



Australia Pacific Judicial Partnership

Australia Pacific Judicial Partnership (APJP) | Regional Newsletter Issue 2, September 2026

Welcome and Overview

Welcome to the second edition of the Australia–Pacific Judicial Partnership newsletter. This issue highlights progress across the Partnership since July, including the first Regional Court Administration Workshop, follow-up support for regional case management reforms, the launch of the Judicial Collegium and preparations for the Regional Digitisation Workshop.

Participants at both the **Regional Case Management Workshop** and **Regional Court Administration Workshop** developed jurisdiction-specific Action Plans identifying practical reforms they would like to progress. The APJP is keen to support implementation, but each Action Plan must first be considered and endorsed by the relevant Chief Justice.

We welcome feedback from Chief Justices on the reforms they wish to prioritise and the support that would be most useful. Implementation will require the commitment of resources within each jurisdiction, together with careful targeting of the technical and financial support available through the APJP. This feedback will help ensure that our future assistance is directed towards locally endorsed priorities with a realistic pathway to implementation.

Thank you for your continued engagement and leadership. We look forward to working closely with you as the Partnership progresses.

Helen Burrows

Director, International Programs | Federal Court of Australia

Regional Court Administration Workshop



Participants attending the Regional Court Administration Workshop, Suva, Fiji, September 2026

The first Regional Court Administration Workshop, held in Suva, Fiji, in September, brought together 44 court officials from 15 Pacific Island nations to consider different approaches to essential court operations.

The workshop was opened by Chief Justice Temu and His Excellency Peter Roberts, Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, and focused on human capacity and skills development, institutional knowledge and effective budget advocacy to support adequate court resourcing. Co-facilitated by the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court of Fiji, the workshop included senior court administrators, judicial officers and finance managers from all participating jurisdictions. Feedback was positive, with 98 percent of participants reporting that the workshop was highly relevant and useful, and 90 percent reporting greater confidence to apply new strategies to address challenges.



Supporting Action Plans

Participants at the June Regional Case Management Workshop and September Regional Court Administration Workshop developed Action Plans identifying reforms tailored to the circumstances and priorities of their respective jurisdictions.

In September, the APJP reconvened participants from the Regional Case Management Workshop to review progress and identify areas requiring further support. Courts reported progress in areas including judge-led case management, registry processes, standard operating procedure development, backlog reduction and regional knowledge-sharing.

Before further APJP support is committed, each Action Plan should be reviewed and endorsed by the relevant Chief Justice. We encourage confirmation of the reforms considered to be the most important and achievable; the activities each partner country is ready to begin implementing; the court personnel and resources that can be committed locally; and the areas in which APJP assistance would add the greatest value.

This information will help the APJP prioritise its resources and direct practical support towards reforms that have judicial leadership, local ownership and a realistic pathway to sustained implementation.

Judicial Collegium: Applications Invited



Participants and judicial colleagues at the conclusion of the pilot residency, Adelaide, Australia, May 2026

Judicial officers and colleagues at the conclusion of the 2026 pilot residency in Adelaide.

To support gender equity among senior Pacific judicial officers and gender-responsive benches across the region, the Federal Court of Australia developed a mentoring program for female judicial

officers.

Following an assessment of the pilot, the program has been refined and renamed the *Judicial Collegium*, reflecting equity, respect, reciprocity and shared learning between judicial colleagues. Applications are now invited from female judicial officers who would like to: share their professional experience and guidance with another judicial officer; or receive collegial guidance and support in relation to their professional or leadership goals. The Judicial Collegium will support confidential, collegial relationships tailored to participants' individual circumstances and objectives. Courts are encouraged to share this opportunity widely with eligible female judicial officers. The handbook and application forms are available on the [APJP resources page](#).

Mana Grants: Applications Encouraged

The Mana Grants facility provides grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible Pacific partner courts for locally led activities that promote the quality of judicial services and more accessible, efficient and effective court services. To date, two applications have been received, from Samoa and Kiribati. Both applications remain under consideration and no grants have yet been approved.

Other partner courts are strongly encouraged to consider submitting proposals. Applications may support practical initiatives arising from locally identified reform priorities, including priorities reflected in Action Plans developed through APJP regional workshops. Proposals should respond to a clearly identified court need; be supported by the relevant Chief Justice; identify the local personnel and resources required for implementation; set out practical and achievable results; and explain how the initiative will be sustained after the grant activity concludes.

The APJP team welcomes early discussions with courts considering an application and can provide guidance on the application process. Grant guidelines and application forms are available on the [APJP resources page](#).

Supporting Digital Readiness



Donated laptops being received and/or in use by the Cook Islands and Tonga.

The Federal Court of Australia is donating 300 ex-service laptops to support Pacific courts' digital readiness and development of e-court services. Under the project, 247 laptops have already

been distributed to 12 courts in region, namely the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Naoero, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.



Courts are using laptops already distributed to equip remote court locations with insufficient computers; enhance registry e-filing services; support family protection order initiatives; and record transcripts of court hearings. The remaining laptops will be distributed over the coming months.

Regional Digitisation Workshop

The next regional activity will be a Regional Digitisation Workshop in Honiara, Solomon Islands, from 17 to 19 November. Informed by the Federal Court of Australia's 2025 Digital Readiness Assessment and regional consultation, the workshop aims to support Pacific courts to strengthen the use and governance of existing digital systems; improve data quality and reporting; identify and manage dependency risks; and prepare for the responsible use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

The workshop will emphasise practical and sustainable improvements, including making more effective use of existing systems, strengthening governance arrangements and reducing institutional reliance on individual system operators.

Partner Court Initiatives of Regional Interest

In addition to the APJP's regional activities, the Federal Court of Australia is working bilaterally with partner courts on initiatives that may offer useful models, resources and lessons for other Pacific jurisdictions.

Papua New Guinea: Judgment Writing and Judicial Capability

A new DFAT-funded program with the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea is supporting efforts to reduce reserved judgments and strengthen judicial capability in emerging and complex areas of law. Developed with the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence to support sustainable local delivery, the program includes: three *Judgment Writing Workshops*; a two-week *Judicial Fellowship Program*; and a webinar series addressing priority legal, judicial and leadership topics. The first Judgment Writing Workshop will take place in Port Moresby in October, while four Supreme Court judges will undertake Judicial Fellowships in Australia.

The program combines professional development with practical implementation support and local ownership. The judgment-writing activities will be delivered progressively, including an advanced workshop and a training-of-trainers component to help embed the curriculum within the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence.

Solomon Islands: Advocacy and Effective Decision-Making



Advocacy and Moot Court Workshop and Effective Decision-Making Workshop, Honiara, Solomon Islands, September 2026.

The Federal Court of Australia continued its strong engagement with the High Court of the Solomon Islands. Following a workshop with magistrates and judges on Court Craft and Trial Management in February 2026, the Federal Court of Australia and Victorian Bar delivered a joint *Advocacy and*

Moot Court Workshop from 21 to 25 September for members of the Solomon Islands legal profession.

This was the first joint workshop of its kind between the two organisations. It focused on urgent legal remedies in civil disputes and the contribution of effective advocacy and quality legal representation to fair and timely judicial decision-making. A total of 32 lawyers participated from the Public Solicitor's Office and Solomon Islands Bar Association. During the same visit, the Federal Court of Australia and Victorian Bar conducted an *Effective Decision-Making Workshop* for magistrates. The workshop addressed the management of high-volume caseloads, including initial file review; dealing with difficult parties; provision of oral decisions; and succinct judgment writing. Seventeen of the Solomon Islands' 19 magistrates participated. Feedback was positive, with sessions on legal research, drafting judgments and case management rated particularly highly.



The Federal Court of Australia's involvement in both workshops was supported by DFAT.

Sharing Approaches Across the Region

Partner courts may wish to draw on the approaches, curricula and lessons emerging from these bilateral activities. Where there is wider regional interest, the APJP can consider opportunities for peer exchange between courts; sharing relevant tools and training resources; adapting successful approaches to different jurisdictional contexts; and providing practical follow-up support.

Courts interested in any of these areas are encouraged to contact the APJP team so that regional interest can be assessed and future support appropriately targeted.

Upcoming Events

5 to 16 October 2026

Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Judicial Fellowship Queensland, Sydney and Adelaide

6 to 8 October 2026

Judgment Writing Workshop, Papua New Guinea

17 to 19 November 2026

APJP Regional Digitisation Workshop, Honiara, Solomon Islands

9-13 May 2027

25th Commonwealth Law Conference, Darwin, Australia

For more information and updates, please visit the [Australia–Pacific Judicial Partnership website](http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/apjp).

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