

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA/FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURT

Question No. AE16/016

Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 9 February 2016:

Mr Foster: That number of judges—I was talking about currently, Senator; I did not have any historical data.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: No, I understand that. But I am asking, when you were talking about your case numbers, you went back to what year?

Mr Foster: I went back to 2010 and 2011.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Can you start there on the number of the judiciary?

Mr Foster: I do not have those numbers with me. I would need to take that on notice.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Is that something that would take long?

Mr Foster: No, it will not take long. We have got information, I just have not got it here.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Okay. As there are other senators who have questions to ask too, perhaps we could revisit that later this session? If that is possible; if not, then take it on notice.

Mr Foster: Okay, thank you. I think I can give you the number of Family Court judges, going back. But I have not got the Federal Circuit Court numbers.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Why don't you wait until you do, because I would like to be able to compare apples with apples, to the extent it is possible.

Mr Foster: Okay. I probably would need to take that on notice then, Senator, if that is okay.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Sure. It is only in the sense that I want to build a picture of the resource constraints, and to have a sense of the trend in that respect.

Mr Foster: Sure, I understand.

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

The Family Court of Australia had a total of 34 justices in both 2010 and 2011. This included one vacancy in 2010 and two vacancies in 2011.

The Federal Circuit Court of Australia had 47.25 judges in 2010 and 48.25 judges in 2011 hearing family law related matters only. These figures reflect that a judge in the Federal Circuit Court may undertake a proportion of both family law and general federal law work.