senior Executive Service classifications and 64 per cent of positions at Executive Level classifications.

An important element of diversity and inclusion is ensuring employees are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times in the workplace. The Court has adopted a zero tolerance approach to inappropriate workplace behaviour and recently updated its anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment policies to ensure they remain current and at best practice standards. The policies now also provide for a formal process for employees to raise a concern if they experience inappropriate behaviour by a judge.

The Court provided mandatory refresher training to all employees on these policies in 2021–22 to ensure employees understand expected standards of behaviour in the workplace, as well as ensuring all employees know how they can raise a concern if they experience inappropriate behaviour. The Court conducts this training on a quarterly basis to ensure all new employees are similarly aware of the Court's policies and expectations in this regard.

### *Reconciliation Action Plan*

The inaugural Federal Court entity Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2020–21 was launched in September 2020. There are four levels of RAP – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – which suit organisations at the different stages of their reconciliation journey. The Court's reconciliation journey began with a Reflect RAP in which it shared its vision for reconciliation as well as laid the foundation for future RAPs.

The Court has focused on creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate increasing from 1.9 per cent in 2020–21 to 2.3 per cent in 2021–22. The Court is currently working on its next RAP at the Innovate level, which it is aiming to launch in 2022–23.

### *Disability reporting mechanism*

*Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* is the overarching framework for inclusive policies, programs and infrastructure that support people with disabilities to participate in all areas of Australian life. The strategy sets out where practical changes will be made to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia. It acts to ensure the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities are incorporated into Australia's policies and programs that affect people with disability, their families and carers. All levels of government have committed to deliver more comprehensive and visible reporting under the Strategy. A range of reports on the progress of the Strategy's actions and outcome areas will be published and available at <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads>.

Disability reporting is included in the Australian Public Service Commission's State of the Service reports and the APS Statistical Bulletin. These reports are available at <http://www.apsc.gov.au>

### **Employment arrangements**

The Remuneration Tribunal determines the remuneration of the CEO and Principal Registrars for the Federal Court, the Federal Circuit and Family Court and the Registrar of the National Native Title Tribunal, as they are holders of statutory offices.

The Courts' Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are covered by separate determinations made under section 24(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The *Federal Court of Australia Enterprise Agreement 2018–2021* covers most non-SES employees. A Determination supplements the enterprise agreement, with the Determination setting out the pay increases employees are eligible to receive during the 2021–22 to 2023–24 financial years. The Court made the Determination in accordance with the *Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2020*.

Individual flexibility arrangements are provided for in the enterprise agreement and are used to negotiate employment arrangements that appropriately reflect individual circumstances. Employees and the Court may come to an agreement to vary such things as salary and other benefits. Some transitional employment arrangements remain, including those described in Australian Workplace Arrangements and common law contracts.

At 30 June 2022, there were:

- three employees on Australian workplace agreements
- two hundred and eighteen employees on individual flexibility arrangements

- seventeen on section 24 determinations, and
- one thousand and nine employees (including casual employees) covered by the enterprise agreement.

In addition to salary, certain employees have access to a range of entitlements including leave, study assistance, salary packaging, guaranteed minimum superannuation payments, membership of professional associations and other allowances.

The Court's employment arrangements do not provide for performance pay for all employees. One employee received a performance payment in line with the employment arrangements that were agreed at the time the employee joined the Court. The amount paid to the employee totalled \$10,000. The Court and the relevant employee have agreed to phase out this performance payment and the employee will not be eligible to receive a payment in 2022–23.

The Court has a range of strategies in place to attract, develop, recognise and retain key staff, including flexible work conditions and individual flexibility agreements available under the enterprise agreement.

### **Work health and safety**

The Court has a strong focus on providing employees with a safe and hazard free workplace. This is underpinned by the Court's commitment to consulting employees on safety related matters, with the Court having a formal Health and Safety Committee in place that meets on a quarterly basis.

In line with the Court's focus on employee wellbeing, the Court adopts early intervention strategies to support staff returning to work and performing their full range of duties following injury or illness. This applies irrespective of whether an injury is work related.

The Court's strong safety performance is reflected in the Court experiencing 59 per cent fewer accepted workers compensation claims than the average for Commonwealth agencies in 2021–22. The Court's indicative workers compensation premium for 2022–23 is similarly decreasing by 55 per cent in comparison to the premium for 2021–22.

## Information technology

The Information Technology (IT), Digital Practice and Cybersecurity teams focus on creating and maintaining technology that is simple, follows contemporary industry standards and meets the evolving needs of judges, staff, external clients, practitioners and other stakeholders across the Courts and Tribunals.

The IT team supports equitable, transparent access to justice via secure, responsive digital services delivered by a modern, cost-effective IT function as a trusted part of the Courts and Tribunals.

Work continued on consolidating and modernising IT systems to simplify the combined court environment and deliver efficiency improvements and more contemporary practices to reduce the cost of delivery.

Achievements for 2021–22 included:

- **Court reform:** Implementation of Court Reform system work to support improved case management pathways for family law in the newly created Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1 and Division 2). This significant change was completed on time for the 1 September legislation commencement.
- **Lighthouse pilot:** The protection of vulnerable parties and children in family law proceedings is supported by the Lighthouse pilot project including risk screening, triage and case pathways into appropriate case management streams. The initial pilot has been successful and work is under way to expand this capability to all family law registries.
- **Visibility of superannuation for family law:** Established secure, automated sharing for superannuation information requests to the Australian Taxation Office for inclusion in property matters. This system was implemented in April 2022.
- **Wi-Fi:** Expansion of court and public Wi-Fi to most court registries, with the remaining regional registries to be completed in 2022–23.
- **Information Management System:** Rationalisation of document management solutions with the migration of documents from four separate repositories, including significant document migration for the National Native Title Tribunal.
- **Telephony:** All telephony services have migrated to softphones and voice over IP handsets, from legacy ISDN or other services, further enabling location-independent calling and court operations.
- **Hardware:** Rollout of refreshed laptops and associated hardware to all judges and staff supporting hybrid and remote working.
- **IT Strategic Plan:** A review of the IT Strategic Plan was completed, with initiatives determined and a future roadmap developed. A review of the previous IT Roadmap found that more than 90 per cent of initiatives were completed, or partially completed, with some pivoting in priorities occurring throughout that time.

## Digital Court Program

The Digital Court Program continues to be a key priority for the Court, with the aim of streamlining core business systems and creating flexibility and operational efficiency. The Digital Court Program oversees the ongoing modernisation of critical document, workflow and case management tools to support the delivery of quality services to the Australian community. The program is delivering improvements to the tools used to manage the Courts' caseload through the development of a new application suite – CourtPath.

The first release of CourtPath is scheduled for the second half of 2022. This release will deliver immediate benefits to family law court files and case management, as well as introduce the system's core architecture. CourtPath will provide a modern, stable platform across the Courts that will deliver significant efficiencies to processes and work patterns.

CourtPath is being developed in partnership with judges, registrars and court staff to deliver sustainable and genuine improvements to workflows, while supporting efficient case handling. Throughout 2021–22, foundational frameworks and initial digital court file capability have been developed. Enhancement and development of additional features continues,

with a roadmap to deliver replacement of legacy systems over the next three to five years.

Following user-centred design principles, CourtPath is intuitive to use while remaining powerful enough to provide timely and accurate access to critical data. CourtPath uses familiar, predictable design patterns seen in other modern applications to minimise the need for user training.

### *Cyber security*

Investment in cyber security continues to be critical, as technology is essential to court operations and the threat landscape continues to evolve. The Court appointed a new Chief Information Security Officer in early 2021, who has led the measurement of current cyber maturity and the establishment of a roadmap with key capability improvements over the next three years to increase protection of court assets, data and operations.

The Court continues to strengthen cyber security maturity in line with the Australian Cyber Security Centre recommendations and Protective Security Policy Framework requirements.

Protection of endpoints (servers, laptops and similar) has been significantly improved over 2021–22 and enhanced security will continue to be deployed through 2022–23.

Vulnerability identification and reduction has also been significantly improved and remains an ongoing priority.

### *Video conferencing and digital practice*

As hybrid hearings, which involve courtroom and remote participants, become a frequent option to conduct matters, the need for technology within the courtroom is more important than before. The focus for 2021–22 was to provide clearer audio and video, as well as larger screens for easier viewing for judges and parties within the courtrooms by upgrading ageing equipment. Software updates improve the remote joining and courtroom experience, including simplifying the connection process, sharing content throughout the courtroom, and the ability to customise participant layout. Additional courtrooms will be enabled for video conferencing throughout the coming year, with the goal to have the majority of courtrooms enabled within the 2022–23 financial year.

To support increasing demand for digital services and document viewing within court, four courtrooms were enabled with integrated eTrial and video conference capability. This allows content to be displayed on multiple screens within the courtroom, and to remote parties and live stream. The new jury courtroom fitout in the New South Wales registry has been set up to enable jury members to have their own individual screen to view content.

Access to justice via live streaming of hearings for media and the public continues to be provided by the Court. High profile matters including defamation, migration and employment matters have been particularly popular for streaming, with up to 90,000 peak viewers. Streaming is also important for the Courts to deliver other events such as judicial training seminars and ceremonial sittings.

Many divorce hearings are now conducted using video and/or audio conferencing, reducing the time and cost of proceedings, and managing safety concerns for parties. Improvements were implemented to automatically provide connection details within the court listing, enabling parties to connect more easily to the hearing, and reducing the manual workload for court and registry staff to manage manual conferencing configurations and communicate these to parties.

To support the Court's digital practice, new positions titled Digital Practice Officers were introduced in the Court in November 2021 to assist judges, chambers and court staff to increase efficiency of proceedings through enabling and refining digital practices. Some significant work included:

- Improving file sharing solutions to enable parties, practitioners and court staff to securely access shared files, reducing cost and administration overhead within courts.
- Supporting judicial development of practice notes, to improve the consistency, efficiency and use of electronic court books, reducing use of paper and third-party solutions.
- Introducing bespoke technical solutions to facilitate complex matters such as Ben Roberts-Smith v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd (ACN 003 357 720) & ORS (NSD1485/2018) which had national security, privacy and international considerations.

- Continuing support and improvements for e-hearings, with live streaming of high interest matters.
- Conducting judiciary training in the use of iPads and related software to improve effectiveness in court operations and other key tasks such as judgment writing.
- Conducting staff training to make better use of electronic court files, case management and online lodgment solutions.

### Websites

The Court and Tribunal websites are the main sources of public information and a gateway to a range of online services such as eLodgment, eCourtroom, eFiling and the Commonwealth Courts Portal.

Corporate Services staff are responsible for managing and maintaining the following Court and Tribunal websites:

- **Federal Court of Australia:**  
www.fedcourt.gov.au
- **Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia:**  
www.fccoa.gov.au
- **National Native Title Tribunal:**  
www.nntt.gov.au
- **Australian Competition Tribunal:**  
www.competitiontribunal.gov.au
- **Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal:**  
www.defenceappeals.gov.au
- **Copyright Tribunal:**  
www.copyrighttribunal.gov.au

The websites provide access to a range of information including court forms and fees, publications, practice notes, guides for court users, daily court lists and judgments.

In the reporting year, over 16,968,457 total hits to the sites were registered:

- **Federal Court website:** 5,455,229
- **Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (1 September 2021 – 30 June 2022):** 9,587,597
- **Family Court of Australia website (1 July 2021 – 31 August 2021):** 867,100
- **Federal Circuit Court of Australia website (1 July 2021 – 31 August 2021):** 1,058,531

- **National Native Title Tribunal website:** 829,632.

In the interests of maintaining open justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, improvements were made to the publishing procedures of the Daily Court Lists which continue to include links for members of the public to join online hearings as observers.

During the reporting period, seven new high profile online files were established. The most prolific of these was *Novak Djokovic v Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs* which generated an unprecedented 574,000 hits to the website, 320,000 of which were to the online file. Other online files created were *Clive Palmer v Mark McGowan*; *Minister for the Environment v Sharma*; *In the matter of the Forum Group of Companies*; and ten COVID-19 Business interruption insurance test cases.

Following the establishment of the entity in 2016, the entity was supporting three content management systems. In 2021, the entity selected the GovCMS platform to host all external websites. The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia website went live on GovCMS in September 2021. Work is now progressing to redesign the Federal Court and National Native Title Tribunal websites which are expected to go live in early 2024. Once complete, all legacy content management systems will be decommissioned.

### Social media

The Federal Court uses Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn to inform the public about the role and work of the Court. Some cases of interest featured over the reporting period included:

- **VID18/2022: *Novak Djokovic v Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs*:** This matter was transferred to the Federal Court from the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2), after a hearing before Judge A Kelly on Friday 14 January. There were three live streams on the Federal Court YouTube channel during the proceeding, with combined total views of 1,614,613. The public sentiment with regards to the Court providing regular updates on Twitter, an online file and transparent coverage of the proceedings was extremely positive.

- NSD1485, NSD1486, NSD1487/2018: Ben Robert-Smith v Fairfax Media and Ors: As ordered by Justice Besanko on 2 February 2022, a total of 116 hearing videos for this matter were published to the Court's YouTube channel from 3 February 2022. On 11 May 2022, Justice Besanko made further orders to discontinue making recordings available on the Court's YouTube channel due to evidence suggesting information obtained by viewing and listening to the recordings was used by persons located outside of Australia to publish information identifying or tending to identify Sensitive Witnesses, as defined in orders made under sections 19(3A) and 38B of the *National Security Information (Criminal and Civil Proceedings) Act 2004* (Cth). There were combined total views for the 116 videos of 101,478.
- NSD912/2020: Clive Palmer v Mark McGowan: Due to the public interest in this matter, the Court established an online file, tweeted hearing updates and live streamed the matter via the Court's secure streaming service, Quick channel.
- NSD773/2021: North East Forest Alliance Inc v Commonwealth of Australia & State of NSW: This matter before Justice Perry was live streamed on 28 and 29 March 2022 via Quick channel.
- Barilaro v Google LLC [2022] FCA 650: Given the profile nature of this matter, a link to the judgment by Justice Rares was tweeted, gaining 18,812 impressions and potential reach of 29,671.

### Twitter

The Court launched its Twitter account on 14 January 2022, and for the period 14 January 2022 to 30 June 2022, the account received 1,602,065 total impressions, total engagement numbers of 132,701 and gained 2,584 followers. Twitter was also used to promote the delivery of high profile judgments like in the matter of Minister for the Environment v Sharma, where Chief Justice Allsop delivered the judgment on behalf of the Full Court (Chief Justice Allsop, Justice Beach, Justice Wheelahan) which was live streamed via Quick channel.

### YouTube

The Court's YouTube channel houses some education material, including videos 'Mediation in the Federal Court of Australia' (13,001 views); 'Electronic Court files in the Federal Court of Australia' (5,376 views); and 'Serving on a Federal Court Jury' (2,026 views). It is also used (in conjunction with Twitter and Quick channel) to profile cases of public interest.

### LinkedIn

The Court's LinkedIn profile, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/federal-court-of-australia> is primarily used to share updates with the legal profession and notify followers of employment vacancies. It is also used to cross promote the Court's other social media like the launch of Twitter in January 2022. The page has 7,216 followers and had 12,821 page views over the reporting period. Visitor demographics indicate the page is primarily followed by the legal and government sectors.

### Access to judgments

When a judgment of the Federal Court of Australia or Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia is delivered, a copy is made available to the parties and published on court websites. The Federal Court also publishes decisions of the Australian Competition Tribunal, the Copyright Tribunal, the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal and the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island.

The Courts also provide copies of judgments to a number of free legal information websites including AustLII and JADE, legal publishers, media and other subscribers. Judgments of public interest are published within an hour of delivery and other judgments within a few days, with the exception of family law and child support decisions which must first be anonymised. The Federal Court provides email notifications of judgments via a subscription service on the Court website.

A revised version of the Judgment Template was deployed to judges and staff from September 2021. This revised version incorporated options for the new Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1 and Division 2) and provided improvements to the operation of the Judgment Template.

A consolidated Judgment Style Guide for use by both courts has been drafted and is being finalised to be released shortly. This Style Guide outlines the recommended approach to be taken to matters of style and form in judgments produced by the Federal Court of Australia and Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. Along with the judgment template, it is intended to facilitate, to a high degree, consistency and uniformity in judgments published by these courts.

### ***Judgment publication***

In the reporting year, 1,921 settled judgments were received by the Judgments Publication Office. This figure includes 224 Full Court decisions.

The Judgments Publication Office also received a number of decisions from the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island (two), Competition Tribunal (six), the Copyright Tribunal (five) and the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal (two).

## **Recordkeeping and information management**

### ***Corporate coverage***

Information management is a corporate service function supporting the Federal Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1) and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2), National Native Title Tribunal, Australian Competition Tribunal, Copyright Tribunal of Australia and Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal.

### ***Information governance***

#### **Information framework**

The information framework for the entity was implemented in 2021–22. The information framework incorporates information governance and sets out the principles, requirements and components for best practice information management. The framework provides a robust approach to information management across the entity, recognising that the individual sections of the Courts and Tribunals have different information needs.

The information framework is supported by policies and standards that ensure the information that is collected, stored and made accessible is tailored to those differing needs, and meets the entity's regulatory, legal, risk and operational requirements.

An entity-wide elearning training module 'Introduction to Information Management' was deployed in 2021–22 to educate new managers and staff about the information framework and their information management responsibilities.

#### **Records authorities**

The review of the combined draft Courts Records Authority by the National Archives of Australia was completed in June 2022. The new combined Courts Records Authority will be issued in 2022–23.

#### **Committees**

The Information Governance Committee met quarterly during the reporting year to monitor information governance obligations that affect the entity. The committee revised its terms of reference to be representative of the sections of the entity, and ensuring the responsibilities of the committee are appropriate. The committee continued to work on meeting the outcomes of the government's *Building Trust in the Public Record* policy.

### ***Information management projects***

#### **Information management system**

A new information management system was deployed across the entity in 2021–22 to replace three legacy records management systems. The new information management system has been designed to capture, manage and provide access to information assets across the entity. Court and Tribunal staff have been able to use the new information management system from November 2021, and data migration from the three legacy records management systems was completed in June 2022. The Information Management System Project is entering the post-migration stage. The stage will be completed by the end of 2022.

### ***Contract management***

A new records and information management services contract covering the entity commenced in June 2021.

Between July and December 2021, 116,484 Court and Tribunal physical files held with other records and information management service providers were consolidated under the new arrangement. Consolidating the entity's physical information assets with one provider will enable more efficient management of the information assets with the ability to find, use and dispose of the assets, as required.

### ***Working digitally***

The Court continues to progress towards working digitally by default. This is a reportable target set by the National Archives of Australia. Progress towards this target was demonstrated by:

- commencement of digitisation of Federal Court Native Title physical files and analogue media
- implementation of the information management system that enables staff to save and retrieve their documents from within office applications and to save their emails directly
- increasing volume of information assets being saved in the new information management system enabling them to be found and reused, and
- making new managers and staff aware of the entity's information framework and their information management responsibilities via induction and online training.

### ***National Archives reporting***

The National Archives annual check-up 2020–21, reporting on digital benchmark targets, saw an improvement of 0.20 percent on the entity's 2019–20 results. Significant improvements were made in the areas of creating and digital operations. The implementation of the new information management system will enable the entity to steadily achieve the whole-of-government outcomes.

### ***Transfers to National Archives***

No transfers to National Archives were undertaken in 2021–22.

### ***Library and information services***

The library provides a comprehensive library and information service to judges, registrars and staff of the Federal Court of Australia and Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and members and staff of the National Native Title Tribunal.

The library collection consists of print and electronic materials and is distributed nationally, with qualified librarians in each state capital except Hobart, Canberra and Darwin. Services to Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory are provided by staff in the Victorian, New South Wales and South Australian libraries, respectively.

In Sydney, Federal Court judges and staff are supported by the New South Wales Law Courts library under a Heads of Agreement between the Federal Court and the New South Wales Department of Justice. The terms of this Agreement are renegotiated each year to reflect changing circumstances.

Although primarily legal in nature, the library collection includes material on Indigenous history and anthropology to support the native title practice areas, and material on children and families to support the family consultants. Details of items held in the collection are publicly available through the Library Catalogue and Native Title Infobase, which are accessible from the Federal Court website. The library's holdings are also added to Libraries Australia and Trove making them available for inter-library loan nationally and internationally.

The library is a foundation member of the Australian Courts Consortium for a shared library management system using SirsiDynix software. The Consortium allows for the sharing of resources, collections, knowledge and expertise between libraries. The SirsiDynix software provides the infrastructure for the Library website, catalogue, and library management system.

With the continued development of online technology, library services were maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach has been sustained in post-lockdown situations.

### *Assistance to the Asia Pacific region*

The Brisbane library continues to provide advice and assistance to the National and Supreme Courts of Papua New Guinea to develop their library collections and services.

## Commonwealth Courts Registry Services

### Overview of Registry Services

In 2019–20, the registry services functions for the Federal Court, Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court were amalgamated into a new program under Outcome 4 (Program 4.2) known as the Commonwealth Courts Registry Services (also known as Court and Tribunal Services).

This program provides the Courts with the opportunity to shape the delivery of administrative services and stakeholder support across the entity in a more innovative and efficient manner. A focus on maximising registry operational effectiveness through streamlined structures and digital innovations will significantly contribute to the future financial sustainability of the Courts.

This national approach ensures that the quality and productivity of registry services is the very best it can be, through building consistency in registry practice across all Court locations and expert knowledge to support the National Court Framework and the important work of the judges and registrars.

### Objectives

The objectives of Registry Services are to:

- provide a high level of support for the judiciary and court users through a national practice-based framework
- maximise operational effectiveness through streamlined structures and digital innovations
- develop an organisational structure that promotes flexibility and responsiveness to new opportunities and demands, and
- support the Courts to take full advantage of the benefits of the Digital Court Program.

### Purpose

The purpose of Registry Services is to provide efficient and effective services to the Commonwealth courts and tribunals and its users.

### Registry services management structure

The **Executive Director, Corporate Services and Court and Tribunal Services** has overarching responsibility for the delivery of registry services and leads the design and delivery of improved case management and administrative services across the Courts and the Tribunal. The Executive Director, Corporate Services and Court and Tribunal Services reports to the CEO and Principal Registrar of the Federal Court.

**Directors Court Services** report to the Executive Director, Court and Tribunal Services. They lead and manage the Courts' registry operations and resources in their respective regions, as well as contribute to continuous business improvement across three national streams: client services, digital services and court operations. Directors Court Services work collaboratively with national service managers and other directors to lead and manage multi-disciplinary teams delivering a range of customer-driven professional and business support services to ensure national service excellence. The development and maintenance of key relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally diverse community groups and support services is an important responsibility of the role and ensures that all Court services recognise the needs of our client groups.

**Managers Court Services** report to the Director Court Services in their respective region and are responsible for leading and managing the Courts' registry operations and resources in their location in accordance with the Courts' strategic and operational plans and national service standards. Liaising with the judiciary of all Courts in their location, they ensure that the judiciary are well supported in chambers and in court, and that the delivery of court services are consistent, responsive to client needs and provided in a courteous, timely and efficient manner.

**Judicial Services Team Leaders, Registry Services Team Leaders and Judicial and Registry Services Team Leaders** report to the Manager Court Services, or in the absence of a Manager Court Services, the Director Court Services in their respective region and are responsible for delivering high quality case management, courtroom and chambers support to judicial officers (including training and development of associates) and registry services to clients, legal practitioners, registrars, Court Child Experts and community groups that support court users. They have oversight of judicial and registry services in their location, and provide information on appropriate avenues for addressing client needs, and recommending appropriate options for effective resourcing and services for the Courts.

The **Director National Enquiry Centre (NEC)** reports to the Executive Director, Corporate Services and Court and Tribunal Services and is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the Courts' National Enquiry Centre based in Parramatta. This position has responsibility for managing the team handling first-level enquiries related to family law matters received via phone, email and live chat. In collaboration with national and local managers, the NEC Director is an important driver and contributor to the identification of business and process enhancements linked to the delivery of improved customer interactions with the Courts and meeting service level standards associated with enquiries handling.

### Court and Tribunal registries

The key functions of Court and Tribunal registries are to:

- provide information and advice about court procedures, services and forms, as well as referral options to community organisations that enable clients to take informed and appropriate action
- ensure that available information is accurate and provided in a timely fashion to support the best outcome for clients
- encourage and promote the filing of documents and management of cases online through the Portal
- enhance community confidence and respect by responding to clients' needs and assisting with making the court experience a more positive one
- monitor and control the flow of cases through file management and quality assurance
- schedule and prioritise matters for court events to achieve the earliest resolution or determination, and
- manage external relationships to assist with the resolution of cases.

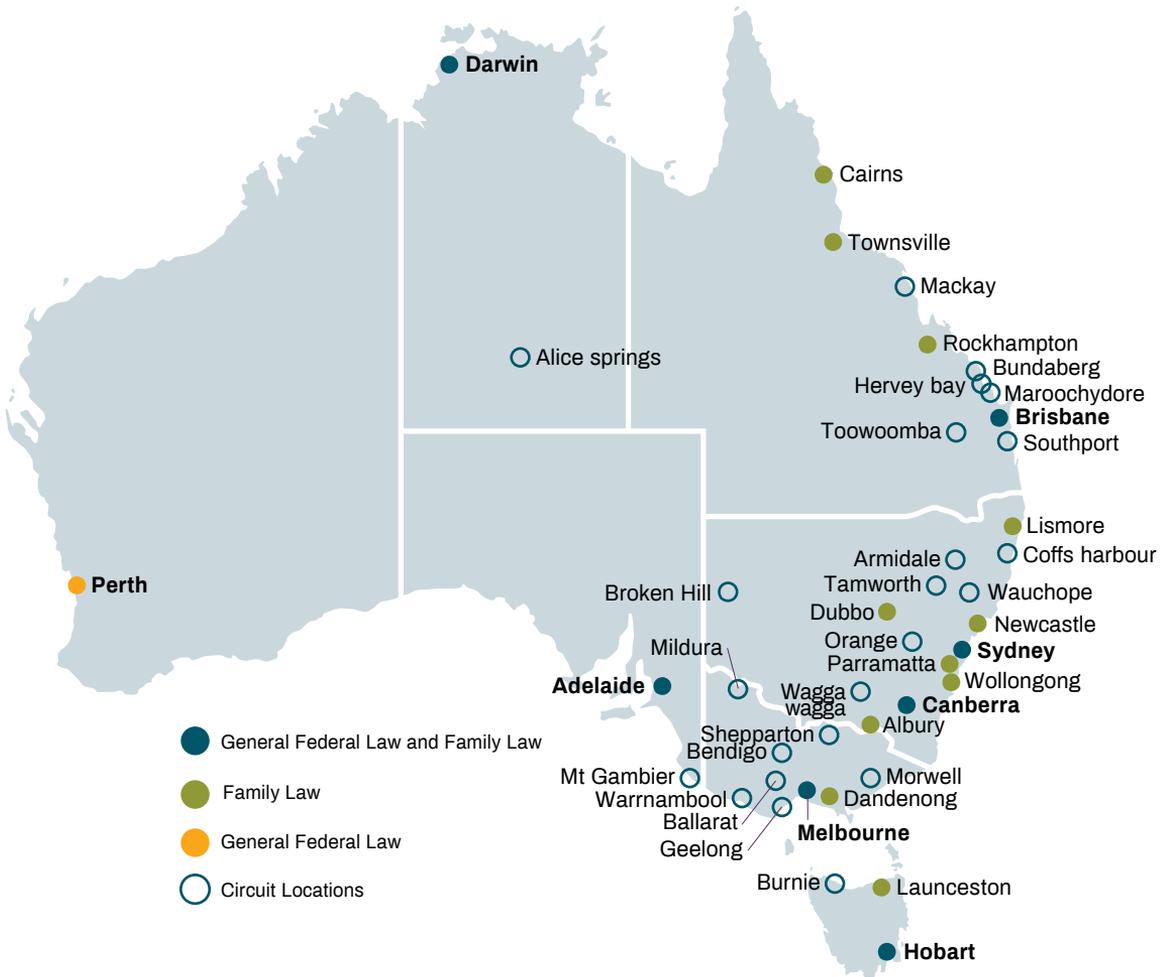
The service delivery principles of Registry Services are to provide services that are:

- Safe and easy to access: all processes and services are streamlined so that they prioritise user safety and ease of access.
- Consistent and equitable: the level of service available to users is consistent irrespective of the location.
- Timely and responsive: services should meet the needs of each user and be delivered in a timeframe considered to be reasonable.
- Reliable and accurate: courts and tribunals must have full confidence that the information provided by staff can be relied upon by the user.

### Registry Services locations

Family law services are provided in 18 registries located in every state and territory (except Western Australia). There are eight general federal law registries located in every state and territory. Three sites – Canberra, Darwin and Hobart – provide cross-jurisdictional services for general federal law and family law registry services.

FIGURE 4.1: REGISTRY SERVICES LOCATION MAP



### The work of Registry Services in 2021–22

Registry Services has three main performance criteria:

**1. Correct information**

*Less than 1 per cent of enquiries result in a complaint about registry services.*

**2. Timely processing of documents**

*75 per cent of documents processed within three working days.*

**3. Efficient registry services**

*All registry services provided within the agreed funding and staffing level.*

*Snapshot of 2021–22 performance against targets***TABLE 4.7: SNAPSHOT OF REGISTRY SERVICES PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS, 2021–22**

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESULT 2021–22	STATUS
<b>CORRECT INFORMATION</b>		
Less than 1 per cent of enquiries result in a complaint about registry services.	0.019% of enquiries resulted in a complaint against registry services	Performance measure achieved
<b>TIMELY PROCESSING OF DOCUMENTS</b>		
75 per cent of documents processed within three working days.	89% of documents were processed within three working days	Performance measure achieved
<b>EFFICIENT REGISTRY SERVICES</b>		
All registry services provided within the agreed funding and staffing level.	All registry services were provided within the agreed funding and staffing levels	Performance measure achieved

Registry Services staff manage enquiries, document lodgments, subpoenas and safety plans. The number of safety plans activated in 2021–22 was 1,071 across all registry locations. Safety plan numbers remain down due to limited face-to-face services in some registries as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and a heavy reliance on electronic hearings for the reporting period. Supporting the electronic hearings and additional registrar resources however, became a significant additional workload for Registry Services.

Throughout the year, although there were disruptions to in-person services due to state-based COVID-19 restrictions, Registry Services staff continued to process urgent enquiries and applications and provided support for difficult issues for a diverse range of clients with different needs both professionally and courteously. This included supporting vulnerable clients and ensuring people from non-English speaking backgrounds are suitably supported.

***Financial management***

In 2021–22, the Registry Services budget allocation was \$31,908,000, with an under spend of 6.8 per cent. These savings were achieved due to ongoing judicial and staff vacancies and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Document processing***

Registry Services has one performance target relating to the timely processing of family law documents.

- *75 per cent of documents processed within three working days.*

During the year, Registry Services processed 89 per cent of all documents received within three working days. Performance in this area has increased after the successful implementation of a Document Processing Dashboard, created by the Business Intelligence team. The dashboard enables workload to be allocated nationally, creating better monitoring and visibility and more efficient processing.

**TABLE 4.8: DOCUMENTS PROCESSED WITHIN THREE WORKING DAYS**

JURISDICTION	DOCUMENTS RECEIVED	DOCUMENTS PROCESSED WITHIN THREE DAYS	PERCENTAGE
All	140,204	125,433	89%
General Federal Law	43,279	40,145	93%
Family law	96,925	85,248	88%

*Documents received and processed – based on 8 weeks' data*

## Enquiries

### Family law enquiries

Registry Services staff manage counter enquiries in 18 locations across the country. Court users may send enquiries directly to family law court locations via email. The NEC also acts as a triage point for email enquiries and refers any enquiries to specific locations that cannot be answered at the first point of contact. These enquiries are usually case-specific or require some form of local knowledge or decision.

In 2021–22 Registry Services continued to have a lower than usual attendance at counters due to restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Court users continue to be encouraged to use electronic means to lodge documents which is contributing to this trend in decreasing in-person attendance at counters.

### General federal law enquiries

Enquiries relating to general federal law matters are managed by Registry staff at each general federal law location separately and via the NEC team using the court's central phone number, email and live chat functions.

Since June 2021, general federal law phone enquiries have been received via a central phone number managed by NEC and Registry staff. Additional live chat and central email were also made available to court users in 2021. Individual registry phone numbers have been decommissioned from July 2021, however each general federal law registry has their own email and fax contact details.

Some registries also provide additional services to support other Courts and Tribunals:

- The New South Wales District Registry provides registry services to the Copyright Tribunal, the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal, the Australian Competition Tribunal, the National Native Title Tribunal and the Court of Norfolk Island.
- The Queensland registry provides registry services to the Copyright Tribunal and the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal.
- The South Australian registry provides registry services to the High Court of Australia, Australian Competition Tribunal, Copyright Tribunal of Australia, and the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal.
- The Victorian registry provides registry services to the Australian Competition Tribunal and the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal.
- The Western Australian registry provides registry services to the High Court of Australia, the Australian Competition Tribunal and the Defence Force Discipline Appeal Tribunal.

## Complaints

During 2021–22, there were 43 complaints relating to Registry Services. This represents 0.019 per cent of the total number of enquiries, which meets the performance measure of 'Less than 1 per cent of enquiries resulting in a complaint about registry services'. Enquiries include phone, email and live chat actioned enquiries to the NEC.

Information about the Court's feedback and complaints processes can be found at [www.fedcourt.gov.au/feedback-and-complaints](http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/feedback-and-complaints).

### Local registry consultation

Registry Services staff engage regularly with numerous external groups such as local family law pathways networks, family advocacy and support services, Legal Aid, bar associations and law societies, local practitioners and practitioners' associations, community legal centres, family relationship centres, community organisations and support groups, child protection agencies, family violence committees and organisations, state courts, universities and police services.

Registries also work with other organisations who provide information to litigants requiring assistance with general federal law, such as the Consumer Action Law Centre, Justice Connect, LawRight, and providers of financial counselling and advice on migration matters.

Some local engagement activities during the reporting period included:

- The South Australian registry hosted 10 guests from the Women's Information Service; continued monthly meetings with the Family Law Pathways Network; and met with the Department for Child Protection South Australia to discuss electronic responses to 69ZW orders.
- The Newcastle registry court user group, consisting of representatives from the Court, Legal Aid and the Bar and Law Society met three times during the reporting period. The Newcastle registry also continued regular Registry Services/Lawyer Liaison meetings, meeting six times during the reporting period.
- The Dandenong registry's senior judicial registrar gave a presentation to family violence practitioners at the 'Together we can summit' in May 2022.
- The Parramatta registry held a function to welcome the Afghanistan Refugee Judges on 6 June 2022. The function was organised by Judge Humphreys OAM from the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2). The registry also hosted a Continuing Legal Education event with the Greater West Family Law Practitioners Association on 15 June 2022, with Justice Altobelli from the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1) as the main speaker.
- The Canberra registry facilitated a meeting between the Court and local legal professionals in Wagga Wagga on 11 May 2022.

### Public education and engagement

The Court engages in a range of strategies to enhance public understanding of its work, and the Court's registries are involved in educational activities with schools and universities and, on occasion, with other organisations that have an interest in the Court's work. Court facilities were also made available for many events, some of which include:

- Anniversary of Mabo decision
- Reconciliation week events
- The launch of the Edited Collection – Current Issues in Competition Law
- A presentation of the role of the Federal Court of Australia to University of Tasmania law students by Justice McElwaine and Judicial Registrar Stone.
- The launch of 'Compensation for Native Title' by Professor William Isdale.

In previous years, the Court has hosted numerous visiting delegations from overseas courts, but this was limited during 2021–22 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Queensland registry hosted a judge from Papua New Guinea in November 2021 who attended the swearing in of Justice Collier and Justice Logan as judges of the Papua New Guinea Supreme and National Courts.

Other activities in relation to liaison with overseas courts and stakeholders can be found in Appendix 8 (*Judges' Activities*).

### National Enquiry Centre

The NEC provides a single point of entry for phone, email and live chat enquiries to the Federal Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 1 and Division 2). The majority of the NEC's work in 2021–22 was focused on family law, however 2021–22 was the first full year the NEC also undertook the management of general federal law enquiries received by phone and live chat. The Courts now advertise two 1300 numbers split between general federal and family law jurisdictions. These enquiries are managed by

NEC and registry staff trained in general federal law processes and procedures.

Live chat enquiries to the NEC can be initiated via the Federal Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and the Commonwealth Court's Portal websites. All of these enquiries channels are triaged and handled by NEC staff. Additionally, the NEC manages email enquiries received via the 'enquiries', 'portal support' and 'portal registration' email addresses.

During 2021–22, the NEC ceased undertaking portal support for the Family Court of Western Australia who no longer utilise the Commonwealth Court's portal for their court users.

In family law, the NEC has responsibility for the triage and delivery of requests for historic divorce orders, as well as managing the administration of resourcing the Courts' family law and general federal law after-hours service.

During 2021–22, the NEC undertook the following projects:

- the implementation of a centralised general federal law after-hours service with administrative triage and referral
- the transition to the new Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia including updating all wiki materials, and
- commencement of a project to introduce a web form for submission of email enquiries.

Implementation of a centralised general federal law after-hours service utilised the existing processes available in family law, however a significant amount of planning, management and process improvements in general federal law took place to streamline this service and introduce national management and rostering for after-hours and urgent calls.

The introduction of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia and the related rules changes were a significant event for staff at the NEC and the Courts more broadly. A comprehensive update of written procedures and materials for clients was undertaken at the NEC in line with the new rules and procedures to ensure our information was accurate, up to date and reflected correct terminology and court pathways.

**TABLE 4.9: NEC PERFORMANCE, 19 JANUARY 2021 TO 30 JUNE 2022**

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	VOLUME
Total calls presented	224,616
Total calls actioned	125,386
Calls (average wait time)*	16:13
Calls (average handle time)	7:35
Total live chats presented	151,946
Total live chats actioned	95,414
Live chats (average queue time)*	7:08
Live chats (average handle time)	13:58
Total emails received	104,261
Total emails sent	51,896

\* based on calls/chats presented, includes calls/chats that may have abandoned prior to connecting to an NEC staff member.

During 2021–22, the NEC also commenced a project to introduce a web form for the submission of email enquiries. This project is not completed to date, but represents an opportunity for significant efficiencies in the management of email enquiries and improvement in service delivery to court users once implemented. It has involved analysis of emails in terms of types of enquiries received, volumes and client pathways for submission of enquiries.

The NEC introduced new contact centre and reporting software on 19 January 2021. The 2021–22 reporting period represents the first full year of performance measuring using this system.

The numbers represent the actual numbers/ measures for work undertaken by the NEC for both family law and general federal law in 2021–22.

### *Phone calls*

The 2021–22 reporting year represented the first full year of performance measures being captured in the new contact centre software. Due to only partial data capture in the year 2020–21, it is difficult to compare year to year, however the approximations available for 2020–21 and the actual data for 2021–22 indicate that phone calls to the NEC increased this year. This may be attributable in part to increased enquiries related to significant process and rules changes in line with the commencement of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia in September 2021.

Waiting times to connect with an NEC agent increased to 16 minutes and 13 seconds average queue time. This exceeds internal NEC targets and is a significant contributor to continuing high abandonment rate for queued calls to the NEC, particularly in family law.

Average handle time for phone calls remains steady year to year at close to 7.5 minutes on average.

### *Live chat*

The data reported in Table 4.9, taken with approximations for 2020, confirms the trend over the previous three years of live chats increasing from approximately 75,192 in 2019–20 to over 151,000 in 2021–22. This increase is also driven to a small degree in increasing uptake of the live chat feature in general federal law.

Live chat remains the most efficient channel for enquiries to the NEC, with staff able to manage several chats simultaneously. Average queue times for chat enquiries across family and general federal law are less than half the queue time for phone queries.

### *Email*

Emails received by the NEC in 2021–22 increased significantly from the 2020–21 estimate. The NEC received 104,261 emails this year. This increase was largely driven by significant changes to family law rules, website and processes in line with the implementation of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia in September 2021.

## **Registry Services initiatives in 2021–22**

### *Introduction of a National Support Pool*

The National Support Pool was introduced in October 2021 as a national standardised support model for Deputy Registrars. The purpose of the pool is to assist, support and streamline services for the Judicial and Deputy Registrars in management of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia high volume applications (divorce applications, consent orders applications and National Duty Registrar work including applications seeking urgent listings). The National Support Pool seeks to provide consistency and timeliness with respect to the assessment and management of the above applications.

### *Centralising general federal law after-hours calls*

The National Enquiry Centre has centralised the administration of after-hours calls in general federal law, utilising existing family law process to nationalise the triage and referral of urgent after-hours calls. In addition to the benefits gained through increased access to justice for litigants who need urgent assistance, this change has also led to improved efficiencies by standardising processes across all locations.

### *Divorce hearings*

Staff of the National Enquiry Centre worked closely with the Digital Practice Team, Deputy Registrars and the National Support Pool to improve the overall experience for litigants in divorce hearings. After a successful pilot, the project went live on Monday 30 May 2022.

Divorce hearings are now conducted electronically on a new system, and the telephone dial-in details are available on the litigant's Portal and on the Daily Court List. This removes the onus on the Court to provide dial-in details, reduces the level of administration on court staff, eliminates any confusion for litigants and improves the overall experience for litigants interacting with the Court. It has also led to a reduction in enquiries to the National Enquiry Centre requesting link details.

### *Court lists – new publishing process*

A collaborative effort between Corporate Services, Registry teams and the National Enquiry Centre led to the creation of an improved version of the Federal Court's Court List, which went live in February 2022.

The main purpose of the changes was to improve the publication process for Open Justice Notifications, to streamline the information published and to automate some previous manual processes.

There are a number of further improvements planned to be introduced in the new reporting year, including the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Division 2) General Federal Law Daily Court List publication process.

### *Enquiry form*

Work has commenced on developing a solution to transform the channel for email enquiries to the National Enquiry Centre. The new web form will: encourage users to self-service for more basic enquiry types; filter and categorise enquiries in a way that makes sense to both users and internal teams; and collect personal details and key information staff need to streamline responses. The enquiry form will be implemented in 2022–23.

### *Registry services restructure*

A project team was established in 2021 to undertake a comprehensive review of the structure and functions of Court and Tribunal Services and sought to design a model that could potentially improve career paths, opportunities and operational effectiveness.

The review included enquiries, filings and in-person counter visits to registries; support, guidance and management of Chambers colleagues and the interaction with the management of registries; the provision of judicial digital services and the connection with registries and IT; and on-site management and the intersection of location staff and Corporate Services staff and other functions of the Courts.

The result was a proposal for a new model for the delivery of court operational services. This model was interrogated by Court and Tribunal Services colleagues from across Australia as well as from all parts of the Courts at meetings in January and February 2022. Roadshow presentations were delivered to staff in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide to talk about the model in more detail.

At the end of the reporting year, the team was continuing ongoing formal consultation, consolidating and considering the feedback from the roadshow presentations, and conducting further discussions with key stakeholders as required. It is expected that the new model will be implemented in 2022–23.

## Registry Services training

Training was offered to staff on a range of subjects during the year, both in-person, online and through the Court's eLearning platform.

Topics included:

- Resilience training
- Respectful workplace behaviour training
- Preparing for an interview
- Information security awareness
- Recruitment training
- Family violence training
- Co-location training (New South Wales Police, Department of Communities and Justice)
- Relationship Australia
- Expense8 training (Travel)
- Various training sessions from the National Operations Registrar team
- Byte size training sessions for managers and team leaders
- Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia implementation
- Cultural awareness
- Legal and professional skills
- Associates Induction
- Training session for National Support Pool Client Service Officers (dispersed team) in Sydney
- COVID-19 and wellbeing support sessions continued to be rolled out during the pandemic and major lockdowns.