



FEDERAL COURT
OF AUSTRALIA



2017–2018 CORPORATE PLAN

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

ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FCA	Federal Court of Australia
FCoA	Family Court of Australia
FCC	Federal Circuit Court of Australia
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreements
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCF	National Court Framework
NEC	National Enquiry Centre
NNTT	National Native Title Tribunal
NPA	National Practice Area
PBC	Prescribed Bodies Corporate

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND PRINCIPAL REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased, in my capacity as the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar of the Federal Court of Australia (the accountable authority), to present our four year Corporate Plan as required under paragraph 35(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

This Corporate Plan covers the reporting periods 2017–18 to 2020–21. The plan outlines the strategic direction, challenges and priorities for the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, the National Native Title Tribunal and Corporate Services.

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

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



Warwick Soden

Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar
9 August 2017

ENVIRONMENT

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

Government policy

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

Recent examples of how this impacts the courts include: the establishment of Parenting Management Hearings; the funding of additional family consultants and registrars to facilitate speedier resolution of family law cases involving vulnerable parties; a successful New Policy Proposal submission against the sustainability fund; and the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the courts and the Attorney-General's Department for a trial of additional registrar positions to triage matters involving cases of family violence (Family Court) and enforcement (Federal Circuit Court).

Forward estimates project a deficit economy for the next financial year. Ongoing budget cuts and the drive for greater public sector efficiencies and accountability, in conjunction with each courts' objective to provide enhanced access to justice, will result in the need to deliver more services at a reduced cost or the same cost. This will require significant management and prioritisation of resourcing over the next four years.

The decision of the Full Court in *McGlade v Native Title Registrar & Ors* [2017] FCAFC 10 had a short-term impact on the Native Title Registrar's ability to notify and register area Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs). This was remedied by amendments to the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) which passed through Parliament in June 2017, however some additional issues arising from the *McGlade* decision may impact the operations of the NNTT going forward.

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

Technological change

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

The introduction of the Government's Digital Transformation Agenda and the creation of the Digital Transformation Agency will guide how we structure and develop future services for court users. The agenda provides standards for digital development, as well as a goal to create public services that are 'simple, clear, faster and customer-centric'. The courts and the NNTT are already on the path to achieve this goal and further work will be conducted over the life of this plan.

Mobile technologies are fast becoming the key drivers of technological change for the courts and the NNTT, however as the use of digital technologies increases, we will need to achieve a balance with our statutory obligations. Additional challenges include accuracy, data security and timeliness of information provided through these platforms. The amalgamated corporate services model is an opportunity to pool our knowledge to identify and apply the best of breed technology.

The pace of technological change and innovation creates opportunities for us to improve the experience of court users across multiple platforms.

Further digital innovation is anticipated over the life of this plan with additional funding to support the involvement of the digital court program and the introduction of artificial intelligence projects to facilitate improvements in service delivery, consolidation of services and reductions in cost. Our challenge is to capitalise on these opportunities as the lifecycle of new technologies continues to become shorter.

Globalisation and free trade

The growth of globalised trade and continued growth in the economies and societies within our region impacts on the work of the Federal Court of Australia (FCA). This economic, commercial and social change needs to be matched by strengthening and deepening the rule of law and of the mechanisms for its regional and transnational enforcement. It will require new and more sophisticated structures to strengthen the region's court systems and strengthening and deepening of its arbitral systems and related dispute resolution mechanisms.

The expansion of Free Trade Agreements beyond those with China and Japan and the increase in commercial activity has the potential to increase the number of disputes.

On 25 May 2017 the Government introduced into Parliament the Government Procurement (Judicial Review) Bill 2017, to meet World Trade and Trans-Pacific Partnership obligations. If passed, the legislation will give the FCA and Federal Circuit Court (FCC) jurisdiction to order compensation and grant injunctions for contraventions by Commonwealth entities of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (subject to a relatively low threshold). There are a large number of procurements made by Commonwealth entities in any year, so the potential workload from this jurisdiction is significant.

Social and economic change

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

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

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

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

There is a growing community awareness and focus on matters involving family violence and allegations of child abuse that impact on the Family Court of Australia (FCoA) and the FCC.

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

RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

We participate in Comcover's annual Risk Management Benchmarking Survey which benchmarks our framework and capabilities against other participating agencies. The overall performance of the FCA risk management program has remained consistent with 2016 performance.

Oversight

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

The functions of the committee are to:

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

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



FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

The objectives of the FCA are to:

- decide disputes according to law—as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible and, in so doing, to interpret the statutory law and develop the general law of the Commonwealth, so as to fulfil the role of a court exercising the judicial power of the Commonwealth under the Constitution
- provide an effective registry service for the community, and
- manage the resources allotted by Parliament efficiently.

The FCA has had responsibility for the corporate administration of the NNTT since July 2012. From 1 July 2016, the *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016* merged the corporate services of the FCoA and the FCC with the FCA into a single administrative entity – known as the Federal Court of Australia. The Act makes provision for the courts to share corporate services including Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance and other functions.

Under the arrangement, each court remains independent to fulfil its statutory obligations. Heads of Jurisdiction continue to be responsible for managing the administrative affairs of their respective courts (excluding corporate services) with assistance from a CEO and Principal Registrar.

Our vision

An internationally respected court.

Our Mission

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

Our values

Prompt, courteous, effective, efficient, accountable.

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

GOALS

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

This plan reflects both the purpose and goals of the Court, our vision and our culture of relentless improvement.

The Court has a track record of innovation and forward thinking. It will continue a number of long-term projects, aligned with its strategic objectives, during 2017–18 and beyond. These include international projects led by the judiciary, further refining the reforms of the National Court Framework (NCF) and digital file and the implementation of Digital Hearings.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

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

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

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

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

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and just dispute resolution

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

As a result of the implementation of the initial NCF reforms in 2015–16, the Court’s entire workload has been reorganised and is now managed with reference to nine National Practice Areas (NPAs). A new national allocation system has been implemented where the work of judges is realigned under these practice areas. In 2016–17, new practice notes were promulgated and comprehensive guides and information published as part of our strategy to simplify practices and procedures.

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

A successful pilot for Digital Hearings was conducted in 2015–16. The pilot studied how judges and litigants interact digitally in the courtroom and identified the workflows necessary to support these interactions. The next phase of Digital Hearings will be implemented during 2017–18. Consultations have commenced with key stakeholders about the changes.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. Restructure judicial and case support nationally for greater effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Further refine practices and procedures, particularly for appeals.
3. Further develop real-time business intelligence reporting to support better monitoring and management of workloads for the judiciary and registrars.
4. Implement digital hearings.

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *efficient and just dispute resolution*

In 2017–18 the FCA will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Finalise implementation of the NCF	• Develop mechanisms for allocation of registrar work nationally	June 2018
	• Restructure the delivery of case work on a nationally cohesive basis	June 2018
	• Integrate native title work	June 2018
Implement Stage 2 for digital hearings	• Refine the mechanism that forms the basis of digital hearings	June 2018
	• Pilot the mechanism	June 2018
	• Continue consultations with the legal profession about the ideal operational practices and processes	Ongoing
Refine further real-time business intelligence reporting to better monitor and manage workloads of the judiciary and registrars	• Refine further current reporting for judiciary	June 2018
	• Develop reports for registrars	June 2018
	• Develop reports for native title workload	June 2018
	• Develop reports for appeals workload	June 2018
Streamline systems and processes	• Improve a number of identified eServices to make them more integrated, increase our efficiency and enhance the court user experience	Ongoing

2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Provide leadership in international justice

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

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

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

The Court currently has MOUs with courts in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Myanmar. Each MOU has strategic and thematic priorities which the Court collaborates to address in order to strengthen the provision of justice in those countries. In addition, the Court manages the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative involving 14 Pacific countries. This initiative commenced in 2016 and is initially for three years, with

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

Priorities for 2016–17 include continued collaboration pursuant to existing MOUs with courts; continuing to foster understanding of global legal issues; developing new judicial relationships within the Asia-Pacific region; and increasing global awareness of the Court’s international programs.

3

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

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

This strategy takes into account the changing needs and expectations of court users and the wider choices available through digital technologies, including the rapid development of artificial intelligence and big data applications. It will continue to be aligned with the

Government’s Digital Transformation Agenda and the evolving whole-of-government initiatives and strategies that it encompasses.

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

The FCA aims to develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of court users and improve access to justice. These approaches extend to the communication

channels we use, as well as providing procedures which are clear, consistent and understandable. Our web strategy has been crucial to the achievement of this goal. Over the next year, we will continue to identify and deploy additional services and technologies to enhance the intuitiveness and responsiveness of our digital communications for different court users.

The FCA also engages in a wide range of activities with the legal profession and community that support the Australian legal system. The Court’s judicial officers continue to contribute to the work of law reform bodies as well as educational and legal community-based organisations. This work ensures that the Court develops positive relationships with, and gains the support of, the legal sector and the Australian public. The Court also provides opportunities for members of the legal profession to discuss existing and emerging issues, provide feedback to the Court and act as a reference group for proposed changes. It is essential to the Court’s and the Australian legal system’s reputation nationally and internationally, that these relationships continue.

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. Contribute to the legal profession through liaison and education.
2. Collaborate with members of the judiciary and legal sector on initiatives of mutual interest and benefit.
3. Maintain effective media relations to deliver timely public information.
4. Strengthen connections with the Australian community.

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *contribute to the Australian legal system—strengthen relations with court users*

In 2017–18, the FCA will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Continued enhancement of our online strategy	• Continue implementation of improved web and digital services	June 2018
	• Continue to align services with the Digital Transformation Agenda	Ongoing
Continued initiatives for court user education	• Develop tailored resources and educational materials via different channels to assist the court users	Ongoing
Contribute to the legal profession through consultation and educational services	• Consult with educational providers and professional bodies to identify needs	Ongoing
	• Develop and deliver seminars, lectures and training to improve access to justice, education on new services and other topics of relevance, including artificial intelligence and big data issues	Ongoing
	• Conduct regular forums with the profession to identify needs and receive feedback	Ongoing

RESOURCING

FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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

	2017–18 Budget \$'000	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses				
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	600	600	600	600
Administered total	600	600	600	600
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	65,064	67,171	67,513	67,723
S74 retained revenue receipts	1,289	1,289	1,289	1,289
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	13,747	13,747	13,747	13,747
Departmental total	80,100	82,207	82,549	82,759
Total expenses Federal Court of Australia	80,700	82,807	83,149	83,359
Average staffing level (c)	329			

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

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



FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

The purpose of the FCoA as Australia's superior court in family law is to:

- determine cases with the most complex law, facts and parties
- cover specialised areas in family law, and
- provide national coverage as the appellate court in family law matters.

Our vision

An internationally respected, specialist family court.

Our Mission

To assist Australian families in the determination of the most complex family law disputes domestically and internationally, consistent with the rule of law and procedural fairness.

Our values

Innovative, impartial, respectful, efficient and accountable.

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

GOALS

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

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes.
2. Ensure the efficient and just resolution of complex family law matters.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

This will be measured by the following:

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

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes

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

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

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

1. The intersection of parenting orders made by the FCoA and family violence orders, including apprehended violence orders or intervention orders and criminal sanctions made in other jurisdictions.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes*

In 2017–18, the FCoA will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Family violence risk screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to evaluate and implement the family violence risk screening tool 	June 2018
Review and enhance the role of Family Court registrars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the role of registrars to ensure they provide specialist services to families with complex family law needs Maximise the role these Family Court registrars play in assisting Australian families with complex family law issues to resolve their disputes 	June 2018 Ongoing

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters*

In 2017–18, the FCoA will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Enhance the efficiency of the FCoA through digital innovation	• Staged roll-out of an electronic court file starting with the Appeal Division	Ongoing
	• Investigate the use of Sharepoint as a means of improved communication and information sharing for specialist FCoA registrars and judges of the Appeal Division	June 2018
Look for efficiencies and business improvements in court processes	• Investigate and implement digital processes for the efficient resolution of consent orders	Ongoing
	• Develop and implement a web-based application for online electronic consent orders	June 2018
Improve processes in dealing with complex family law matters	• Engage and collaborate with other jurisdictions, agencies, and service providers to improve and enhance services provided to Australian families with complex family law matters	Ongoing

RESOURCING

FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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

	2017–18 Budget \$'000	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses	300	300	300	300
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	100	100	100	100
Administered total	400	400	400	400
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	31,706	32,443	32,404	32,479
S74 retained revenue receipts	259			
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	12,318	11,720	11,720	11,720
Departmental total	44,283	44,163	44,124	44,199
Total expenses Family Court of Australia	44,683	44,563	44,524	44,599
Average staffing level (c)	107			

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

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



FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

Our vision

The Court and its judges shall inspire public confidence in the rule of law and deliver the highest standard of justice to the Australian community, irrespective of a litigant's race, socio-economic background, gender or geographical location.

Our Mission

The Court and its judges shall fulfil its vision by being accessible, timely, responsive and accountable and by fairly and efficiently resolving disputes brought before it by:

- acting impartially and independently
- operating without undue formality
- using streamlined procedures
- encouraging the use of a range of appropriate dispute resolution processes
- endeavouring to ensure that the proceedings are not protracted, and
- striving to ensure equal access to court services.

Our values

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

GOALS

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

This information is also reflected in the Annual Report and Annual Performance Statement for the FCA. Performance measures include those which are submitted in the Portfolio Budget Statements for the FCA.

The FCC has grown to become Australia's principal federal trial court. The Court aims to be an innovative, agile organisation which is responsive to the needs of all litigants including those in rural and regional communities.

The foundation for this strategy is our charter to provide simpler and more accessible alternatives to litigation, with a particular focus on increasing accessibility in regional and rural areas.

In addition, our strategy addresses the Court's challenge in meeting the demands of a large and diverse caseload. Significant thought has gone into improving court user accessibility and simplifying processes and procedures.

This includes the development of a Registry Services Delivery Strategy for family law, an extensive IT requirements review and an education program for the judiciary and their direct support staff.

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

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Ensure efficient access to justice.
2. Improve business systems.
3. Provide flexible and responsive registry services.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

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

Timely completion of cases will be measured by the following:

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

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

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

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient access to justice

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

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

In 2016, family law matters constituted 91 per cent of all applications filed. As such, family law is a particular focus area for strategy.

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

A further example of the Court's innovation is the development and implementation of a fully electronic divorce file. Approximately 45,000 divorce files are lodged each year with upwards of 70 per cent of those

applications now being lodged electronically. Any hard copy applications are converted to a digital format ensuring that all divorce files are now electronic. These changes improve access to justice for litigants by further enabling online services.

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

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *efficient access to justice*

In 2017–18, the FCC will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Collaborate with agencies and service providers to improve access and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards enhanced collaboration with agencies and service providers to facilitate information sharing when risks are alleged in family law proceedings 	Ongoing
Continue to enhance rural and regional mediation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the process of referrals to mediation provided via the Administered Appropriation 	Ongoing
Analyse circuit workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further refine data requirements and reports to enable a review of circuit workloads 	Ongoing
Identify opportunities to expand eFiling and online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of the Commonwealth Courts Portal, eFiling and other online services 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the capacity to enable the eFiling of all applications types 	Ongoing

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Improved business systems

The work of the Court is characterised by the high volume of trial work across a diverse range of jurisdictions in family and general federal law. In pursuit of the objectives spelt out in the Court’s mission, which relate to efficient and effective case management, the Court maintains a policy of judicial-led case management. Therefore it is critical that judges and their support staff, in particular, are assisted by systems and tools that contribute to this policy.

With the move to a shared corporate services environment, it is important to develop a common understanding of the Court’s practices and the key supporting systems and business processes. This includes work done in judicial chambers, including interaction with parties during litigation and the support provided by the registries in both family and general federal law. Analysis of work undertaken in judicial chambers has already led to the automation of the production of court orders providing significant benefits in terms of efficiency, accuracy and time.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *improved business systems*

In 2017–18, the FCC will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Review of business processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan 	December 2018
Evaluate critical business system improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a roadmap for review 	December 2018
Realise benefits of automated court orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – cease sending orders via post to legal practitioners 	July 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 – cease sending all orders via post 	January 2018
Refine reporting requirements for business intelligence tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise reporting requirements 	August 2017
Develop and implement focused training for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement online induction and training for registry service officers 	December 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out the Family Violence and Disability eLearning packages 	December 2018

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Transformation of service delivery

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

The demands of supporting self-represented litigants have required the Court to introduce self-help processes through intuitive technologies to reduce loads on registry staff and the NEC.

A family law registry services strategy was developed in 2015 to identify ways to improve service delivery.

This reinforces the FCC's commitment to identify technologies and processes to improve communication channels and streamline case management for court users and provide support to the judiciary.

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *transformation of service delivery*

In 2017–18, the FCC will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Identify opportunities to expand the use of online services to integrate court user needs, improve access and reduce cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the requirements with users • Develop a project plan 	Ongoing
Review demands on NEC and registry staff by better understanding court user needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review NEC data to identify needs of court users • Provide recommendations re service delivery 	July 2017 September 2017
Create a virtual registry to improve access and reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify and improve access to court-related information • Introduce systems to initiate applications and make payments • Identify other transactions that can be web enabled • Develop communication methods using technology to remind litigants of court events 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Scope the potential for using social networking technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to use social media to provide users with updated court information 	Ongoing

RESOURCING

FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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

	2017–18 Budget \$'000	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses				
Administered item	1,583	1,579	1,580	1,584
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	200	200	200	200
Administered total	1,783	1,779	1,780	1,784
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	89,185	91,474	91,359	91,651
S74 retained revenue receipts (a)	640	640	640	640
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	2,526	624	624	624
Departmental total	92,351	92,738	92,623	92,915
Total expenses Federal Circuit Court	94,134	94,517	94,403	94,699
Average staffing level (c)	516			

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

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



NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE TRIBUNAL

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

The purpose of the native title scheme, under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) (the Act) is to:

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

The President of the NNTT is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the NNTT with the assistance of the FCA CEO and Principal Registrar, who may delegate his powers under the Act, to any of the Native Title Registrar, Deputy Registrar or staff assisting the NNTT.

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

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

Our vision

Shared country, shared future.

Our Mission

Provide predictable, just decisions, procedural justice, and delivery of a fair and efficient dispute resolution system.

Our values

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

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

GOALS

The NNTT's goals are based on three strategic objectives that will focus our operations and priorities over the next four years. We review our strategies and priorities each year to ensure that our plan remains relevant to our purpose and our operating environment.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

1. Excellent service and innovation.
2. Respectful, diverse and capable workforce.
3. Informed and engaged clients and stakeholders.

The strategies in our Corporate Plan continue the implementation of phase two of the President's Review. The review was undertaken to revitalise and re-energise the NNTT and phase one structural changes were implemented in 2015. Phase two recommendations are incorporated in the Corporate Plan and reflect the continuing work within the NNTT to improve its responsiveness and external focus whilst improving internal efficiency.

Much has been achieved over the past year to improve customer service, build organisational capability and improve access to information and services. In addition, the NNTT has actively participated in discussions about improvements to the native title system, including in relation to PBCs, and has worked collaboratively with other agencies to identify ways the NNTT can improve its effectiveness within the native title sector.

In the past 12 months, the NNTT has continued to roll out technological innovations designed to improve service delivery and client access, as well as improve productivity.

This plan continues to build on the NNTT's track record of innovation and collaboration in order to position it to respond to the challenges ahead and ensure it has a skilled and agile workforce able to deliver the vision.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The NNTT strives to be an externally focussed organisation, responsive to client and stakeholder needs. We will measure our success by monitoring our achievements against the strategies in this Corporate Plan.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Excellent service and innovation

This strategy underpins our ongoing commitment to be more service-focussed and responsive to the needs of clients.

The NNTT will continue to identify innovative ways to improve collaboration with clients and stakeholders and to ensure that our services are appropriate and respectful. We will conduct market research to improve our understanding of the issues and barriers faced by external clients when they interact with the NNTT and proactively seek out opportunities to build on our existing knowledge and capabilities in this area.

Process improvement, service culture, innovation and client experience are at the heart of this strategy. These will be demonstrated in the delivery of our services, which include core statutory functions (registration of claims and ILUAs, future act applications, mediation, inquiries etc.) as well as assistance functions.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. Implement and progress initiatives to improve service delivery and processes.
2. Ensure consistent service delivery with a focus on service excellence.
3. Use innovative tools and resources to deliver services (both internally and externally).
4. Improve service delivery through better understanding of the needs of key clients and stakeholders.

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *excellent service and innovation*

In 2017–18, the NNTT will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Implement and progress initiatives to improve service delivery and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate service level standards and identify areas for improvement • Develop and implement specific initiatives to deliver improvements 	January 2018
Ensure consistent service delivery with a focus on service excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop internal capability and culture to focus on service excellence • Increase internal knowledge of effective service delivery 	June 2018
Use innovative tools and resources to deliver services (both internally and externally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of service delivery where the use of technology can improve efficiency of resources • Look for opportunities to further develop and create new products and services, including through the use of social media 	Ongoing

Objective	Deliverable	Target
<p>Improve service delivery through better understanding of the needs of key clients and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement tools to assess client and stakeholder needs • Continue to develop tailored and culturally appropriate services in response to client and stakeholder feedback • Grow the internal knowledge of staff to enable dissemination of relevant information about native title law, policy and any social implications 	<p>December 2017</p>

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Respectful, diverse and capable workforce

Over the next four years, we will continue to build organisational capability, including cultural respect and safety. Our goal is a respectful, diverse and capable team who are committed to our vision.

Open lines of communication within the NNTT will ensure the consistency and integrity of organisational information and key messages.

A significant aspect of our cultural respect program will be in developing a new Reconciliation Action Plan and participating in the development of an Indigenous Employment Strategy for the FCA. Both documents will consolidate our commitment to developing cultural competence and diversity within our workforce and to building relationships with the communities that we serve.

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. Align communications to our goals of service excellence and transformation.
2. Promote a safe and respectful culture within the organisation.
3. Continue to develop a skilled, agile and responsive workforce.



PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *respectful, diverse and capable workforce*

In 2017–18, the NNTT will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Align communications to our goals of service excellence and transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce a shared vision of service excellence Develop an agenda for communicating organisational achievements and transformation 	Ongoing December 2017
Promote a safe and respectful culture within the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing commitment to providing a culturally safe and respectful workplace and services Continue to promote APS Values within the organisation Instill open lines of communication and transparent management processes 	Ongoing
Continue to develop a skilled, agile and responsive workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for the future by identifying required workforce skills and related training and development needs Provide opportunities for career and professional development Consolidate understanding of governance and accountability within the organisation 	Ongoing

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Informed and engaged clients and stakeholders

Over the next four years, the NNTT will continue its significant focus on engagement with clients and stakeholders and the overall operation of the native title system.

The NNTT has recognised the emergence of other peak bodies which are now engaging with the native title system as it moves towards a post-determination phase. In response, the NNTT has broadened the scope of its engagement strategy and is seeking to work with these bodies to improve the overall operation of the native title system. In particular, the NNTT is the lead agency in an ongoing inter-agency PBC Support Forum delivering a consortium approach to delivery of assistance to PBCs.

A significant aspect of our strategy is to build a broader educative role with a range of external stakeholders to increase their knowledge of native title law, policies and to raise their awareness of the social impact of native

title. In the past year we have worked with a number of key stakeholders and industry peak bodies including banks, mining companies, graziers and pastoralists, local government, Federal and State governments and universities to improve their awareness of native title issues. We also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the recognition of native title by publishing a 25 years of native title recognition website, with stories, images and videos discussing native title.

The President, Native Title Registrar, members and senior staff meet regularly with key stakeholders and other clients to provide them with support and assistance. The President and Tribunal members also make a significant contribution to the native title system through committee memberships, conference presentations and authoring of peer reviewed and other journal publications.

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

1. Work collaboratively with other agencies and organisations to improve the overall operation of the native title system.
2. Increase awareness and understanding of native title law and policy and its social impact.
3. Improve the capacity of our clients and stakeholders to engage in the native title system.

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *informed and engaged clients and stakeholders*

In 2017–18, the NNTT will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Work collaboratively with other agencies and organisations to improve the overall operation of the native title system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and exchange ideas to improve effectiveness with other agencies and stakeholders • Identify new stakeholders and potential partnerships in the native title sector • Look for opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders on suitable projects 	Ongoing
Increase awareness and understanding of native title law and policy and its social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to share our knowledge, including through publications, information sessions and presentations • Remain informed on these issues by being actively engaged with stakeholders and exchanging information • Develop and update internal and external publications which assist to increase community understanding of native title law and policies 	Ongoing
Improve the capacity of our clients and stakeholders to engage in the native title system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly evaluate what training and information our clients and stakeholders need • Continue to provide high quality information and training sessions to clients and stakeholders 	Ongoing



FEDERAL COURT CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND

GOALS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

RESOURCING

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

The amalgamated corporate services body is expected to generate efficiencies by consolidating resources, streamlining processes and reducing duplication. The savings gained from reducing the administrative burden on each of the courts will be reinvested to support the core functions of the courts.

The objectives of the Corporate Services team are to:

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

GOALS

The key objective for corporate services over the next 12 months is to focus on the provision of high level corporate service to the courts and the NNTT to assist the courts and tribunal in achieving their organisational objectives.

A major area of focus will be on the development of the digital court program, a series of technology-related projects that aim to streamline core business systems, create flexibility and operational efficiency, support the courts' ongoing digital transformation and improve service delivery. In addition, corporate services will continue to look at consolidating resources, streamlining services and reducing unnecessary duplication.

The challenge will be to remain focussed on delivery of services to the courts and the NNTT whilst the amalgamation of systems and services continues. Lower costs will need to be achieved through consolidation of resources and greater productivity. Early consultation and communication, both within the team and to the courts and the NNTT, will be very important to manage the reputation of the new team and ensure that stakeholders' expectations are met.

The corporate services of the courts will be recognised as playing a leading and strategic role in creating modern and efficient courts with a reputation for innovation.

Significant work has been undertaken to implement the amalgamation and this plan continues that work to identify the best systems and processes to achieve the desired goals.

Our strategic objectives for the next four years:

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

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Efficient and effective corporate services

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

Amalgamation provides opportunities to consolidate the experience of corporate services staff to identify the most effective policies and procedures to develop nationally consistent services that support the work of the judiciary and registries.

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *efficient and effective corporate services*

In 2017–18, Corporate Services will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Refinement of business processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to strengthen areas of high quality performance and remediate areas of underperformance • Identify areas of duplication • Progress implementation of best practice 	December 2017
Develop a risk and compliance framework to better support and manage the risks of the entity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and refine suite of risk management policies, including overall of business continuity plans for the organisation 	October 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training documentation and training programs developed and implemented 	March 2018
Drive efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve further efficiencies through consolidation or restructuring of contracts as existing contracts expired 	June 2018

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce

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

Over the past financial year, Corporate Services focussed on identifying and communicating a positive culture and shared values for the newly merged Corporate Services team. This will continue throughout 2017–18 as we work to implement a new enterprise agreement to support the three courts and the NNTT, and continue to strengthen the work of the new teams.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce*

In 2017–18, Corporate Services will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Develop a strategy and structure to support the courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design organisation structure in line with recommendations from the organisational review 	December 2017
Consolidate and improve HR systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade to Aurion 11 and provide further enhancements to ESS 	January 2018
Build a learning and development program aligned with strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a web-enabled training platform for all courts and the NNTT 	June 2018
Merge processes and policies to develop best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review key policies and programs to rationalise and update Implement preferred models 	June 2018
Corporate Services workforce plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership development 	Ongoing

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions

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

Amalgamation provides an opportunity to modernise our IT systems and update our key business systems. Considerable planning has already been undertaken to ensure that the strategy is able to incorporate each courts' and the NNTT's long and short-term requirements.

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

OUR STRATEGIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

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

PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18 ► *optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions*

In 2017–18, Corporate Services will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Ongoing digital transformation through the delivery of the Digital Court Program to drive more efficient and streamlined practices across the courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a digital file in the family law jurisdiction • Refinements to the electronic court file in general federal law • Consolidation and enhancement of the courts case management system • A new document management system • Enhancements to electronic lodgment and access to electronic records 	Phased rollout over the next 2–3 years.
Optimise digital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and complete the first stage of a project that delivers a common web platform for the courts and tribunal 	June 2018
Finalise technology roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with stakeholders 	December 2017

Objective	Deliverable	Target
Novell integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate remaining applications from Novell to the new Microsoft Active Directory 	October 2017
Domino application migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the significant number of FCoA/FCC Domino applications and retire or migrate to a new platform Retire Domino platform 	June 2018
Data centre consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence consolidation of data centre environments from four to two Accelerate the removal of the data centre infrastructure in the AON Building to provide greater flexibility in dealing with the lease 	Start July 2017 December 2018
Secure internet gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unify the two secure internet gateways into a single infrastructure 	September 2018
Establish hybrid cloud capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the data centre consolidation, establish hybrid cloud infrastructure to allow appropriate applications to be moved to infrastructure or platform as a service cloud model. High business value applications including disaster recovery will remain on a private cloud 	December 2017
DevOps capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish tools to automate and streamline development, testing and deployment of applications for bespoke court management system and ECF 	December 2017
Voice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise onto a single voice system (as a service) moving off current multiple PABXs 	March 2018
IT policy review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise IT policies across the courts and tribunals 	June 2018
Artificial intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish pilot of Robotic Process Automation Machine Learning platform to support routine registry administrative decisions 	June 2018
PC upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifecycle replacement of PC fleet including deployment of tablets and laptops to judicial, registrar and executive staff. Includes upgrade to contemporary versions of Windows, Office and Adobe 	October 2017
Courtroom technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploy touchscreen PCs to FCoA and FCC courtrooms 	October 2017
Skype for Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrate Skype for Business to a service cloud model and expand to FCoA and FCC 	October 2017

RESOURCING

FEDERAL COURT CORPORATE SERVICES

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

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
	\$'000	estimate	estimate	estimate
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	64,635	64,543	65,786	60,073
S74 retained revenue receipts (a)	2,015	2,065	2,110	2,142
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	53,402	53,285	53,200	53,275
Total expenses Corporate Services	120,052	119,893	121,096	115,490
Average staffing level	125			

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

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

COMPLIANCE TABLE

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

	Page Number				
	Federal Court of Australia	Family Court	Federal Circuit Court	National Native Title Tribunal	Corporate Services
Introductory statement	2	2	2	2	2
Purpose	8	16	22	30	38
Environment	3–4	3–4	3–4	3–4	3–4
Performance including how the entity will achieve its purpose and how the entity's performance will be measured	9	17	23–24	31	39
Capability – the key strategies and plans that the entity will implement in each reporting period covered by the plan to achieve the entity's purposes	10–13	18–19	24–27	32–36	40–43
Risk and oversight management – a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity for each reporting period covered by the plan including any measures that will be implemented to ensure compliance with the finance law	5–6	5–6	5–6	5–6	5–6