



CHIEF JUSTICE'S CHAMBERS
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA
Owen Dixon Commonwealth Law Courts
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31 March 2020

Mr Paul Doolan
Chair
Family Law Section
Law Council of Australia
GPO Box 622
BRISBANE QLD 4001

By email

Dear Presidents, Chairs and members

Alternative Dispute Resolution, settlement and mediation services

Whilst changes to the operations of the Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia (the Courts) have been implemented in accordance with the necessary restrictions placed on our community by the Commonwealth Government, the Courts remain open to assist Australian families in these challenging times. The Courts are also keen to support and encourage practitioners in each state and territory. Indeed, legal representatives provide a vital role in access to justice, particularly in these challenging times.

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing the way Courts and lawyers conduct their work. We are conscious that your organisations and your members wish to continue to offer mediation, dispute resolution and family law settlement services during these times of restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Litigants, and the community, would benefit from clear and accessible information about the services your members are offering during the current crisis, particularly regarding your members who undertake mediation, FDR and/or arbitration work, or any schemes run by your organisation. This could include family law settlement services, *pro bono* mediation schemes, lists of mediators, FDRPs or arbitrators, etc.

If you wish to provide information about the services provided by your organisation that are currently available for families or other practitioners to use (including a short explanatory paragraph), we would be happy to place links to these services on our websites.

Your association and members may wish to also provide on your websites information about the different types of mediation available and where to find information and rates, or who to contact for this information.

All services would necessarily have to be conducted electronically over the internet or by telephone.

Please forward your information to Catherine Bull: catherine.bull@familycourt.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Alstergren', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Justice Alstergren
Chief Justice
Family Court of Australia
Chief Judge
Federal Circuit Court of Australia

Copy to: National and state Bar Associations, Law Societies and Legal Aid services