

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO**

**Family Court of Australia**

**Question No. AE17/066**

**Senator Pratt asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:**

1. What percentage of matters heard in the Family Court involve a self-represented litigant?
2. Has the number of self-represented litigants changed in recent years?
3. Do self-represented litigants in the Family Court impact on the ability of the Court to deal with matters efficiently? Does an increase in self-represented litigants impact on workflow for Court staff (not just the judiciary but the ancillary staff, like Family Consultants, Registrars, Court Officers and clerks)?

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

- 1+2: This information is available in the 2015-16 Family Court Annual Report.
3. (i) The Full Court of the Family Court of Australia, in *Re: F: Litigants in Person Guidelines* (2001) FLC 93-072, set out guidelines as to a judge's obligations when determining a case where one or more parties are self-represented litigants. This requires additional time for the judge to explain the court process and procedural information.
- (ii) Anecdotally, self-represented litigants require more assistance throughout the proceedings in explaining court processes and procedures. In an effort to address the needs of self-represented litigants, and ensure consistent and appropriate information is provided, the Court has developed a range of publications and resources to assist litigants, including "How do I..." pages on the Court's website and development of You Tube videos.