

# Changes to the Family Court



There has been lots of press (mostly bad) about the Family Court system. It currently takes up to 3 years or more to get through the process which is a long time to be in limbo when your children and financial security are at stake.

Well, things are about to change and not before time! From 1 September 2021 the Family and Federal Circuit Courts are merging. What does this mean for those of you potentially about to embark on litigation?

- The overarching purpose of the changes is to ensure fair resolution of family law disputes as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible.
- The core principles of the new laws mean that parties and their lawyers are expected to take a sensible and pragmatic approach to litigation.
- Dispute resolution is front and centre with litigation being a last resort.

- Lawyers will be expected to encourage their clients to be realistic about their expectations and open to reasonable offers of settlement.
- There will be costs ramifications for parties and their lawyers if they don't take heed of the core principles.
- The goal is to ensure that matters are finalised, even if they don't settle, within 12 months!

For many of us who are family law specialists, we already make every effort to run our cases in this way. But we have all heard a horror story about those who don't. Hopefully the new laws will fix a process which has been broken for a very long time.

There are many new rules which you need to be aware of. I urge you, if you are about to head down this path, to speak to a specialist family lawyer about what the changes will mean for you.



## FREE 10 MINUTE CONSULTATION

For a **FREE** confidential 10 minute phone consultation, call Managing Director, Fiona Reid.

*Fiona Reid is the Managing Director of Reid Family Lawyers, a boutique specialist family law firm with offices in Brookvale and Surry Hills. She is supported by a team of expert family lawyers. The firm has a plethora of experience in all facets of family law including complex property matters, parenting matters, child support and spousal maintenance issues, relocation, de facto and same sex issues, surrogacy and adoption.*



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