Family Law Court Jurisdiction

Commonwealth family law is dealt with by the Family Law Act 1975, the Family Law Regulations 1984 and the Marriage Act 1961.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_Court_of_Australia#cite_note-familylawact-6) In 1986–87, the States agreed that children should be dealt with under the same legislation through the cross-vesting scheme.

The Family Law Act 1975 was amended in 1988 to reflect this agreement (although this did not happen in relation to Queensland until 1990).

Western Australia, however, did not enter into the agreement and has maintained its own separate Family Court which deals with federal legislation (such as the Family Law Act) as well as state legislation such as the Family Court Act (WA).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_Court_of_Australia#cite_note-7)

The Court has therefore has jurisdiction over all marriage-related cases in all states and territories of Australia except Western Australia which has its own family court.

Its jurisdiction covers applications for declarations of the validity or nullity of marriage, divorces, residence, contact, maintenance, child support and property issues.

This jurisdiction, granted under the Family Law Act 1975, is a Commonwealth responsibility under the 'matrimonial causes' head of power in Section 51(xxii) of the Constitution.

Prior to 1975, jurisdiction over family law matters was held and exercised largely by state Supreme courts under the *Matrimonial Causes Act*.