



19/6981-9

Mr Tas Lanarch
Acting Committee Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System
familylaw.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Lanarch

Clarification to evidence

I write to you concerning evidence that I provided to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System on 23 November 2020. I wish to make the following clarifications relating to my evidence about the Northern Territory court pilot.

On page 15 of the transcript, following questioning from Mr Perrett about whether a Darwin pilot was a pilot of a single entry point, I stated:

That particular pilot is about reducing the need for parties who are already before a state or territory court to have to commence separate proceedings in a Commonwealth court. The Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Act, which passed this parliament, does allow for states and territories to exercise family law jurisdiction in an enhanced set of circumstances. As part of that, the government is piloting the use of the enhanced family law jurisdiction. For the one in Darwin, it's in the Children's Court, but it has given powers to that court to exercise parenting jurisdiction....

Further to my evidence and the evidence of Mr Iain Anderson, I would like to confirm that the pilot I described does not relate to a single point of entry for the family law jurisdiction of the federal family law courts, and which would require legislation. Instead, as stated, the pilot relates to the enhanced exercise of family law jurisdiction by the Northern Territory Local Court, and aims to allow parties to resolve certain related matters together in the one court.

Further, I would like to clarify that the pilot is taking place in the Family Matters Division of the Northern Territory Local Court, which exercises equivalent jurisdiction to children's courts that operate in other states and territories. There is no standalone children's court in the Northern Territory. In May 2020 the pilot was expanded to also include a limited presence in the Civil Division of the Northern Territory Local Court, in respect of domestic violence matters.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this clarification.

Yours sincerely

Alex Mathews
Assistant Secretary
Family Safety Branch
Attorney-General's Department

14 Dec 2020