



**FEDERAL COURT  
OF AUSTRALIA**



# **2016–2020**

## **CORPORATE PLAN**

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

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

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

This Corporate Plan covers the reporting periods 2016–17 to 2019–20. The plan outlines the strategic direction, challenges and priorities for the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, the National Native Title Tribunal and Corporate Services.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warwick Soden', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Warwick Soden**  
Chief Executive Officer  
17 August 2016

# BACKGROUND

## Federal Court of Australia

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

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

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

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

The objectives of the FCA are to:

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

The Court has had responsibility for the corporate administration of the National Native Title Tribunal since July 2012. In the 2015–16 Budget, the Australian Government announced that it would amalgamate the corporate services of the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court with the Court into a single administrative body with a single appropriation. The *Courts Administration Legislation Amendment Act 2016* establishes the amalgamated body, to be known as the Federal Court of Australia, from 1 July 2016. This approach preserves each court's functional and judicial independence, whilst improving their financial sustainability.

### Our vision

An internationally respected court.

### Mission

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

### Our values

Prompt, courteous, effective, efficient, accountable.

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

# BACKGROUND

## Family Court of Australia

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

The Court is a superior court of record and equity exercising appellate and trial level jurisdiction. At trial level, the Court deals with the most complex parenting and financial cases and hears cases arising under the regulations implementing the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction. It has a substantial appellate jurisdiction and hears appeals from decisions of single judges of the Court and from the Federal Circuit Court of Australia in family law matters.

The Chief Justice is the head of jurisdiction and is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the Court. The Chief Justice is assisted by the Deputy Chief Justice and other judges of the Court. The Chief Justice is also assisted by the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar who is appointed by the Governor-General on the nomination of the Chief Justice.

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

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

### Our vision

The Court's vision provides for:

- putting children and families first in the design and delivery of services
- furthering functional family relationships after separation
- ensuring independence and impartiality in the judicial process
- having staff who are valued for providing quality service for families
- providing quality child dispute services for families, and
- being at the forefront of the development of services.

### Our values

Prompt, courteous, efficient.

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

# BACKGROUND

## Federal Circuit Court of Australia

The Federal Circuit Court of Australia (FCC) was established under the *Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999* (Cth).

The FCC provides a simpler and more accessible alternative to litigation in the FCoA and the FCA and helps to relieve the workload of the superior federal courts. The provisions of the *Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999* (Cth) enable the FCC to operate as informally as possible in the exercise of judicial powers, use streamlined procedures and make use of a range of dispute resolution processes to resolve matters without judicial decisions.

The FCC deals with a high volume of matters and delivers services to regional Australia through its regular circuit court program. Its jurisdiction includes family law and child support, administrative law, bankruptcy, unlawful discrimination, consumer protection law, privacy law, migration law, trade practices law, trade mark and design and workplace relations law.

### Our vision

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

### Mission

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

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

### Our values

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

# BACKGROUND

## National Native Title Tribunal

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

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

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

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

The President of the NNTT is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the NNTT with the assistance of the Federal Court Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Principal Registrar, who may delegate his powers under the Act, to any of the Native Title Registrar, Deputy Registrar or staff assisting the NNTT. The Federal Court 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 Federal Court Chief Executive Officer and Principal Registrar regarding the exercise of his power to assist the President in managing the administrative affairs of the NNTT.

### Our vision

Shared country, shared future.

### Mission

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

### Our values

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

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

# ENVIRONMENT

The three courts and the NNTT undertake regular reviews of their operating environment, challenges and risks to determine performance goals and operational plans each year.

A review of the external environment suggests that the key environmental drivers during the period of this plan will be government policy, the economy, technological change, globalisation and social change.

## Government policy

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

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

For the NNTT, the recommendations made by the Australian Law Reform Commission in relation to native title connection issues, the Federal Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia, the outcomes of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) investigation and the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission Property Rights Forums, highlight emerging pressures in the native title system which will impact upon practitioners and influence service delivery for the NNTT. In addition, changes in state government policy relating to land tenure matters, have the potential to increase the demand for Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

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

innovations. The courts and the NNTT also invest in educational materials and support to improve access for external stakeholders including the public, litigants and the legal profession. These initiatives improve efficiency and reduce the demands on staff.

## Technological change

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

The introduction of the Federal Government's Digital Transformation Agenda and the creation of the Digital Transformation Office in the 2015–16 Budget, will guide how we structure and develop future services for court users. The new policy provides standards for digital development, as well as a goal to create public services that are 'simple, clear, faster and customer-centric'. The courts and the NNTT are already on the path to achieve this goal and further work will be conducted over the life of this plan.

Mobile devices and mobile technologies have enabled information and transactions to occur in multiple environments. Mobile technologies are fast becoming the key drivers of technological change for the courts and the NNTT. However as the use of digital technologies increases, we will need to be mindful of achieving a balance with our statutory obligations. Additional challenges include accuracy, data security and timeliness of information provided through these platforms. The amalgamated corporate services model is an opportunity to pool our knowledge to identify and apply best of breed technology.



The pace of technological change and innovation creates opportunities for us to improve the experience of court users across multiple platforms. Further digital innovation is anticipated over the life of this corporate plan. Our challenge is to capitalise on these opportunities as the lifecycle of new technologies continues to become shorter.

### Globalisation and free trade

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

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

### Social and economic change

The expectations and types of court users, clients and stakeholders for the courts and the NNTT are expected to change significantly over the next four years.

With the ongoing development of 'big data', tailored services and communications, convenience and personalisation are now expected by the different stakeholder groups serviced by the courts and the NNTT. Whilst technology provides a lower cost option to meet this need, defining stakeholder needs and developing tailored responses creates significant workload.

Business, government and commercial organisations also expect the legal profession to conduct business with them electronically. We need to position the courts and the NNTT to continue to respond to this expectation and identify the most effective technology platform to address their needs. For the NNTT this also includes maintaining a balance between leveraging the benefits

of technology to improve access, but also ensure that we meet the needs of clients in remote areas where access to technology can be not only cost prohibitive, but more importantly, inaccessible in some areas.

The work of the courts has also been impacted by economic and social change. For example, workloads for judges have increased as a result of increases in unrepresented litigants and, in the FCA, class actions. This trend is expected to continue over the four years of the plan.

For the NNTT, an increase in the determination of native title claims has placed greater emphasis on the challenges facing Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) and how native title holders can leverage economic development from the recognition of their native title rights and interests. Further, as the resolution of native title claims in settled areas proceeds, tenure analysis is becoming increasingly involved. The NNTT has been actively involved in assisting stakeholders to identify more efficient and timely ways to capture and analyse current and historical tenure.

There is a growing community awareness and focus on matters involving family violence and allegations of child abuse that impact on strategy for the FCoA and the FCC. Cases involving mental illness and substance abuse have also increased, as have cases relating to international family law (including Hague Convention abduction matters and the 1996 Protection Convention), as well as medical procedures for which court approval is required. These are complex matters that present strategic challenges for each court.



# FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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GOALS

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

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

## FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA GOALS

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

### Our strategies for the next four years are:

1. Efficient and just dispute resolution
2. Provide leadership on international jurisprudence, and
3. Contribute to the Australian legal system – strengthen relations with court users.

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

The Court has a track record of innovation and forward thinking. A number of long-term projects aligned to these strategies were initiated in the 2014–15 plan year and will continue throughout this plan year. These include international projects led by the judiciary, evolving the reforms of the National Court Framework and the implementation of Digital Hearings.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

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

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

# 1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Efficient and just dispute resolution

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

The initial reforms of the NCF were implemented during 2015–16. As a result, the Court’s entire workload has been reorganised and is now managed with reference to eight National Practice Areas (NPAs). A new national allocation system has been implemented where the work of judges has been realigned under these practice areas. This year, new practice notes will be promulgated as part of our strategy to simplify practices and procedures.

Digital Hearings (previously known as eTrials) are a further initiative by the Court to provide efficient and just dispute resolution and to reduce litigation costs.

A successful pilot for Digital Hearings was conducted during 2015–16. The pilot studied how judges and litigants interact digitally in the courtroom and identified the workflows necessary to support these interactions.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Restructure the Court and the system of allocation and management of matters to ensure efficiency and national consistency
2. Create nationally consistent practices and procedures
3. Further develop real time business intelligence reporting to monitor and manage workloads for the judiciary and registry, and
4. Implement Digital Hearings.

Based on the success of this pilot, the next phase of Digital Hearings will be implemented during 2016–17. Consultations have commenced with key stakeholders about the changes.

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

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Continue the reforms of the NCF	• Promulgate new practice notes.	September 2016
	• Create user groups for each NPA.	January 2017
	• Mature the reforms of the NCF.	June 2017
Implement stage two for Digital Hearings	• Develop the mechanism that forms the basis of Digital Hearings.	June 2017
	• Pilot the mechanism across several NPAs.	June 2017
	• Continue consultations with the legal profession about the ideal operational practices and processes.	Ongoing

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Implement real time business intelligence reporting to monitor and manage workloads for the judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop reports that allow the Court to drill down into specific aspects of its data.</li> <li>Develop a greater understanding of the data and build models that can show resourcing implications.</li> </ul>	<p>December 2016</p> <p>June 2017</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the national manual which details the Court’s standards for working with Electronic Court Files.</li> <li>Initiate digital automation projects that allow court user self-service.</li> <li>Improve a number of identified eServices to make them more integrated, increase our efficiency and enhance the court user experience.</li> </ul>	<p>August 2016</p> <p>Sept 2016</p> <p>June 2017</p>

## 2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Provide leadership in international jurisprudence

The Court’s judicial officers are recognised as thought leaders in international jurisprudence. The Court’s international programs support our vision to become internationally respected by promoting judicial independence and developing judicial services, with particular emphasis on Asia and the Pacific regions.

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

This strategy also recognises the need to position the Court to respond to growth in global trade and the rapid expansion of economies in the region by building Australia’s international reputation as a centre of the rule of law and of efficient and just resolution of disputes. In particular, the projected increase in commercial activity resulting from the Free Trade Agreements between China and Japan has the potential to lead to

an increase in disputes. The Court is cognisant of the potential for a greater workload in this area of law.

The Court achieves this strategic objective by working closely with international jurisdictions and developing relationships with our international counterparts. This includes hosting international delegations, as well as our international development and cooperation program where we partner with judiciaries around the world.

We currently have Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with international courts in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. In 2016, we entered into a new MOU with Myanmar.

In addition, we manage the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative involving 14 other Pacific countries. In 2016, we were successful in winning the contract through MFAT to conduct this program for the next five years. The program is designed to strengthen governance and the rule of law by enhancing the professional competence of judicial and court officers, along with the processes and systems that they use. Over the years, it has transitioned from a regional training and capacity building program, to a targeted development project based on improving law and justice outcomes for beneficiaries at local, regional and national levels.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Enhance the professional competence of judicial and court officers through international collaboration and cooperation
2. Identify areas of thought leadership in international jurisprudence, and
3. Develop a regional initiative for Maritime Disputes.

Priorities for the 2016–17 year include further work on existing MOUs with international courts, as well as continue the work of building understanding of global legal issues, in particular Regional Maritime Dispute Centres.

## 3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Contribute to the Australian legal system – strengthen relations with court users

This strategy takes into account the changing needs and expectations of court users and the wider choices available through digital technologies. In this respect, we will be guided by the Government’s Digital Transformation Agenda announced in the May 2015 Budget.

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

The Court aims to develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of court users and improve access to justice. These approaches extend to the communication channels we use, as well as providing procedures which are clear, consistent and understandable. Our web strategy has been crucial to the achievement of this goal. In the next year, we will identify additional services and technologies to ensure that our digital communications are more intuitive and responsive to the needs of different court users.

The Court also engages in a wide range of activities with the legal profession and community that support the Australian legal system. Last year, the Court’s judicial officers contributed to the work of law reform bodies as well as educational and legal community-based

organisations. This work ensures that the Court develops positive relationships with, and gains the support of, the legal sector and the Australian public. The Court also provides opportunities for members of the legal profession to discuss existing and emerging issues, provide feedback to the Court and act as a reference group for proposed changes. It is essential to the Court’s and the Australian legal system’s reputation nationally and internationally, that these relationships continue.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

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

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Communication strategy for court user education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop tailored resources and educational materials via different channels to assist the court users.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Continued enhancement of our online strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a road map for web and digital services for the next two years.</li> <li>Align digital services with the Digital Transformation Agenda.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Contribute to the legal profession through consultation and educational services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with educational providers and professional bodies to identify needs.</li> <li>Develop and deliver seminars, lectures and training to improve access to justice, education on new services and other topics of relevance.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Consult with the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct regular forums with the profession to identify needs and receive feedback.</li> </ul>	Ongoing



# FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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**GOALS**

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**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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**STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES**

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



## FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA GOALS

The purpose of the Court is to deliver best practice in providing services for children, families and litigants. The Court achieves this through the provision of effective judicial and non-judicial processes and high-quality and timely judgments, while respecting the needs and sensitivities of separating families.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes, and
2. Ensure efficient and just dispute resolution.

The overall goal of strategy over the next four years is to enable the Court to focus its resources on the cohort of first instance cases and appeals. The Court intends to reinvigorate its case management and particularly its use of registrars.

Key strategic priorities for the Court will include enhancing judicial guidelines in relation to family violence and working with Corporate Services to leverage technology to improve the experience of court users.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The key outcome measure for the Court is contained in Outcome Two of the Portfolio Budget Statements. That is, to apply and uphold the rule of law for litigants in the Family Court of Australia 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 Court maintains three goals related to timely completion of cases. Strategies and priorities are designed to support the achievement of these performance goals. Our Annual Performance Statement will report on the success of the plan to achieve timely completion of cases.

This will be measured by the following:

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

# 1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Ensure best practices in judicial and non-judicial processes

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

1. The intersection of family violence orders including apprehended violence orders or intervention orders, criminal sanctions and parenting orders made by family law courts.
2. The consequence of a victim of family violence having to be involved in private litigation with their former partner following an acrimonious separation, particularly if there has been a history of violence.
3. The need to make interim parenting orders which may have to last 12 months before a final hearing can be provided and where there are contentious issues about safety which cannot always be readily determined at an interim hearing.
4. The crucial need for adequate risk assessment at the earliest opportunity when an application has been filed.

5. Where the alleged perpetrator cannot afford a lawyer and is ineligible for legal aid, the need to manage cross-examination of the alleged victim sensitively whilst according procedural fairness to both parties.

The Court is under considerable pressure when parenting matters involve allegations of family violence and other associated issues. Whilst the Government has been proactive in amending the Act to provide better protection and broaden the definition of family violence, the Court's ability to manage workloads in order to provide timely hearings and well informed outcomes requires considerable management attention. Identification and allocation of resources to address these issues are a priority.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Enhance judicial guidelines for family violence, and
2. Maximise the use of registrars.

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Enhance judicial guidelines for family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop guidelines for judges dealing with cases involving cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses by an alleged perpetrator.</li> </ul>	July 2017
Family violence risk screening for interim s11F assessment interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the family violence risk screening process.</li> <li>• Roll out the revised tool nationally.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Evaluate guidelines and processes that will maximise the use of registrars in matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual enhancement to the role of registrars to ensure maximum judicial support.</li> </ul>	June 2017

## 2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Efficient and just dispute resolution

The Court will continue to focus on client-oriented initiatives to provide a just, efficient and effective dispute mechanism.

Our strategy recognises that services need to be accessible and tailored to the needs of a diverse range of users. These include unrepresented litigants, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Indigenous clients. To this end, the Court will focus on continuing to identify the needs of court users and develop resource materials and information to address them.

#### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Continuously look for efficiencies and business improvements in processes and operations
2. Improve processes in dealing with family law matters, with a particular focus on child safety, and
3. Develop resources and self-help materials to meet the needs of court users.

### Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Enhance the quality of family violence information available to clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review family violence information in forms, publications and on the website.</li> <li>• Maximise the use of social media as another channel to inform stakeholders about improvements.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Improve processes and practices within the Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Royal Commission and other reports that assist in process improvements.</li> <li>• Review Family Violence Best Practice Principles and the Family Violence Plan.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Improve access to justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the use of interpreters in court.</li> <li>• Review available information for culturally diverse clients.</li> <li>• Review information for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Collaborate with other agencies to improve and enhance service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and enhance the relationship between other jurisdictions and the FCoA.</li> </ul>	June 2017



# FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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**GOALS**

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**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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**STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES**

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

## FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT GOALS

The FCC's corporate plan is based on three strategies. These are reviewed each year by management and the judiciary to ensure that they remain relevant to our operating environment.

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

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

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

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

### Over the next four years we will focus on three main strategic goals:

1. Efficient access to justice
2. Improved business systems, and
3. Flexible and responsive registry services.

Registry Services Delivery Strategy, an extensive IT requirements review and an education program for the judiciary and their direct support staff.

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

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

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

Timely completion of cases will be measured by the following:

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

Timely provision of registry services will be measured by:

1. Seventy-five per cent of counter enquiries served within 20 minutes
2. Eighty per cent of National Enquiry Centre telephone enquiries answered within 90 seconds
3. Eighty per cent of email enquiries responded to within two working days, and
4. Seventy-five per cent of applications lodged processed within two working days.

**1****STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE****Efficient access to justice**

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

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

In 2015, family law matters constituted 91 per cent of all applications filed. As such, family law is a particular focus area for strategy.

The Court has a track record of innovation in the area of family law and collaborates with other agencies to improve processes and improve access. Since the introduction of the *Notice of Risk*, the Court has driven efforts to improve the interface between the child

welfare and family law systems through developing partnerships and information exchange mechanisms with local and state providers.

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

Circuits comprise about 20 per cent of the Court's family law workload. Strategies to improve the efficiency and value of circuits, as well as better analyse workloads are priorities. These strategies seek to provide convenient, localised service whereby matters can be dealt with in the one location. eFiling enables court users to file documents electronically, reducing the need to attend a registry location.



**Our strategies over the next four years are to:**

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

**Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year**

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Collaborate with other agencies to improve access and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and explore the future potential of the <i>Personal Histories</i> pilot.</li> </ul>	Reduction in subpoenas
Improve processes in dealing with family law matters with particular focus on child safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with NSW Department of Families and Community Services to identify further opportunities for information exchange.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with state welfare agencies to enhance the opportunity to share information.</li> </ul>	July 2017
Enhance rural and regional mediation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan to increase the number of referrals to mediation provided via the Administered Appropriation to the Court.</li> </ul>	Timely service Reduction in waiting times in regional and rural locations.
Analyse circuit workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope data requirements and develop reports for circuits.</li> <li>• Review workloads.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Identify opportunities to expand eFiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the benefits of eFiling via meetings with the legal profession.</li> <li>• Provide education in respect to the use of electronic access to the Court.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

## 2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Improved business systems

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

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

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

#### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

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

### Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Evaluate critical business system improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a roadmap for review.</li> </ul>	July 2017
Implement order production and processing automation project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a project plan.</li> </ul>	July 2017
Scope reporting requirements for business intelligence tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Negotiate resourcing with Corporate Services.</li> </ul>	June 2017



# 3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Flexible and responsive registry services

Registry services provide support to court users and the judiciary of the FCoA and FCC in family law matters. They ensure that all litigants, lawyers and the judiciary have access to skilled staff, timely information and courtrooms that function effectively. The Court’s charter to provide access in a broad geographic area across a diverse caseload creates significant challenges to balance resources and services with cost.

The demands of supporting self-represented litigants has required the Court to introduce self-help processes through intuitive technologies to reduce loads on registry staff and the National Enquiry Centre (NEC).

A strategy was developed in 2015 to identify strategies and priorities to improve service delivery. This reinforces the Court’s commitment to identify technologies and

processes to improve communication channels and streamline case management for court users, and provide support to the judiciary.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

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

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Identify opportunities to expand the use of electronic court files to integrate court user needs, improve access and reduce cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope the requirements with users.</li> <li>• Develop a project plan.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Reduce demands on NEC and registry staff by better understanding court user needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrogate NEC data to identify needs.</li> <li>• Provide recommendations for services.</li> <li>• Simplify and improve access to information for litigants and legal practitioners.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Create a virtual registry to improve access and reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access for lawyers to court-related information.</li> <li>• Introduce systems to initiate applications and make payments.</li> <li>• Identify other transactions that can be web enabled.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Scope the potential for using social networking technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to use social media to provide users with updated court information.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Identify potential partnerships with government agencies to improve access for court users in rural and regional areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership plan developed.</li> </ul>	July 2017



# NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE TRIBUNAL

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**GOALS**

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**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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**STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES**

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

## NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE TRIBUNAL GOALS

The NNTT's goals are based on three strategies that we will use to focus our operations and priorities over the next four years. Our performance against these strategies will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement for the FCA.

The NNTT reviews our strategies and priorities each year to ensure that our plans remain relevant to our purpose and the operating environment.

The foundation for the strategies in our corporate plan is the President's Review conducted in 2015. Adopted review recommendations are incorporated in the corporate plan and reflect the continuing work within the NNTT to improve its responsiveness and external focus whilst improving internal efficiency.

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

In the past 12 months, the NNTT has continued to roll out technological innovations designed to improve service delivery and client access, as well as improve productivity. The NNTT has also undertaken extensive collaboration with the Federal Court and other users

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Promote service excellence and innovation
2. Reshape our culture and capabilities, and
3. Promote services to improve client access.

and conducted research to better understand and respond to their needs.

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

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The NNTT strives to be an externally focussed organisation, responsive to client and stakeholder needs. We will measure our success by monitoring how well our services meet the needs of clients and stakeholders.

Our success will also be measured by how effectively we can grow the volume and diversity of assistance requests and claims mediation referrals that we receive each year. Increasing the volume of requests for assistance by clients and stakeholders by service type and FCA referrals for mediation will be used as our key performance indicators and reported on in our Annual Performance Statement.

# 1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Promote service excellence and innovation

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

The NNTT will continue to identify ways to improve collaboration with clients and stakeholders and will continue to conduct market research to improve our understanding of their needs.

The NNTT has recognised the emergence of other peak bodies which are now engaging with the native title system as it moves towards a post-determination phase. In response, the NNTT has broadened the scope of its engagement strategy and is seeking to work with these bodies to improve the overall operation of the native title system.

Collaboration, continued development of tailored and culturally appropriate services and agility in delivery are at the heart of this strategic goal. These will be supported by an ongoing project to simplify our processes to improve accessibility and leverage new digital platforms and other technologies to improve efficiency.

Technology will be an important enabler to achieve the strategy, as will ensuring that the skills and capabilities of staff are aligned.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Position the NNTT to be recognised as a capable and effective mediation and facilitation service provider
2. Leverage technology to develop culturally appropriate services and information for clients
3. Develop our internal capability and culture to focus on service excellence, and
4. Standardise and simplify processes to improve our efficiency and responsiveness to our clients' needs.

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Increase service delivery in relation to mediation and facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote our mediation and facilitation services.</li> <li>• Develop the capability and capacity of staff and members.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to assist parties through mediation and facilitation services.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Scope the road map for the development of online and digital products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify integrated and efficient online products and services.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the FCA to develop a framework and methodology for IT project management.</li> <li>• Continue collaborating with the FCA on the use of resources and budget.</li> </ul>	January 2017

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Increase understanding of stakeholders' needs and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and conduct a program of market research to assess existing client needs and identify new client segments.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Implement standardised policies and procedures nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and deliver a plan to improve and simplify organisational policies and procedures.</li> </ul>	January 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that communication channels and staff are aligned to the goal of increasing accessibility.</li> </ul>	June 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce enhanced communication governance to improve consistency and quality assurance for information provided.</li> </ul>	
Reinforce a shared vision of service excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and conduct training in customer service.</li> <li>Develop and improve mediation and facilitation skills.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Efficient, fair and respectful servicing of requests for assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop and refine the new nationally distributed business structure.</li> <li>Promote and utilise matrix management tools.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Increase internal knowledge of effective service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current mechanisms for capturing and reporting information about statutory assistance requests, including ancillary requests.</li> </ul>	December 2016

## 2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Reshape our culture and capabilities

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

An internal communications unit has been established in the NNTT to ensure that staff are engaged with the strategy and that they understand our vision and value proposition.

A significant aspect of our culture change program will be the development and launch of a new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP will consolidate our commitment to developing cultural competence and building relationships with the communities that we serve.

#### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Build a passionate, dynamic and inquisitive workforce
2. Align our skills and capabilities with the needs of the organisation
3. Build cultural competency, and
4. Communicate meaningfully with our staff to engage them with our value proposition and vision.

### Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Ongoing development of culturally safe and respectful workplaces and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a program for building competence and capacity for the organisation.</li> <li>• Embed cultural knowledge in all training programs.</li> </ul>	<p>June 2017</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Deliver the advanced training program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build staff capacity in relation to statutory functions through the advanced training program.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Deliver the leadership and talent recognition program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop future leaders.</li> <li>• Identify and promote subject matter experts within the organisation.</li> <li>• Implement the mentoring program.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Launch the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on the development and launch of the RAP.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Indigenous recruitment program developed and launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Opportunities for career and professional development exchange promoted and pursued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expose staff to both internal and external professional development opportunities, including secondments to other agencies.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# 3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Promote services to improve client access

Proactive engagement with clients and stakeholders to improve access to services and develop services which meet their needs is critical to the achievement of our vision.

The NNTT is committed to ensuring that our employees are culturally competent and that our services are appropriate and respectful. We will consult widely with stakeholders and clients to improve our understanding of the issues and barriers faced by external clients when they interact with the NNTT and proactively seek out opportunities to build on our existing knowledge and capabilities in this area.

A significant aspect of our strategy is to build a broader educative role with a range of external stakeholders to increase their knowledge of native title law, policies and to raise their awareness of the social impact of native title. In the past year we have worked with banks,

mining companies and local government to improve their awareness of native title issues. We have also collaborated with the Human Rights Commission and the President, members and senior staff have presented papers at conferences both in Australia and overseas.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Establish the NNTT as the pre-eminent provider of native title information
2. Engage with our clients to promote the vision of a shared country, shared future, and
3. Simplify and improve our practices and procedures to make them more accessible for clients.

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Improve native title resources for clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update information on existing services.</li> <li>• Identify new opportunities to further develop or create new products and services, including through the use of social media.</li> <li>• Collaborate with clients to review products, services and information tailored specifically for Indigenous Australians.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Improve service delivery through increased understanding of the needs of key stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan.</li> <li>• Conduct a stakeholder survey.</li> <li>• Conduct forums for stakeholders.</li> <li>• Continue participating in the Indigenous Property Rights project convened by the Human Rights Commission.</li> </ul>	December 2016 June 2017 Ongoing Life of project

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Improve capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to manage and enjoy their native title rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) Interagency Roundtable forum.</li> <li>• Conduct research on current PBC support services.</li> <li>• Provide information sessions and training on relevant native title issues.</li> <li>• Provide information on governance and coordinate support services.</li> <li>• Identify new stakeholders and potential partnerships in the native title space.</li> </ul>	<p>June 2017</p> <p>December 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Increase access and transparency to the NNTT's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Federal Court to assess and digitise significant native title records.</li> <li>• Develop an internal geocoded research database and online portal.</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of national guidelines for the management of native title information.</li> </ul>	<p>June 2017</p>
Increase public knowledge of native title law and policy and its social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding sources to implement education and research programs.</li> <li>• Conduct outreach programs in various community forums.</li> <li>• Present at conferences and seminars and contribute to external publications.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>







# FEDERAL COURT CORPORATE SERVICES

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**GOALS**

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**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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**STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES**

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

## FEDERAL COURT CORPORATE SERVICES GOALS

The amalgamation of corporate services functions for the FCoA and the FCC with the FCA into a single administrative body with a single appropriation will be the focus of strategy for the next 12 months. The amalgamated corporate services body is expected to generate efficiencies by consolidating resources, streamlining processes and reducing duplication.

The challenge for the new Corporate Services team will be to remain focussed on delivery of services to the courts and the NNTT whilst the amalgamation occurs.

The budget for the team will be reduced over the life of the plan. Lower costs will need to be achieved through consolidation of resources and greater productivity. Early consultation and communication, both within the team and to the courts and the NNTT, will be very important to manage the reputation of the new team and ensure that stakeholders' expectations are met.

The success of the amalgamation will be measured by the status of all of the courts. The corporate services of the courts will be recognised nationally, and internationally as playing a leading and managerial role in creating modern, efficient and safe dispute resolution with a reputation for exceeding expectations and for introducing innovative digital operations for judges, staff and other users of our services.

### Over the next four years we will focus on three main strategic goals:

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

Significant work was undertaken in 2015 in preparation for the amalgamation and this plan continues that work to identify the best systems and processes to achieve the desired goals.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

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

# 1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

## Efficient and effective corporate services

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

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

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

1. Benchmark finance processes to identify efficiencies and eliminate duplication, and
2. Conduct a business process review to streamline the functions of corporate services.

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Streamline finance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve financial processes and systems.</li> <li>• Develop a set of national practices.</li> <li>• Provide information and training to staff.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Finalise the business process review for each functional area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise positions for the new team.</li> <li>• Identify areas of duplication.</li> <li>• Document best practice.</li> </ul>	December 2016
Consolidate contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas of duplication in contracts.</li> <li>• Consolidate contracts where necessary.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Benchmark corporate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a survey of key stakeholders to measure satisfaction.</li> <li>• Based on the results, develop a plan to address the issues raised, strengthen areas of high quality performance and remediate areas of underperformance.</li> </ul>	September 2016 October 2017

## 2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

### Build an agile, skilled and engaged workforce

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

The first 12 months of this plan will focus on identifying and communicating a positive culture and shared values for the newly merged Corporate Services team. Significant work was done during 2015 to identify differences in work practices and policies. The new team will jointly focus on identifying which practices and policies will be transferred or modified for the new team to best meet the needs of the courts and the NNTT.

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

#### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

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

### Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Develop a strategy and Human Resources (HR) structure to support the courts and the NNTT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a HR shared service vision.</li> <li>• Review services and develop the HR operating model.</li> <li>• Design organisation structure to support operating model.</li> </ul>	December 2016 December 2016 October 2016
Consolidate HR systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Payroll System Phase 2 and Phase 3.</li> </ul>	February 2017
Corporate Services workforce plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan that shows timing and steps for how shared corporate service operating model will be implemented.</li> <li>• Leadership development.</li> </ul>	October 2016 Ongoing
Merge processes and policies to develop best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review key policies, processes and programs to rationalise and update.</li> <li>• Implement preferred models.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Build a learning and development program aligned with strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and development needs identified.</li> <li>• Align learning and development programs within the courts and develop a plan.</li> </ul>	December 2016

# 3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

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

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

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

This strategy aims to optimise technology for case management by increasing online accessibility for the

legal community and, where appropriate, members of the public. It also supports the judiciary and court officers to manage and decide cases according to the law as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible.

### Our strategies over the next four years are to:

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

## Priorities for the 2016–17 plan year

In the 2016–17 plan year, we will undertake the following projects and deliverables:

Objective or Project	Tactics	Target
Finalise technology roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	December 2016
Technology platform merge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novell Directory Services Migration.</li> <li>• WAN optimisation and unification.</li> <li>• Mail unification.</li> <li>• Domino application migration.</li> </ul>	November 2016 December 2016 January 2017 June 2017
IT workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service desk consolidation.</li> <li>• Investigate options to outsource portions of application development.</li> </ul>	June 2017 June 2017
Optimise digital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align site with the Government’s Digital Technology Strategy.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to increase self-service.</li> <li>• Create a shared services intranet.</li> <li>• Expand and improve usability of key digital services.</li> </ul>	June 2017 June 2017 October 2017 June 2017
Improve courts’ ability to collaborate between locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Skype for Business to facilitate better communication.</li> <li>• Expand FCA WiFi across selected buildings.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Modernise courtroom technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for digital hearings.</li> </ul>	June 2017
Develop and modernise key business systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence project to unify case management systems across general federal law and family law.</li> <li>• Provide a simpler process for the inspection of electronic documents at general federal law registries.</li> <li>• Continue to rationalise and improve core NNTT systems.</li> </ul>	June 2017

## RESOURCING

The tables below illustrate the financial and staffing resources applied by each court and the newly established Corporate Services entity over the four years of this Plan.

### Resourcing – Federal Court of Australia

	2016–17 Budget \$'000	2017–18 Forward estimate \$'000	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses				
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and     Accountability Act 2013</i>	600	600	600	600
<b>Administered total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	63,329	64,404	64,582	64,774
S74 retained revenue receipts (a)	2,428	2,467	2,527	2,572
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	13,102	13,102	13,102	13,102
<b>Departmental total</b>	<b>78,859</b>	<b>79,973</b>	<b>80,211</b>	<b>80,448</b>
<b>Total expenses Federal Court of Australia</b>	<b>79,459</b>	<b>80,573</b>	<b>80,811</b>	<b>81,048</b>
<b>Average staffing level (c)</b>	<b>339</b>			

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

(a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

(b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses, resources received free of charge and liabilities assumed by other entities.

(c) Excludes judges.

### Resourcing – Family Court of Australia

	2016–17 Budget \$'000	2017–18 Forward estimate \$'000	2018–19 Forward estimate \$'000	2019–20 Forward estimate \$'000
Administered expenses				
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and     Accountability Act 2013</i>	30	30	30	30
<b>Administered total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	31,447	31,458	31,737	31,813
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (a)	10,609	10,609	10,609	10,609
<b>Departmental total</b>	<b>42,056</b>	<b>42,067</b>	<b>42,346</b>	<b>42,422</b>
<b>Total expenses Family Court of Australia</b>	<b>42,086</b>	<b>42,097</b>	<b>42,376</b>	<b>42,452</b>
<b>Average staffing level (b)</b>	<b>108</b>			

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

(a) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of liabilities assumed by other entities.

(b) Excludes judges.

## Resourcing – Federal Circuit Court of Australia

	2016–17 Budget	2017–18 Forward estimate	2018–19 Forward estimate	2019–20 Forward estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Administered expenses				
Administered item	894	900	907	913
Special appropriations <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	270	270	270	270
<b>Administered total</b>	<b>1,164</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>1,183</b>
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	89,144	89,288	90,177	90,152
S 74 retained revenue receipts (a)	640	640	640	640
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	602	602	602	602
<b>Departmental total</b>	<b>90,386</b>	<b>90,530</b>	<b>91,419</b>	<b>91,754</b>
<b>Total expenses Federal Circuit Court</b>	<b>91,550</b>	<b>91,700</b>	<b>92,596</b>	<b>92,937</b>
<b>Average staffing level (c)</b>	<b>504</b>			

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

(a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

(b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses, resources received free of charge and liabilities assumed by other entities.

(c) Excludes judges.

## Resourcing – Corporate Services

	2016–17 Budget	2017–18 Forward estimate	2018–19 Forward estimate	2019–20 Forward estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental expenses				
Departmental appropriation	63,978	62,581	60,954	61,543
S 74 retained revenue receipts (a)	250	250	250	250
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year (b)	53,875	53,907	53,780	53,695
<b>Total expenses Corporate Services</b>	<b>118,103</b>	<b>116,738</b>	<b>114,984</b>	<b>115,488</b>
<b>Average staffing level</b>	<b>150</b>			

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

(a) Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

(b) Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses, resources received free of charge.

# RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The Federal Court of Australia, as the merged entity, promotes a culture 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 risks associated with competition.

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

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

1. Risks that affect the reputation of the Chief Justices, Chief Judge and Judges and their ability to perform, or which may impair the community's trust
2. Risks that affect the Registrar's management of and accountability for performance, including the entity's service delivery obligations, regulatory framework and business relationships
3. Risks that affect performance against identified strategic priorities
4. Risks that affect the integrity of decisions, processes and information
5. Risks that affect the security of all courts' and the NNTT's resources (including property) and visitors to its premises, and
6. Risks that affect the health and safety of personnel.

Risks are reviewed at least each quarter and the risk register is updated after each review. We recognise the importance of training and awareness programs in risk management. Consequently, we are committed to ensuring all staff receive regular training and information on risk management and their responsibilities.

We continued to participate in the annual Comcover benchmarking survey, which measures risk and assesses the extent of cultural change within agencies. Our overall result continued to improve, reflecting the efforts in the area of risk management.

## Oversight

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

The functions include:

- endorsing the entity's Risk Management Plan
- endorsing risk treatment strategies and action plans
- oversight of the implementation of the entity's Risk Management Plan
- compliance with finance law including financial and performance reporting
- review of annual risk reports, and
- providing a system of internal control for the entity.

The identification and review of critical risk areas within the group and the implementation of the Risk Management Plan will be the subject of internal audit protocols, to be applied by Internal Audit. Our Audit and Risk Committee monitor the implementation of individual audit report recommendations generated from those audits through quarterly status reports.



## COMPLIANCE TABLE

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

	Page Number				
	Federal Court of Australia	Family Court	Federal Circuit Court	National Native Title Tribunal	Corporate Services
Introductory statement	2	2	2	2	2
Purpose	3	4	5	6	3
Environment	7–8	7–8	7–8	7–8	7–8
Performance including how the entity will achieve its purpose and how the entity's performance will be measured	10	16	20	26	33
Capability – the key strategies and plans that the entity will implement in each reporting period covered by the plan to achieve the entity's purposes	11–14	17–18	21–24	27–31	34–36
Risk and oversight management – a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity for each reporting period covered by the plan including any measures that will be implemented to ensure compliance with the finance law	39	39	39	39	39