

Additional information provided by the Family Court of Australia

Alternative Dispute Resolution ('ADR') Project

The ADR Project endeavours to ensure that a dispute resolution framework is available for all matters (so long as it is safe to do so), whether parenting or property matters.

The Project involves the development of a sophisticated mediation model tailored to the complexity of the dispute, including longer periods to resolve property conciliations as may be needed, and, for the first time in recent history, dispute resolution for parenting matters. These parenting conferences will have highly trained registrars, skilled in mediation techniques, pairing up where needed with children-specialist Family Consultants. In addition, the Courts are ensuring that external mediation and conciliation services are drawn on more frequently to maximise the number of matters that have dispute resolution available to them. This will be embedded in the case management pathway and is expected to resolve/finalise many disputes at a much earlier stage of the proceedings, saving significant cost and stress for the parties, as well as being a more effective outcome for the parties (given that they have by definition agreed to the parenting or property arrangements).

Priority Property Pools under \$500,000 ("PPP500")

As at 15 November 2020, 72% of matters in the PPP500 Pilot have been resolved without judicial intervention.

Case management

An enhanced role for Registrars

Previously the Courts did no parenting dispute resolution and a limited amount of property conciliations. These will be expanded under the ADR project being led by Anne-Marie Rice, a Senior Registrar and Executive Director of Dispute Resolution.

Court Resourcing

The funding received by the Courts as part of the October 2020 budget will assist the Courts in undertaking several key initiatives. The budget included funding for Judges, Registrars and support staff in migration in the Federal Circuit Court and in family law across both Courts, and funding to allow for the continuation and expansion of the national COVID-19 Lists.