

CORPORATE plan

Covering the reporting period
2020–21 to 2023–24

2020–2021



FEDERAL COURT
OF AUSTRALIA





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Guidance for the use of the Corporate Plan

The Federal Court of Australia Corporate Plan is the entity's overarching primary planning document. The Court's planning framework is modelled on the Commonwealth Performance Framework.

The Portfolio Budget Statements (usually published in May) outline our proposed allocation of funds to achieve our stated outcomes. This year that process has been delayed due to COVID-19, with the budget moved to October 2020. Due to this, there is no resource information available to publish in this plan.

The Corporate Plan (published in August) is a non-financial strategic planning document. It sets out our purpose, the activities we will undertake to achieve our purpose, and the results we expect to achieve over the next four years. It also includes discussion on our operating environment, our capability, our stakeholders and our management of risk.

The Annual Performance Statement (published in October the following year) is produced at the end of the reporting cycle and provides an assessment of how successful we have been in achieving our purpose. It includes results against planned performance in both the Portfolio Budget Statements and the Corporate Plan. The Annual Performance Statement for the entity is included in the Federal Court's annual report.

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction, goals, challenges and priorities for each of the Federal Court of Australia (Federal Court), the Family Court of Australia (Family Court), the Federal Circuit Court of Australia (Federal Circuit Court), the National Native Title Tribunal, Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services and Commonwealth Courts Registry Services.

The Corporate Plan was developed in conjunction with the following reference material:

- *Resource Management Guide 131: Developing good performance information*
- *Resource Management Guide 132: Corporate plans for Commonwealth entities*
- *Auditor-General Report No. 14 2019–20: Commonwealth Resource Management Framework and the Clear Read Principle.*

The Corporate Plan covers the following topics and themes:

- entity structure
- strategic themes
- operating context
- environment
- capability
- cooperation
- risk, and
- performance.

This is a living document that is reviewed and updated each year.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar

The Corporate Plan is our primary non-financial planning document. It outlines the strategic direction, goals, challenges and priorities for each of the Federal Court, the Family Court, the Federal Circuit Court, the National Native Title Tribunal, Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services and Commonwealth Courts Registry Services.

The Corporate Plan focuses on planning future work and outlines how we will achieve our goals against our stated purpose and how we will measure our performance.

The Corporate Plan, Portfolio Budget Statements and Annual Performance Statement (included in the Annual Report) are the core elements of the enhanced Commonwealth performance framework.

We operate in a dynamic environment, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, so this plan will be reviewed each year, allowing us to continue to refine and adapt our efforts and ensure we remain on track.

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



Sia Lagos

Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar



Statement of preparation

I, Sia Lagos, as the accountable authority of the Federal Court of Australia, present the *Federal Court of Australia's Corporate Plan 2020–21*, which covers the period 2020–21 to 2023–24, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

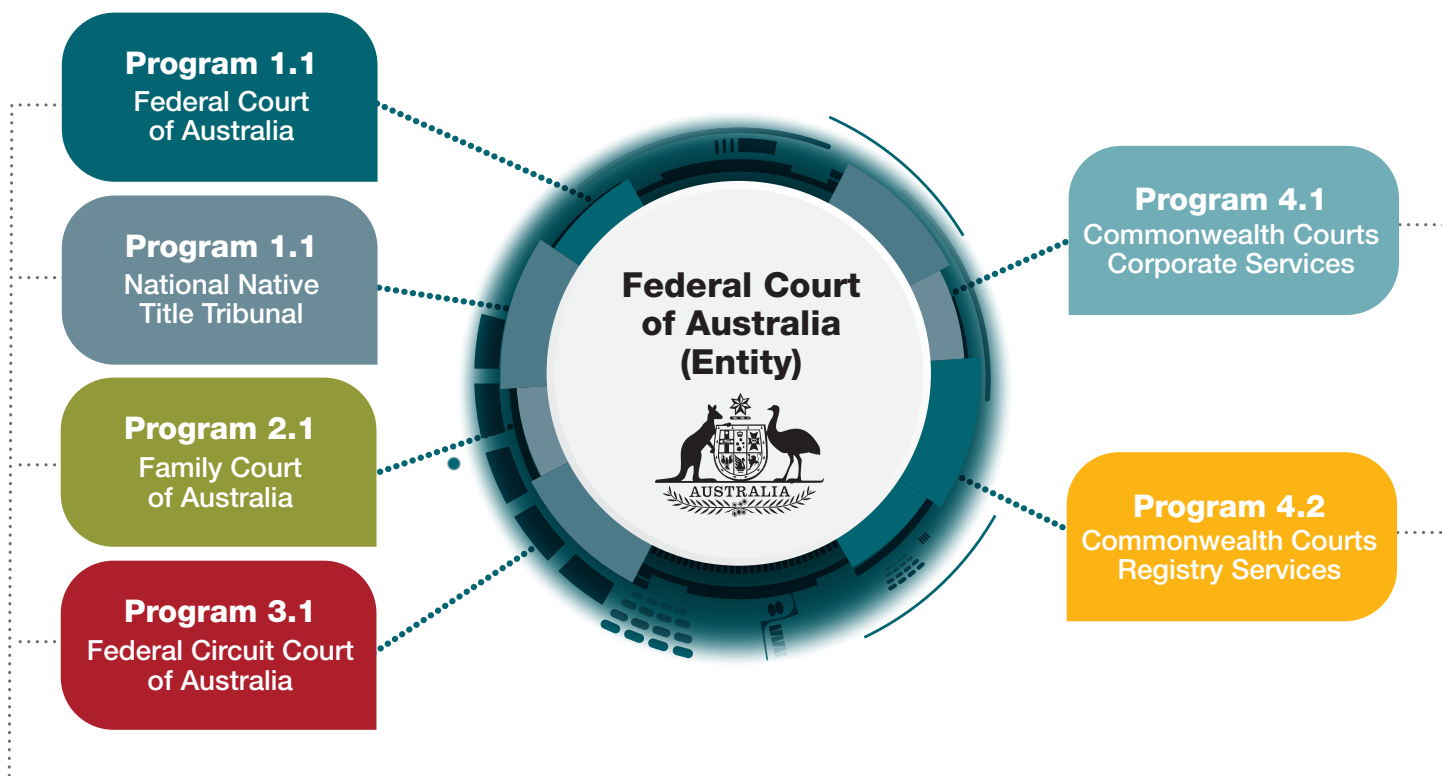
Sia Lagos

Chief Executive Officer and
Principal Registrar
Federal Court of Australia

7 August 2020

Introduction

The Federal Court of Australia entity has four programs:





Program 1.1: Federal Court of Australia

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

The Court's workload is organised by National Practice Areas and, where applicable, sub-areas based on established areas of law.

The Chief Justice is the senior judge of the Court and is responsible for managing the business and administrative affairs of the Court. The Chief Justice is assisted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and

Principal Registrar, who is appointed by the Governor-General on the nomination of the Chief Justice.

The Federal Court has a substantial and diverse appellate jurisdiction. It hears appeals from decisions of single judges of the Court, decisions of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia 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.

Since July 2012, the Federal Court has had responsibility for corporate administration of the National Native Title Tribunal, however the Tribunal remains an independent body established by the *Native Title Act 1993*.

In 2016, the corporate services of the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court were merged with the Federal Court, with the management of those corporate services managed by a listed non-corporate entity known as the Federal Court of Australia (the entity). See Program 4.1.

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Program 1.1 (Cont'd): National Native Title Tribunal

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


The Native Title Act is a special measure for the advancement and protection of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and is intended to advance the process of reconciliation amongst all Australians.

The purpose of the native title scheme, established by the Native Title Act, is to provide for the recognition and protection of native title, establish a mechanism for determining claims to native title, and establish ways in which future dealings affecting native title (future acts) may proceed.

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

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

The President of the Tribunal is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the Tribunal with the assistance of the Federal Court CEO and Principal Registrar. The President may delegate his powers under the Native Title Act, to the Native Title Registrar or any staff assisting the Tribunal. The CEO and Principal Registrar 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 CEO and Principal Registrar regarding the exercise of her power to assist the President in managing the administrative affairs of the Tribunal.



Program 2.1: Family Court of Australia

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

The Family Court exercises original and appellate jurisdiction in family law, including in a number of highly specialised areas. At first instance, the Court determines cases with the most complex law, facts and parties, and hears cases arising under the regulations implementing the Hague Convention on

the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

It provides national coverage as the appellate court in family law matters, including hearing appeals from decisions of single judges of the Federal Circuit Court in family law matters and the Family Court of Western Australia.

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 Family Court maintains registries in all Australian states and territories except Western Australia.



Program 3.1: Federal Circuit Court of Australia

The Federal Circuit Court was established by the *Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999* (Cth) as an independent federal court under Chapter III of the Constitution. The Court is a federal court of record and a court of law and equity.


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

The Federal Circuit Court sits in all capital cities, selected major regional centres, and also circuits to

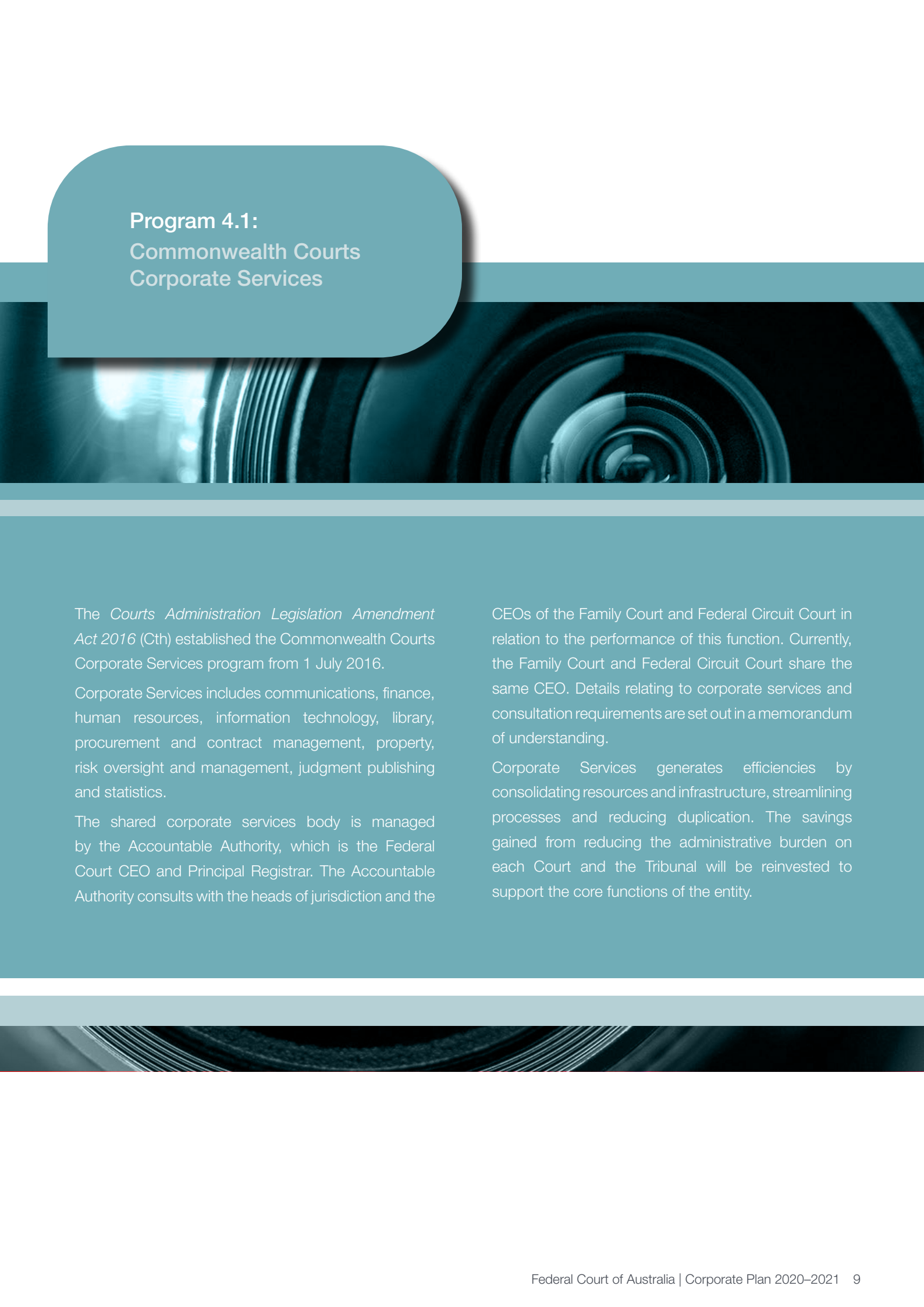
a number of regional locations. It deals with a high volume of matters and delivers services to regional Australia through its regular circuit court program.

The jurisdiction of the Federal Circuit Court includes family law and child support and the following areas of general federal law: administrative law, admiralty law, bankruptcy, consumer law, human rights, industrial, intellectual property, migration and privacy.

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



Program 4.1: Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services



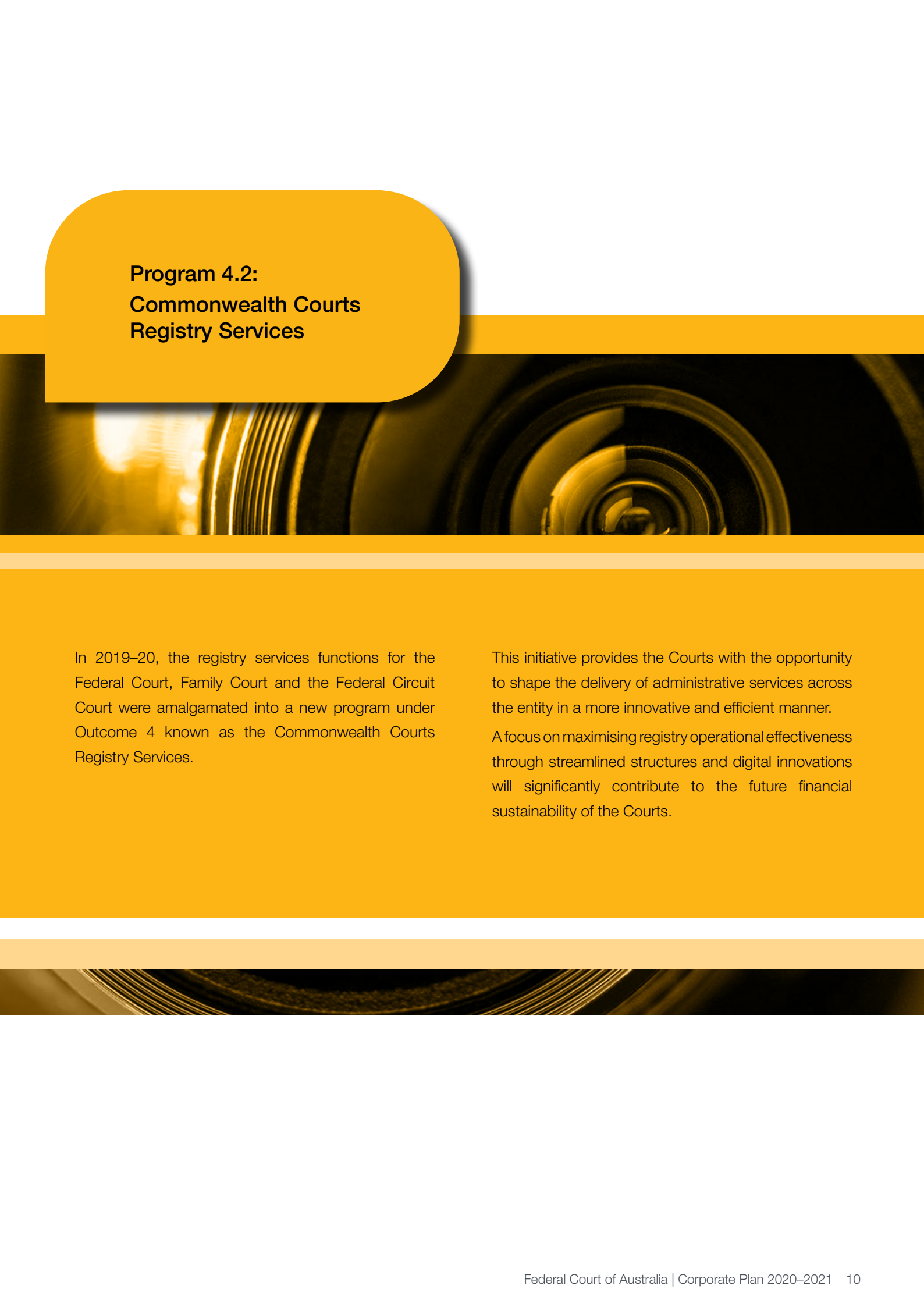
The *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016* (Cth) established the Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services program from 1 July 2016.

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

The shared corporate services body is managed by the Accountable Authority, which is the Federal Court CEO and Principal Registrar. The Accountable Authority consults with the heads of jurisdiction and the

CEOs of the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court in relation to the performance of this function. Currently, the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court share the same CEO. Details relating to corporate services and consultation requirements are set out in a memorandum of understanding.

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



Program 4.2: Commonwealth Courts Registry Services

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

This initiative provides the Courts with the opportunity to shape the delivery of administrative services across the entity in a more innovative and efficient manner.

A focus on maximising registry operational effectiveness through streamlined structures and digital innovations will significantly contribute to the future financial sustainability of the Courts.

Purpose

Federal Court of Australia entity

Purpose: The provision of corporate services in support of the operations of the Federal Court, Family Court, Federal Circuit Court and the National Native Title Tribunal.

Program 1.1: Federal Court of Australia

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

Program 1.1 (Cont'd): National Native Title Tribunal

Purpose: To perform the functions conferred upon it by the Native Title Act in accordance with the directions contained in s 109, ethically, efficiently, economically and courteously, thus advancing the purposes underlying the Act, particularly reconciliation amongst all Australians.

Program 2.1: Family Court of Australia

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

Program 3.1: Federal Circuit Court of Australia

Purpose: To assist with the effective resolution of disputes using streamlined procedures and appropriate dispute resolution processes to resolve matters as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Program 4.1: Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services

Purpose: To provide efficient and effective corporate services to the Commonwealth Courts and Tribunals.

Program 4.2: Commonwealth Courts Registry Services

Purpose: To provide efficient and effective registry services to the Commonwealth Courts and Tribunals.

Strategic objectives/themes

Federal Court of Australia



Deliver efficient and just dispute resolution.



Improve access to justice.



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



Build public trust and confidence.

National Native Title Tribunal



Support reconciliation and Indigenous workforce growth initiatives by performance of its statutory functions.



Improve the accessibility and quality of our information to increase understanding of native title and the native title system.



Enhance the delivery of our services.



Continue to implement services that reflect an understanding of the current and evolving needs of our stakeholders.

Family Court of Australia



Deliver just, efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters.



Improve access to justice.



Ensure best practice in judicial and non-judicial processes.



Protect vulnerable parties and children.



Build public trust and confidence.

Federal Circuit Court of Australia



Deliver just, efficient and effective dispute resolution in family law, migration and general federal law matters.



Ensure best practice in judicial and non-judicial processes.



Protect vulnerable parties and children.



Improve access to justice.



Build public trust and confidence.

Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services



Deliver efficient corporate services to each Commonwealth Court and Tribunal.



Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions.



Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce.



Improve access to justice.

Commonwealth Courts Registry Services



Deliver efficient registry services to each Commonwealth Court and Tribunal.



Deliver a consistent registry service experience to all users.



Build a service-oriented and digitally savvy workforce.



Improve access to justice.



Operating Context



Environment

The three Courts and the Tribunal undertake regular reviews of their operating environment, challenges and risks to determine performance goals and operational plans each year. A review of the external environment suggests that the key environmental drivers are government policy and legislative change, technological change, and social and economic change.

COVID-19 has also had a profound impact on our environment at all levels and will continue to do so over the four years of this plan as we

capture our lessons learned and apply this knowledge to build and improve on existing resources, products and services. Supporting the delivery of the Government's COVID-19 recovery agenda is another important priority for the Courts and the Tribunal. This includes workforce planning and capability actions and continuing digital transformation and information and communications technology reform to support the delivery of Court and Tribunal services.



Government Policy and Legislative Change

Government policy and legislative change can affect the volume and type of workloads, and jurisdiction.

As a result, the Courts and the Tribunal need agile and flexible resources and systems to ensure we can respond to change in the fastest and most cost effective way.

The announcement of additional efficiency dividends across the Public Sector in May 2019, in conjunction with each Courts' objective to provide enhanced access to justice, has resulted in the need to deliver more services at a reduced cost. This has put significant pressure on Court and Tribunal budgets and will require careful management and prioritisation of resourcing over the next four years.

Other policy and legislative factors that could impact our environment over the period of this plan include the following:

- In its response to the *Final Report of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry*, released by the Treasurer on 4 February 2019, the Government announced that it would expand the Federal Court's jurisdiction in relation to criminal corporate crime. Extending the Federal Court's jurisdiction would boost the overall capacity within the Australian court system to ensure the prosecution of financial crimes does not face delays because of heavy caseloads in the courts. While it was anticipated that legislative amendments to

implement the expansion of the Court's jurisdiction would be introduced into Parliament in 2019–20, delays to legislative programs occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic response have meant that the amendments are expected to be introduced in 2020–21.

- The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Bill 2019 and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2019 were introduced on 5 December 2019 after the previous Bills lapsed on the Parliament being prorogued on 11 April 2018 for the 2019 general election. These Bills proposed significant structural change to the Courts, similar to the 2018 Bills, but with some notable changes including the Appellate Division remaining within the Family Court rather than sitting within the Federal Court. The Bills were referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 20 November 2020. Subject to the passage of legislation, such structural reform will have a substantial impact on the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court. It would see the unification of the administrative structure of the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court into the 'Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia' and is designed to ensure families are able to have their matters dealt with as quickly, efficiently and as cost effectively as possible.

- The Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court are focused on harmonising family law rules, procedures and practices, and moving to a common case management approach. The Courts have fundamentally different approaches to their case management of like-cases. Significant progress has been made on the harmonisation of family law rules and case management procedures through the work of the Joint Rules Harmonisation Working Group, comprising an independent Chair, the Hon. Dr Chris Jessup QC, two supporting barristers, and a Joint Committee comprising judges of both Courts. Additional funding has been provided to assist the Courts with these critical internal reforms.
- The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) conducted a wide-ranging review into the family law system. The final report of the ALRC, delivered in March 2019, recommended significant reforms of relevance to the family law courts.
- A further inquiry into the family law system was announced in September 2019 when the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System was appointed by resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives on 18 and 19 September 2019 respectively. The terms of reference direct the Committee to examine a number of aspects of the family law system and the Committee is due to report on 7 October 2020.
- On 4 June 2020, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs announced an inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence. This inquiry was called for by the Minister for Women Senator the Hon. Marise Payne and Minister for Families and Social Services Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston. The terms of reference specifically include the adequacy of the evidence base around the prevalence of domestic and family violence, and data collection from institutions including the Courts.
- The Government had long signalled its intent to move forward on a range of proposed reforms to the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). In October 2018, the Attorney-General and Minister for Indigenous Affairs released exposure drafts of the Native Title Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate Legislation Amendment Regulations 2018, for public comment. The proposed reforms intended to improve the native title system for all parties by:
 - streamlining claims resolution and agreement-making processes
 - supporting the capacity of native title holders through greater flexibility around internal decision making
 - increasing the transparency and accountability of prescribed bodies corporate (the corporations set up to manage native title) to the native title holders
 - improving pathways for dispute resolution following a determination of native title, and
 - ensuring the validity of section 31 agreements in light of the Full Federal Court's decision in *McGlade v Native Title Registrar & Ors* [2017] FCAFC 10.

The exposure draft of the Native Title Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 canvassed a new dispute resolution function for the Tribunal. The Bill was introduced into Parliament on 21 February 2019. It progressed as far as a second reading in the House of Representatives, before Parliament was prorogued for the general election. The Bill lapsed, but was subsequently re-introduced into Parliament on 17 October 2019, as strong support remains for the reforms to be enacted by the Government. The Bill was referred to Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which is due to provide its Report on 19 August 2020.



Technological Change

The Courts and the Tribunal have an ongoing commitment to relentless improvement, with many programs to improve efficiency already in place.

Technological change continues to play a significant role in driving strategy, however the COVID-19 global pandemic necessitated the acceleration of our digital transformation agenda and will continue to guide our decisions. The Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through key initiatives such as the national electronically based COVID-19 List. These rapid technological changes have provided greater access to justice, improved safety for vulnerable litigants and more efficiently and effectively utilised judicial and registrar resources on a national basis. However, while technological advances provide opportunities to improve the experience of court users and automate processes and increase efficiency, they also create significant pressure on resourcing and funding ongoing development.

The rollout of Microsoft Teams in April 2020 facilitated remote hearings and electronic alternative dispute resolution and assisted the Courts and the Tribunal to continue to provide access to justice while adhering to government restrictions. Importantly, these technological advancements have created innovative alternatives for the delivery of Court and Tribunal services moving forward.

In family law, a significant improvement was the implementation of the Digital Court File in April 2020, allowing the Court to create and access all court files electronically from any location around the country.

The challenge for the entity will be to capture key learnings from COVID-19 and refocus our priorities and programs accordingly to support the Government's recovery agenda and to better support our litigants and stakeholders. The Courts and the Tribunal are already well advanced in the digital space, and further work will be conducted over the life of this plan to embrace and expand these new technologies. This includes artificial intelligence to improve service delivery, redesigning the way we work through remote access technology and taking advantage of the benefits of digital litigation, and consolidating services and reducing costs. Additional challenges will include accuracy, data security and timeliness of information provided through these platforms.

In 2020, the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court are launching the Lighthouse risk screening and triage pilot. The Project will utilise a bespoke, custom built web application to risk screen and triage all new parenting only applications into three levels of risk, assisting the Courts with early identification of family safety risks. Cases will then be directed to appropriate case management pathways, safety planning and service referrals. High risk cases will be allocated to a dedicated high risk list, the Evatt List, for case management by specialised and highly experienced judges, registrars and family consultants. This important project aligns with the Courts' focus on protecting vulnerable children and parties, particularly in the context of family violence, and delivering positive public safety and health outcomes.



Social and Economic Change

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant social and economic impact that will have a lasting effect on the Courts and the Tribunal, the profession, litigants and other stakeholders.

It is expected that this impact will continue to be felt by the Courts and the Tribunal for many years.

The impact has been felt particularly in the family law jurisdiction, where stay-at-home restrictions and the economic ramifications of the pandemic have placed additional pressures on families already dealing with separation and co-parenting and led to an increase in urgent applications and allegations of family violence.

The expectations and types of court users, clients and stakeholders will continue to change over the next four years. The ongoing development of tailored services and communications, convenience and personalisation are now expected by the stakeholder groups serviced by the Courts and the Tribunal. While technology provides a lower cost option to meet this expectation, defining stakeholder needs and developing tailored responses creates significant workload.

Business, governments and commercial organisations also expect the legal profession to conduct business with them electronically. The Courts and the Tribunal are positioning themselves to continue to respond to this expectation and identify the most effective technology platforms to address their needs. For the Federal Circuit Court and the Tribunal, this also includes maintaining a balance between leveraging the benefits of technology to improve access, but also ensuring it meets the needs of clients in remote areas where access to technology can be not only cost prohibitive, but more importantly, inaccessible in some areas. However, the technological achievements and the work of the Courts and the Tribunal throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that widely available, user-friendly technology can facilitate access to justice in remote and regional locations.

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

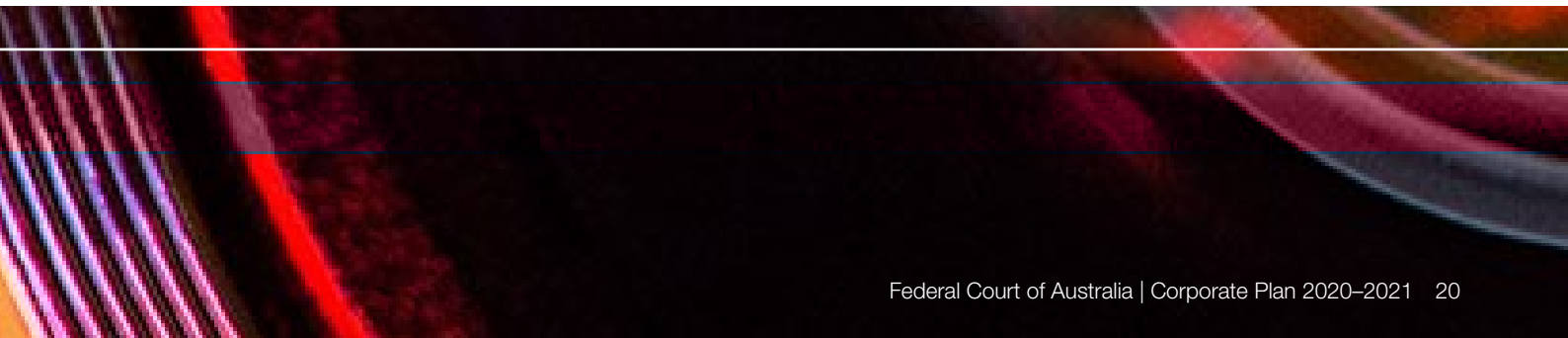
The native title system continues to mature, with the Tribunal impacted by the ongoing increase in the determination of native title claims. This has placed greater emphasis on the challenges facing Prescribed Bodies Corporate and how native title holders can leverage economic development from the recognition of their native title rights and interests. The High Court's decision in *Northern Territory v Mr A. Griffiths (deceased)* and *Lorraine Jones on behalf of the Ngaliwurru and Nungali Peoples [2019] HCA 7* (Timber Creek Compensation Claim) has created a focus on compensation applications, which is expected to translate into increased workloads for the Tribunal over the period of this plan.

Community awareness and focus on matters involving family violence and allegations of child abuse remains high, with resulting impacts on the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court. This is reflected by the recent establishment of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence. The Courts are focused on appropriately identifying and handling matters involving allegations of child abuse and family violence through a number of core projects, including the harmonisation of the notice of risk, information sharing with states and territories, and the Lighthouse Project.



Capability

To ensure we achieve our stated purpose, we will build and maintain our capability over the four years of this plan by focussing on the following themes:





Legislative

- **Implement** the expansion of the Federal Court's jurisdiction in respect of corporate crimes.
 - **Implement** the National Native Title Tribunal's possible expanded function in respect of dispute resolution (subject to legislation).
 - **Harmonise** family law rules, forms, practices and procedures.
 - **Improve** family law case management pathways.
 - **Deliver** a national structure for family law registrars and family consultants.
-

Administrative

- **Restructure** service delivery to streamline and maximise services provided to our clients.
 - **Leverage** and scale the National Enquiry Centre.
 - **Deliver** services via a range of locations throughout Australia, including regional and remote.
 - **Aspire** to be innovative and commit to a culture of continuous improvement and organisational reform.
 - **Implement** and maintain strong governance arrangements to ensure we are accountable, open, collaborative and responsive.
 - **Achieve** financial sustainability by realising further savings in an effort to achieve a balanced budget.
 - **Invest** in leadership and management to ensure our leaders are responsible, visible, respected and trusted.
 - **Commit** to workforce planning and capability actions as a direct result of COVID-19 learnings and recovery.
-

Digital

- **Transform** our business through digitisation and other modern service reforms, with a focus on ongoing reforms as a result of COVID-19 learnings.
 - **Increase** our Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) capability and align our ICT strategies to whole of government initiatives.
 - **Implement** agile systems and processes with the capacity to navigate and respond to change.
 - **Standardise** systems and processes that allow us to rapidly respond to client needs.
-

People

- **Invest** in our people to deliver the best outcomes and support a strong and respectful organisational culture.
- **Develop** and maintain a robust and dynamic workforce-planning model consistent with the APS workforce strategy.
- **Maintain** support for ongoing learning and performance development.
- **Build** a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- **Form** positive and influential relationships with our stakeholders to support better outcomes for the Australian people.



Risk oversight and management

The Federal Court entity promotes an enterprise-wide 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*.



Risk Management Priorities

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

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 the judicial system.
4. **Operational risks**—risks that affect the CEO and Principal Registrar's management of and accountability for performance, including the entity's service delivery obligations, regulatory framework and business relationships.
5. **Legal and compliance risks**—risks arising from statutory and other compliance and reporting obligations as well as current or pending litigation to which the entity is a party.
6. **People risks**—risks that affect staff ethical behaviour, the integrity of decisions, processes and information, or affect the work, health and safety of personnel.
7. **Information Management and Information Technology**—risks associated with information services and the delivery of those services, programs and functions and includes business continuity, disaster recovery and external events impacting on the entity's ability to deliver services.

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. The importance of training and awareness programs in risk management is recognised, and consequently, the entity is committed to ensuring all staff receive regular training and information on risk management and their responsibilities.

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

Additionally, Comcover's annual Risk Management Benchmarking Survey benchmarks the entity's risk management framework and capabilities against other participating agencies. The overall performance of the entity's risk management program has improved over the last two years and is fit for purpose.



Oversight

The Audit Committee is established in accordance with s 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The CEO and Principal Registrar must establish and maintain an Audit Committee, with the functions and responsibilities required by s 17 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

The functions of the committee are to:

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

The Enterprise Risk Management Committee is accountable to and supports the Accountable Authority by advising the Audit Committee and making recommendations concerning the development, implementation and operation of:

- the entity Risk Management Framework including the policy and plan
- the Accountable Authority's Enterprise Risk Appetite Statement
- the Enterprise Wide Risk Register, and
- Risk treatment strategies and action plans.

The Enterprise Risk Management Committee also has responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of controls where the entity's risk appetite has been exceeded. This will generally be where residual risk is assessed as High or Extreme, and determine which risks which are highlighted in the Enterprise Wide Risk Register.

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 and action plans are put in place to address the areas for improvement. The Audit Committee monitors quarterly, the implementation of the audit recommendations and respective action plans and advises on the suitability of the action plans proposed by management.

The table below provides some examples of the risks faced by the Courts and the Tribunal.

RISKS	AREA OF RISK	RISK DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION STRATEGY
Strategic	Disconnected future strategies	Risk for the Courts and Tribunal of conflicting strategic agendas with government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication and consultation with key stakeholders, particularly the Minister, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Finance, and key government agencies.
Financial	Funding/ financial resources	Insufficient financial resources to support the essential requirements of the Courts and the Tribunal to deliver services to the customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust budgeting and disciplined financial management practices. Communication/consultation with key stakeholders, particularly the Minister, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Finance and key government agencies. Continued refinement of e-services to drive work practice efficiencies and better, quicker, less expensive services to customers.
Reputation	Inadequate guidance provided to judicial staff regarding media liaison practices	Reputational damage to the Courts which could lead to a lack of public confidence in the judicial system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance provided to judicial and other relevant staff regarding media liaison practices. A media management guide is provided to assist judges, their staff and registry staff in handling situations where there is media interest. Official statements are reviewed prior to release.
Operations (Technological)	Technological management	Information Technology (IT) tools and systems are unable or unavailable to support the judiciary, staff and customers of the Courts and the Tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing refinements to the Electronic Court File (ECF) improving functionality (diminishing risks arising from double handling of data and not recording properly). Business continuity and IT disaster recovery plans in place Continued and active investigation of transformational opportunities, such as ECF, electronic consent orders and examination of how the Courts' case management procedures could be more robust through IT support. Ongoing review of systems (including case management applications) across the Courts and the Tribunal to ensure they are technically sound and operate with a high level of data integrity.
Legal and compliance	Legal compliance	The Courts and the Tribunal are subject to litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and contract management is carefully undertaken and supervised to protect the entity. Internal policies and procedures about how to comply with federal and state legislation, as well as the procedural rules of the Courts and the Tribunal are in place and are easy to understand and obtain.
Operations (Security)	Security management	Attacks/threats to staff, judges and members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff are aware of safety and security protocols. Sheriff and Marshal oversee security functions. Building Management Committee oversees security function at each location. X-ray and/or metal detection and security cameras at each court. Limited access to the secure areas in each building. Higher cyber security awareness and enhanced protective security measures.
People	Calibre of personnel	Difficulty in recruiting skilled/ experienced professional support staff, registrars and family consultants and the loss of key personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reporting and monitoring of resources. Implement workforce planning and an integrated learning and development framework. This includes specialist services and culturally competent staff to assist carry out necessary functions.


Cooperation

Our relationships are essential to help us achieve our purpose. Successful engagement and collaboration helps to contribute to more effective connection of services, better cooperation and sharing of information and improved service delivery.

As an entity, we work collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders, including the legal profession, government agencies, other courts, non-Government organisations, research, academia and community groups, to build partnerships to promote access to justice, early engagement with products and services, and more effective information to assist Court and Tribunal users.

As independent Courts and a Tribunal, we each have different stakeholders and partnerships that underpin the broader entity structure. For the Courts, relationships are managed either by the Chief Justice, Chief Judge, other judges or the respective CEO and Principal Registrar on behalf of the Chief Justice and Chief Judge. For the Tribunal, relationships are managed by the President or the Registrar and Members on behalf of the President.

Over the four years of this plan, the Courts and the Tribunal will focus on sustaining engagement and cooperation by continuing to build on our highly successful partnerships and working collaboratively to build new ones.



The **Federal Court** engages in a wide range of activities with the legal profession, including regular user group meetings. The aim of user groups is to provide a forum for court representatives and the legal profession to discuss existing and emerging issues, provide feedback to the Court and act as a reference group. Seminars and workshops on issues of practice and procedure in particular areas of the Court's jurisdiction are also regularly held. Registries host advocacy sessions, bar moot courts and moot competitions and assist with readers' courses.

Court facilities are made available for many events for the legal community, including lectures, seminars and ceremonies. Registries regularly host visiting delegations from overseas courts who are interested in learning more about the Court's operations. The Court is also an active supporter of legal education programs, both in Australia and overseas.

The Court also regularly engages with the Law Council of Australia, the Australian Bar Association, and the various state and territory bar associations and law societies.

The Federal Court continues to coordinate a number of projects and activities to support governance, access to justice and the rule of law within neighbouring judiciaries. By collaborating with other courts, predominantly across the Asia Pacific region, the Court is able to contribute to a number of our partners' important reform and development priorities. Detailed information on this is published in the Court's annual report.

The Court's Marshal and Sheriff continues to work closely with the Australian Federal Police and the police services of the states and territories. This is particularly important in the execution of orders emanating from family law matters such as the recovery of children, the arrest of persons and the prevention of parties leaving Australia when ordered not to do so. The Marshal and Sheriff also works closely with the Australian Federal Police, the police services of the states and territories and the Attorney-General's Department on a range of information exchange arrangements in order to improve the Courts' understanding of risks associated with individuals coming to Court.

The **National Native Title Tribunal** continues to work with stakeholders, particularly representative

bodies, governments at all levels, peak bodies and prescribed bodies corporate. The President, Members and Registrar have established a fresh engagement agenda, including development of a renewed working relationship with the Federal Court to ensure the most effective use of resources.

A Protocol facilitates the performance of Court and Tribunal native title roles and builds upon the close existing relationship. The Tribunal conducts information sessions around the country to assist stakeholders in understanding their legal obligations and the need for compliance with the future act provisions of the Act.

The **Family Court and Federal Circuit Court** have numerous external stakeholders, some of which include Bars and Law Societies, the Australian Bar Association, the Law Council of Australia and the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia. Engagement and ongoing collaboration also occurs with Legal Aid organisations, women's legal groups, Aboriginal Legal Services, migrant and refugee services, community legal services, child welfare agencies, the Australian Federal Police, state and territory police, overseas jurisdictions, Relationships Australia, Family Relationship Centres, alternative dispute resolution providers and judicial education and research organisations.

There are several established channels through which external stakeholders may inform the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court and provide feedback, including the following:

- The Australian Institute of Family Studies was established under s 114B of the Family Law Act and is a forum for exchange of information and research.
- The Chief Justice meets regularly with key representatives of national and state bar associations and law societies. In addition, the Federal Circuit Court has established relationships with bar associations, law societies and key stakeholders in regards to migration and other general federal law matters.

The Family Court also has a commitment to participate in the Australian Awards program to help develop and strengthen access to justice for family law litigants in Pacific nations.

Both the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court have a number of strategies for strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, such as legal practitioners, non-government organisations, and government agencies and departments. Judges regularly present to law societies and bar associations in their respective jurisdictions, as well as hold informal meetings with members of the legal profession and participate in stakeholder meetings. Judges are often asked to speak at secondary schools and lecture at law schools about particular topics and their work generally.

Staff continue to regularly engage with numerous external groups such as local family law pathways networks, legal aid, bar associations and law societies, local practitioners and practitioners' associations, community legal centres, family relationship centres, community organisations and support groups, child protection agencies, family violence committees and organisations, state courts, universities and police services.

The diagram below is a high-level depiction of the interconnection of relationships and stakeholders of the Courts and Tribunal across the entity.





Performance

This section sets out the intended actions and high-level activities that will contribute to the entity's purpose over the four years of this plan.

Program 1.1: Federal Court of Australia

Purpose

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

Strategic objectives/themes



Deliver efficient and just dispute resolution.



Improve access to justice.



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



Build public trust and confidence.

How we will achieve our strategic objectives

- Extend the National Court Framework (and its core principles) across all of the Court's legal operations to further support the effective case management and disposition of proceedings.
- Further develop non-traditional hearing types including digital and online hearings.
- Continue to enhance online access.
- Continue initiatives for court user ease of access to all services.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), the Federal Court will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Increase the mediation and case management support work for judges through implementation of the national arrangement for registrars.	•	•	•	•
	Align Judicial Registrars to directly support National Practice Area (NPA) Coordinating Judges in the management of each NPA, and judges within each NPA more generally.	•	•	•	•
	Develop, pilot and implement a best practice model that forms the basis of digital hearings.	•			
	Continue to implement improved web and digital services to increase ease of access to the Court.	•	•	•	•
	Further develop and refine the best practice model that forms the basis for online hearings conducted by Microsoft Teams (or other suitable platform).	•	•	•	•
	Develop tailored resources and educational materials via different channels to assist court users.	•	•	•	•
	Develop and deliver seminars, lectures and training to improve access to justice, education on new services and other topics of relevance, including artificial intelligence.	•	•	•	•
	Continue to align services with the Digital Transformation Agenda.	•	•	•	•
	Develop new functional accommodation design principles to facilitate the use of new digital hearing technologies.	•	•	•	•

How we will measure our performance

The key outcome measure for the Federal 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 Federal Court and parties in the Tribunal through the resolution of matters according to law and through the effective management of the administrative affairs of the Court and the Tribunal.

The Court maintains two time goals to measure the performance of its work. All strategies and tactical plans are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals. The Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve timely completion of cases.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	2020–21 MEASURE	2021–22 MEASURE	2022–23 MEASURE	2023–24 MEASURE
Timely completion of cases	85% of cases completed within 18 months of commencement	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21
	Judgments to be delivered within three months	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21

Intended results

- Increased mediation and case management support work for judges.
- Registrar resources utilised more effectively on a national basis to address workload demands.
- Continued improvement of the hybrid model of remote and in person hearings that emerged as a result of COVID-19.
- Improved multi-function facilities to accommodate remote hearings, enabling judges, witnesses and parties to be linked in to matters being heard in other locations, thus minimising travel expenses, improving access to justice and freeing up courtrooms for other hearings.
- Establish user groups for each NPA and improved liaison with the profession.
- Developed practices and procedures for NPAs.
- Continued ongoing support for judges through judicial education.

National Native Title Tribunal

Purpose

The Tribunal is an independent body established by the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). The purpose of the Tribunal is to perform the functions conferred upon it by the Act in accordance with the directions contained in s 109, ethically, efficiently, economically and courteously, thus advancing the purposes underlying the Act, particularly reconciliation amongst all Australians.

Strategic objectives/themes









	Support reconciliation and Indigenous workforce growth initiatives by performance of its statutory functions.		Improve the accessibility and quality of our information to increase understanding of native title and the native title system.
	Enhance the delivery of our services.		Continue to implement services that reflect an understanding of the current and evolving needs of our stakeholders.

How we will achieve our strategic objectives

- Implement effective initiatives for recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees and developing and utilising their unique skills and knowledge.
- Ensure consistent service delivery with a focus on service excellence.
- Improve service delivery through ongoing innovation and focus on the needs of our stakeholders.
- Periodic review of organisational structure to enable flexible deployment of staff and resources.
- Ensure our website is current, fully describes available services, and meets stakeholders' information needs.
- Identify operating efficiencies and cost-effective practices and processes.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), the Tribunal will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Deliver the 2020 Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with the Federal Court.	•			
	Complete the Indigenous employment strategy in conjunction with the Federal Court and apply strategy to all recruitment activities.	•	•	•	•
	Identify areas of service delivery where the use of technology can improve accessibility of information for Traditional Owners.	•	•	•	•
	Develop internal knowledge, capability and culture to focus on service excellence.	•	•	•	•
	Expand Tribunal online resources by continuing to assess our website, products and services.	•	•	•	•
	Continue to enhance and improve the NTV plus visualisation tool.	•	•	•	•
	Deliver tailored and culturally appropriate services in response to stakeholder feedback.	•	•	•	•
	Develop partnership with key stakeholders to deliver education and specialised training.	•	•	•	•



How we will measure our performance

The Tribunal strives to be an externally focussed organisation, responsive to stakeholder needs, and conscious of the role conferred upon it by Parliament. The Tribunal will look to stakeholders for their assessments of its performance. It will also publish, relevant statistics in the *Report of the National Native Title Tribunal*, which is included in the Federal Court of Australia's Annual Report.

Intended results






- Indigenous workforce development opportunities identified and championed.
- Tribunal staff equipped and motivated to achieve high-quality results.
- A flexible workforce aligned to work needs and demands.
- Enhanced accessibility to Tribunal information and resources with increasing online delivery.
- A user friendly tool that supports the visualisation of native title by the general public.
- High quality Geospatial services compliant with industry standards.
- Effective working relationships with stakeholders.
- Increased knowledge in stakeholders and the wider community about the role and functions of the Tribunal.

Program 2.1: Family Court of Australia

Purpose

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

Strategic objectives/themes










	Deliver just, efficient and effective dispute resolution of complex family law matters.		Improve access to justice.
	Ensure best practice in judicial and non-judicial processes.		Build public trust and confidence.
	Protect vulnerable parties and children.		

How we will achieve our strategic objectives

- Develop harmonised family law rules and common case management processes.
- Strengthen the role of the Family Court as a specialist court for complex family law matters.
- Implement the Lighthouse Project and comprehensive information sharing with State and Territory child welfare authorities and police.
- Continue to enhance the role of registrars.
- Expand the provision of alternative dispute resolution within the Court.
- Improve strategies and processes to address family violence.
- Continue to improve online information and improve the efficiency of the Court through digital innovation.
- Improve the scope for information sharing and collaboration with other agencies to improve access and service delivery to court users.
- Review and improve the delivery of Child Dispute Services.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), the Family Court will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Work towards common case management and rules harmonisation within the family law system.	•	•	•	•
	Maximise the role of registrars by increasing delegations and enhancing case management practices to ensure they provide specialist services to families.	•	•	•	•
	Expand the provision of alternative dispute resolution within the Court, utilising registrars and family consultants.	•	•	•	•
	Harmonise the Notice of Child Abuse, Family Violence or Risk of Family Violence.	•			
	Implement the Lighthouse Project involving risk screening using DOORS Triage, service referral and safety planning, and establishing the high risk Evatt List, to support families who may have experienced family violence and other risks.	•	•		
	Improve the digital capabilities of the Court by enhancing the digital court file, eFiling and other online services and digital processes.	•	•	•	•
	Enhance collaboration with agencies and service providers to facilitate information sharing when risks are alleged in family law proceedings.	•	•	•	•
	Review the Family Violence Best Practice Principles and Family Violence Plan.	•	•	•	•
	Restructure the Court's website to ensure all court users can easily access and understand key information.	•	•		

How we will measure our performance

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

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	2020–21 MEASURE	2021–22 MEASURE	2022–23 MEASURE	2023–24 MEASURE
Timely completion of cases	Clearance rate of 100%	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21
	75% of judgments to be delivered within three months	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21
	75% of cases pending conclusion to be less than 12 months old	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21

Intended results






- Improved efficiencies and access to justice in family law through clear and harmonised rules and case management procedures.
- Improved case management through early registrar triage and safely conducted ADR and family dispute resolution (FDR), and increased judicial time to focus on the most complex disputes.
- Reduced delays and backlogs of pending family law cases, assisting litigants to resolve their disputes in a just and timely manner with simplified court procedures.
- Positive outcomes for children and families through increased information sharing and engagement with relevant stakeholders and other jurisdictions.
- Improved protection of vulnerable parties and children exposed to family violence and other risks through early risk identification, screening and assessment.

Program 3.1: Federal Circuit Court of Australia

Purpose

To assist with the effective resolution of disputes using streamlined procedures and appropriate dispute resolution processes to resolve matters as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Strategic objectives/themes









	Deliver just, efficient and effective dispute resolution in family law, migration and general federal law matters.		Improve access to justice.
	Ensure best practice in judicial and non-judicial processes.		Build public trust and confidence.
	Protect vulnerable parties and children.		

How we will achieve our strategic objectives

- Develop harmonised family law rules and common case management processes.
- Maximise the role of registrars.
- Implement the Lighthouse Project and comprehensive information sharing with state and territory child welfare authorities and police.
- Improve strategies and processes to address family violence.
- Continue to enhance online services and improve digital innovation.
- Improve the scope for information sharing and collaboration with other agencies to improve access and service delivery to court users.
- Expand the provision of alternative dispute resolution to suitable family law matters within the Court.
- Review and improve the delivery of Child Dispute Services.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), the Federal Circuit Court will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Work towards common case management and rules harmonisation within the family law system.	•	•	•	•
	Maximise the role of registrars by increasing delegations and enhancing case management practices to ensure they provide specialist services to families.	•	•	•	•
	Expand the provision of alternative dispute resolution to suitable family law matters within the Court utilising registrars and family consultants.	•	•	•	•
	Harmonise the Notice of Risk.	•			
	Implement the Lighthouse Project involving risk screening using DOORS Triage, service referral and safety planning, and establish the high risk Evatt List, to support families who may have experienced family violence and other risks.	•	•		
	Improve the digital capabilities of the Court by enhancing the digital court file, eFiling and other online services and digital processes.	•	•	•	•
	Identify opportunities to expand the use of online services to integrate court user needs, improve access and reduce cost. Scope the requirements with users and develop a project plan.	•	•	•	•
	Work towards enhanced collaboration with agencies and service providers to facilitate information sharing when risks are alleged in family law proceedings.	•	•	•	•

Key activities (Cont'd)

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Review the Family Violence Best Practice Principles and Family Violence Plan.	•	•	•	•
	Restructure the Court's website to ensure all court users can easily access and understand key information.	•	•		
	Continue to implement the Priority Property Pool 500 Pilot to provide a quicker, cheaper and simpler way of resolving family law property disputes involving small property pools.	•	•		
	Review the operation of Indigenous Lists in family law matters.	•	•	•	•

How we will measure our performance

The key outcome measure for the Federal Circuit 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 Federal Circuit Court 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 three goals related to timely completion of cases to measure the performance of its work. All strategies and tactical plans are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals. The Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve timely completion of cases.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	2020–21 MEASURE	2021–22 MEASURE	2022–23 MEASURE	2023–24 MEASURE
Timely completion of cases	90% of final order applications disposed of within 12 months	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21
	90% of all other applications disposed of within six months	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21
	70% of matters resolved prior to trial	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21

Intended results





- Improved efficiencies and access to justice in family law through clear and harmonised rules and case management procedures; and the implementation of key family law initiatives.
- Improved case management through early registrar triage and safely conducted ADR and FDR, and increased judicial time to focus on the most complex disputes.
- Reduced delays and backlogs of pending family law cases, assisting litigants to resolve their disputes in a just and timely manner with simplified court procedures.
- Positive outcomes for children and families through increased information sharing and engagement with relevant stakeholders and other jurisdictions.
- Improved protection of vulnerable parties and children exposed to family violence and other risks through early risk identification, screening and assessment.

Program 4.1: Commonwealth Courts Corporate Services

Purpose

To provide efficient and effective corporate services to the Commonwealth Courts and Tribunals.

Strategic objectives/themes

	Deliver efficient corporate services to each Commonwealth Court and Tribunal.		Optimise technology to support judicial, registry and corporate services functions.
	Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce.		Improve access to justice.

How we will achieve our strategic objectives










- Streamline processes and procedures to identify efficiencies.
- Further refine business processes to streamline the functions of corporate services.
- Build and sustain an engaged workforce who are passionate about working together to achieve the vision.
- Strengthen the leadership group.
- Create a high performance culture.
- Modernise technology to improve quality and range of services.
- Maintain a quality, contemporary and efficient IT environment.
- Improve the Courts' key business systems.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), Corporate Services will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Continue to enhance and further refine the risk and emergency management framework.	•	•	•	•
	Assess the entity property portfolio for capacity to address longer term requirements.	•	•	•	•
	Modernise and renew security equipment and systems, as funding permits.	•			
	Deliver quality property projects to support expanded work in jurisdictions, as funding becomes available.	•	•		
	Provide enhanced support to staff to assist in effective and commercial sound procurement decisions.	•	•	•	•
	Continue to implement staff resilience and wellbeing training.	•	•	•	•
	Leadership development.	•	•	•	•
	Continue to develop and enhance training documentation and programs (classroom and online) for the entity.	•	•	•	•
	Deliver a common web platform for the entity.		•	•	•

Key activities (Cont'd)

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	In line with the Government's bargaining framework, commence discussions and negotiations for a replacement enterprise agreement for the entity	•	•		
	Increase workforce planning and capability actions to support the APS workforce strategy for COVID-19 learnings and reform.	•	•	•	•
	Deliver the 2020 Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with the National Native Title Tribunal	•			
	Complete the Indigenous employment strategy in conjunction with the National Native Title Tribunal and apply strategy to all recruitment activities.	•	•	•	•
	Review work practices to ensure they are aligned to our workplace continuity plans	•			
	Implement a new document management system.	•	•	•	•
	Migrate all Courts and Tribunals to new integrated case management system.	•	•	•	•
	Maintain appropriate courtroom technology equipment lifecycle.	•	•	•	•
	Consider experience during COVID-19 for new technologies solution to support digital and/or video conferenced hearings.	•			

How we will measure our performance

The key outcome measure is contained in Outcome Four (program 4.1 and 4.2) of the Portfolio Budget Statements. That is, improved administration and support of the resolution of matters according to law for litigants in the Federal Court, the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court and parties in the Tribunal through efficient and effective provision of shared corporate and registry services. The Court's Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve efficient and effective corporate services.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	2020–21 MEASURE	2021–22 MEASURE	2022–23 MEASURE	2023–24 MEASURE
Efficient and effective corporate services	Corporate services to be provided within the agreed funding	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21	As per 2020–21

Intended results

- Improved security in all court premises.
- Increased digital capability to support the growth in online hearings and other digital initiatives.
- Improved website information to better support self-represented litigants and other litigants.
- Implement a five-year strategic property plan.
- Completed Sydney criminal jurisdiction stage one fit out and the corporate services property fit out
- Improved training documentation and programs for risk and procurement.
- A revised workforce planning model to capture key learning from the COVID-19 period to ensure we have a diverse, skilled and agile workforce to support the work of the Courts and the Tribunal into the future.
- Revised work practices that align to our workplace continuity plans.

Program 4.2: Commonwealth Courts Registry Services

Purpose

To provide efficient and effective registry services to the Commonwealth Courts and Tribunals.

Strategic objectives/themes



Deliver efficient registry services to each Commonwealth Court and Tribunal.



Deliver a consistent registry service experience to all users.



Build a service-oriented and digitally savvy workforce.



Improve access to justice.

How we will achieve our strategic objectives

- Develop leadership and service delivery capability.
- Realise the benefits of the Digital Court File.
- Deliver a new service model for integrated Commonwealth registry services.
- Leverage and scale the National Enquiry Centre.
- Improve in-court technical support.
- Implement and deliver digital litigation support to the judiciary, profession and litigants.

Key activities

For 2020–21 (and the outlook period 2021–2024), Registry Services will progress the following key activities:

LINK TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	GOAL	TARGET			
		2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	Establish leadership forums for managers and team leaders for information sharing and problem solving.	•	•	•	•
★★★★★	Provide enhanced support and training for in-court technology, digital hearings and online hearings through the establishment of a Digital Practice Team.	•	•	•	•
	Implement business process changes to complement the rollout of the Digital Court File.	•	•	•	•
	Review the model for the management of general federal law enquiries.	•	•	•	•
	Enhance National Enquiry Centre systems and capability.	•	•	•	•
	Design and implement a new service model for integrated registry services.	•	•	•	•

How we will measure our performance

The key outcome measure is contained in Outcome Four (program 4.1 and 4.2) of the Portfolio Budget Statements. That is, improved administration and support of the resolution of matters according to law for litigants in the Federal Court, the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court and parties in the Tribunal through efficient and effective provision of shared corporate and registry services. The Court's Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve correct information, timely processing of documents and efficient registry services.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	2020-21 MEASURE	2021-22 MEASURE	2022-23 MEASURE	2023-24 MEASURE
Correct information	Less than 1% of enquiries result in a complaint about registry services	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21
Timely processing of documents	75% of documents processed within three working days	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21
	90% of documents processed within five working days	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21
Efficient registry services	All registry services provided within the agreed funding and staffing level	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21	As per 2020-21

Intended results

- Effective and efficient use of available resources.
- Quality, timely and consistent information for all court users across all Courts and the Tribunal.
- Enhanced access to justice services through digital technologies.
- An environment that focusses on safety for court users experiencing family violence.
- Flexible and remote modes of working introduced.

List of Requirements

The corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act, and
- the PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements met by the Federal Court of Australia's corporate plan and the page reference(s) for each requirement.

REQUIREMENT		PAGE(S)
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