

8 April 2021

The Hon John Quigley MLA
Attorney General
5th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: Minister.quigley@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Attorney General

DELAY IN THE FAMILY COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA YOUR REF 7617909/2, 3

Thank you for your letter dated 2 February 2021, and for acknowledging the considerable judicial workload of the Family Court of Western Australia.

I have attached a copy of my letter to the Attorney General for the Commonwealth.

My letter to the Attorney identifies the significant increase in demand being experienced by family relationship centres and associated support services assisting those experiencing family relationship breakdown in circumstances that commonly involve family violence. Family Relationship Centres are limited in their capacity to provide mediation services to families experiencing family violence. Inevitably the number of certificates issued to enable parties to commence family court proceedings will increase and there will be an increase in the number of parties seeking an exemption from the requirement to attend mediation. This will add to the significant workload burden of the Family Court of WA which has previously been identified by the Society.

I acknowledge that your Government has appropriately increased funding to counsellors to address the related issues around family violence.¹

However, this development in combination with the information provided earlier has made the need for an immediate appointment to the Family Court all the more pressing. To this end I am formally requesting the Commonwealth Attorney General to contact you to progress this as a matter of priority.

In order to assist the Family Court of Western Australia in the short to medium term, the Law Society seeks your commitment to appoint a judicial member to the Court on an "acting" basis, notwithstanding the Law Society's preference is for permanent appointment to the Court.

¹ <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/announcements/recovery-payment-support-victims-of-family-and-domestic-violence>

Finally, the Law Society would like to acknowledge your report on the business case for the accommodation works on level 4 of the Federal Courts Building to provide an extra court room, extra meeting rooms and extra chambers and looks forward to the completion of that work.

If you have any queries please contact Mary Woodford, General Manager Advocacy and Professional Development on 9324 8646 or mwoodford@lawsocietywa.asn.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Boujos', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jocelyne Boujos
President

Copy to: The Hon Gail Sutherland
 Chief Judge of the Family Court of Western Australia
 1 Victoria Ave
 PERTH WA 6000

 Senator the Hon Michaela Cash
 Attorney General for Australia
 Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices
 Exchange Plaza
 2 The Esplanade
 PERTH WA 6000