**Family Law Courts overview**

The Family Law Courts comprise the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia. Both courts have jurisdiction in family law matters in all states and territories except Western Australia, which has its own Family Court

The courts are independent, but cooperate to provide streamlined access to the federal family law system. Clients benefit from:

* a simplified path through the family law system
* access to services for the resolution of family disputes
* a single point of filing regardless of which court handles the application
* a national enquiry centre and website that provide information about both courts
* high quality services to litigants and the community, and
* easy transfer of cases between courts when ordered by a court.

The Family Court of Australia is a superior court of record and deals with more complex matters. These may include, for example

* Parenting cases including those that involve a child welfare agency and/or allegations of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of a child (Magellan cases), family violence and/or mental health issues with other complexities, multiple parties, complex cases where orders sought having the effect of preventing a parent from communicating with or spending time with a child, multiple expert witnesses, complex questions of law and/or special jurisdictional issues, international child abduction under the Hague Convention, special medical procedures and international relocation.
* Financial cases that involve multiple parties, valuation of complex interests in trust or corporate structures, including minority interests, multiple expert witnesses, complex questions of law and/or jurisdictional issues (including accrued jurisdiction) or complex issues concerning superannuation (such as complex valuations of defined benefit superannuation schemes).

The Federal Circuit Court deals with less complex matters that are likely to be decided quickly. It was established in 2000 as a federal court that provides a simple and accessible alternative to litigation in the superior federal courts.

The Combined Registry Program commenced in July 2004 and aims to provide simplified access to the Family Law Courts (the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court). It comprises a number of major projects that have been completed or are nearing completion.