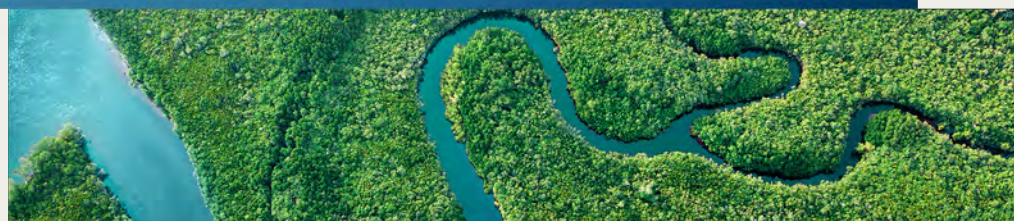


Federal Court of Australia



Annual
Report
2025–2026



About this report

Federal Court of Australia Annual Report 2025–26

ISSN 835-1565 (Online)

ISSN 1035-5863 (Print)

© Commonwealth of Australia 2026

The content of this document is licensed under the Creative Commons – Attribution 4.0 International – CC BY 4.0 with the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Court logo and images. Material used must be attributed: © Commonwealth of Australia (Federal Court of Australia) 2026.

Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used can be found at www.pmc.gov.au/government/commonwealth-coat-arms.

Contact details

Federal Court of Australia
Law Courts Building,
Queens Square
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: All enquiries (Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm AEST/AEDT)
1300 720 980

International
+612 7809 1037

Live Chat

Live Chat <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/contact> with the Federal Court registry if your enquiry relates to:

- Applying to the Court
- Procedures or information relating to your proceeding
- Information and support for the Commonwealth Courts Portal, including eLodgment
- General enquiries about Federal Court proceedings

Website

<https://www.fedcourt.gov.au>

Email

- Enquiries may be directed to the Registry in the state where the proceeding will be, or has been, lodged. See Part 2 (Court locations) for more information.

Commonwealth Courts Portal

support@comcourts.gov.au

Communications

communication@fedcourt.gov.au

Media

Media-FCA@fedcourt.gov.au

Social media

LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/federal-court-of-australia>

Bluesky:
<https://bsky.app/profile/fedcourtau.bsky.social>

YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/@FederalCourtAus>

Alternative format

This annual report is available electronically at <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/about/corporate-information/annual-reports>

Acknowledgments

This report reflects the efforts of many people. Special thanks go to the Annual Report Working Group, Ben Racz and the Court staff involved in contributing and coordinating material, as well as the following specialist staff and contractors:

Design and typesetting:
Olga Frost, Federal Court of Australia Listed Entity

Report production:
Giraffe Visual Communication

Proofreading and indexing:
Apricot Zebra

Printing:
Ink printing

This annual report is printed on 100% recycled Monza Satin.

Contact officer for annual report

Director of Communications
Phone: +612 6113 9470
Email: communication@fedcourt.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

The Court acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and pays its respects to the Traditional Owners of the Country on which the Court's eight registries are situated.

The Court acknowledges the challenges facing the Australian community in our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which include how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated by the justice system. In this Court, that includes but is by no means limited to, the administration of the Court's jurisdiction under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), where the Court's processes and decisions have a significant impact on the interests of First Nations Peoples. The Court is committed to the improved administration of all its jurisdictions, where they affect First Nations Peoples.

Pictured: On 18 July 2025, Justice Bennett presided over a Consent Determination Hearing for the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee Native Title Claim Group on Country, on the Murray River near Mildura.

The land and waters the subject of the determination are located in the northwest corner of Victoria. Justice Bennett presented bound versions of the reasons for judgment to members of the Ngintait, Latji Latji and Nyeri Nyeri Peoples.

Photo is courtesy of ABC and used with their permission.



Contents

	Acknowledgement of Country	1
	Letter of transmittal	4
	Readers' guide	5
	2025–26 at a glance	6
PART 1 Understanding the Federal Court's role and why it matters	The Federal Court's role in Australia's system of government	9
	Jurisdiction: The Federal Court's authority to hear disputes	10
	Leadership and stewardship in the administration of the Federal Court	11
	Judges of the Federal Court and its locations	12
PART 2 Year in review and looking ahead	Chief Justice's year in review	17
	Report from the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar	27
PART 3 How the Federal Court does its work	What the Federal Court does and does not control	29
	Management of administrative affairs of the Federal Court	29
	Rules and practices guiding the Federal Court's resolution of proceedings	33
	The Federal Court's work in 2025–26	37
	Statistical overview	38
	Judicial work across all NPAs	40
	Judicial work within each National Practice Area	41
	Administrative and Constitutional Law and Human Rights	42
	Migration matters within ACLHR	45
	Admiralty and Maritime	49
	Commercial and Corporations	53
	Regulator and Consumer Protection sub-area	57
	Corporations and Corporate Insolvency sub-area	59
	Commercial Contracts, Banking, Finance and Insurance sub-area	61
	General and Personal Insolvency sub-area	62
	Economic Regulator, Competition and Access sub-area	63
	Commercial Arbitration sub-area	64
	Employment and Industrial Relations	65
	Federal Crime and Related Proceedings	70
	Intellectual Property	73
	Patents and Associated Statutes sub-area	75
	Trade Marks sub-area	76
	Copyright and Industrial Design sub-area	77
	Native Title	80
	Taxation	86
	Other Federal Jurisdiction	90
	Defamation sub-area	92
PART 4 The work of the Federal Court in practice	Work of the judges in other courts and tribunals	93
	The work of the Federal Court's Judicial Registrars	95

	People supporting judicial work	100
	Court library spotlight	104
PART 5	Supporting the Federal Courts work	106
People and capability supporting judicial work	Court and Tribunal Services	106
	Corporate Services	107
	Supporting accessible justice	110
	Litigants in person and pro bono assistance	110
PART 6	Pro bono legal assistance	112
Community and international engagement	Community engagement and education	113
	Work with international jurisdictions	114
	Technology and AI	120
PART 7	Making the Federal Court's work accessible	120
Communications and technology	Media engagement	122
	Social media	123
	Information Publication Scheme (IPS)	125
	Internal and external scrutiny	125
	Complaints	125
PART 8	Financial management and compliance	125
Governance	Correction of errors	125
	Overview	128
PART 9	Geospatial	137
National Native Title Tribunal	Dispute Resolution and Assistance	143
	Legal and Compliance	151
	Appendix 1: Judges' activities 2025–26	159
	Appendix 2: Registry locations	192
	Appendix 3: Judicial committees	193
PART 10	Appendix 4: Airline memberships	195
Appendices	Appendix 5: Glossary	196
PART 11	List of figures	199
List of figures and tables	List of tables	199
Index	Index	200

Letter of transmittal



Chambers of Chief Justice Mortimer

Federal Court of Australia
Victoria District Registry
305 William Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

24 September 2026

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to submit the Federal Court of Australia's annual report for the 2025–26 financial year.

This document reports on the management of the administrative affairs of the Court, in accordance with section 18S of the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth). It also seeks to inform the Australian community, court users, Parliament and the Executive about the Court's role, the resolution of its business, and its wider contributions to the community.

The President of the National Native Title Tribunal is required to prepare a report that relates to the Tribunal's activities for the last financial year. That report is provided as Part 9, pursuant to section 133 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth).

The Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar is required to prepare a report under section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). That report addresses in detail the provision of corporate and registry services to the Court, and includes financial statements relating to the Court.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Debra Mortimer'.

Debra Mortimer
Chief Justice, Federal Court of Australia

Readers' guide

This Annual Report explains the work of the Federal Court of Australia (the Federal Court) during the 2025–26 reporting year and the context in which that work was carried out. It is written for a broad audience, including Parliament, court users, practitioners and members of the public who may or may not be familiar with courts or legal processes.

Legal and institutional concepts are explained in plain language, and the report assumes no prior knowledge of the Federal Court or the justice system. When reference is made to Commonwealth legislation, that legislation can be freely accessed by any member of the public on the Federal Register of Legislation website.

Judges ordinarily speak through their written reasons for the judgments (or decisions) they make in the proceedings they decide. This Annual Report serves a different purpose. It explains why the Federal Court's work matters, how the Federal Court carries out its functions and is administered, and the limits within which it operates as part of Australia's system of government. The Report does not assess the merits of individual proceedings or comment on judicial decisions. This Report is structured to move from context to explanation. **Parts 1 and 2** outline where the Federal Court's constitutional role fits within the Australian legal system and provides the Chief Justice's year in review and those events that have shaped the Federal Court's work during the reporting period. **Parts 3 and 4** describe how the Federal Court undertakes its work and how proceedings are managed.

Data and statistics are woven throughout the Report to support explanations and provide a transparent understanding of the Federal Court's workload, pressures, and trends over time. Charts, tables and graphical summaries appear alongside the relevant discussion to represent this information visually.

Some information sets out what is within the Federal Court's control, such as case management practices and administrative arrangements. Other information explains factors outside the Federal Court's control, including the volume and nature of proceedings filed, legislative changes and resource constraints. Understanding these differences provides insight into how the Federal Court operates within the required limits of both its role and capacity.

Part 5 of the Report focuses on the people who support judicial work. This includes a spotlight article on the Federal Court's Library staff, highlighting some of the institutional capability that underpins judicial decision-making but is rarely visible to court users or the public.

Parts 6 and 7 of the Report explain how the Federal Court engages with court users, the legal profession, and the broader local and international community, and how it communicates its work. These parts also highlight the initiatives and technology the Federal Court uses to promote open and accessible justice.

Part 8 sets out how the Federal Court is governed, supported and held accountable, including reporting on key compliance obligations.

Part 9 is presented as a separate report of the National Native Title Tribunal within this Annual Report. This reflects the National Native Title Tribunal's distinct statutory role, while acknowledging its connection to the Federal Court's organisational structure.

Parts 10 and 11 contain the Appendices, List of Tables and Figures, and Index.



2025

to
2026
at a glance

Statistical Overview

(Judge and Registrar proceedings)



FILINGS

6,010  up **9%**
from last year



FINALISATIONS

5,473  up **15%**
from last year



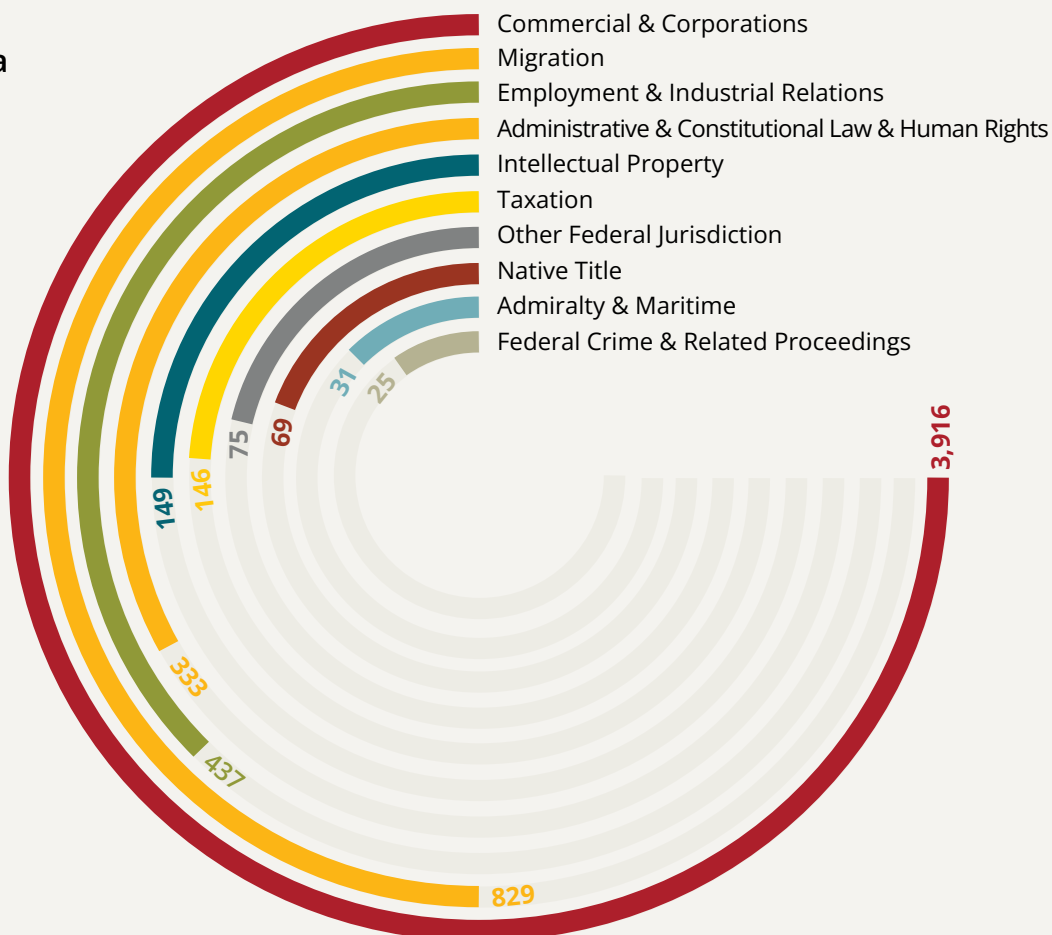
CURRENT PROCEEDINGS

5,245  up **11%**
from last year



Proceedings filed by National Practice Area

	2025-26	2024-25
C&C		
▲ 6%	3,916	3,705
MIG		
▲ 9%	829	760
E&IR		
▲ 22%	437	358
ACLHR		
▲ 24%	333	268
IP		
▲ 5%	149	142
TAX		
▲ 20%	146	122
OFJ		
▲ 23%	75	61
NT		
▲ 41%	69	49
A&M		
▲ 19%	31	26
CRIME		
▼ 26%	25	34



Finalisations



Judgments



Proceedings filed in each state and territory

