

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO**

Family Court of Australia

Question No. AE17-070

Senator Pratt asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:

- 1) How many matters are currently awaiting trial in each registry of the Family Court?
- 2) What is the average wait time for a trial in the Family Court?
- 3) What is the effect of a lengthy wait time for resolution of a family law matter?
- 4) What is the effect of a lengthy wait time on a person experiencing, or who has experienced, family violence?
- 5) In your opinion, what would be the best way of reducing the wait time for a trial in the Family Court?
- 6) Would you say that the Family Court is in a 'resourcing crisis'?

The answer to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

- 1) The number of Final Orders applications docketed to a judge and awaiting trial*, by registry:

Registry	Awaiting trial as at 28 Feb 2017
Adelaide	28
Brisbane	46
Canberra	32
Dandenong	0
Darwin	0
Tasmania	18
Melbourne	109
Newcastle	66
Parramatta	145
Sydney	167
Townsville	16
Total	627

*In accordance with the Family Court's case management system, matters are docketed to a Judge after all Registrar managed events have occurred, and it has been determined that the matter requires trial.

- 2) As at 1 February 2017, the average time from the lodgement of a matter to the first day of trial in the Family Court was 17.2 months. However, interim applications will be heard prior to trial and the overall mean time to the first defended hearing for interim applications in the Family Court, as at 31 March 2017, was 3.71 months.
- 3) and 4) The effect depends upon the circumstances of the matter.
- 5) The question calls for an expression of opinion and is inappropriate to answer.
- 6) Resourcing of the Family Court is a matter for Government.