

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

Question No. 132

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2007:

Administration and IT Costs

- a) Are you able to provide the total administrative costs of your Court, for each city in which it has a Registry, broken down into:
 - i. The staffing numbers (in Full Time Equivalent) and costs for:
 - (1) Communications;
 - (2) Human Resources;
 - (3) Judges;
 - (4) IT Staff;
 - (5) Other administrative staff (and how these would be classified).
 - ii. The accommodation costs for each city.
- b) To what extent are the administrative costs between these courts shared? Eg. Do you have a shared administrative staff, or do you have a discrete staff?
 - i. If so, could you indicate:
 - (1) What administrative staffing positions are shared between this Court and other Courts?
 - (2) The level of funding provided by the Court for the shared administrative costs.
- c) What other bodies are there that you provide administrative support to?
- d) Are you able to list the bodies and outline the nature of that support?

In answer to the honourable senator's question the following response is provided.

- a) The answers to the Senator's question for Human Resources, Judges, IT Staff, and other administrative staff are contained in Table 1, 2, 3 and 4 attached to this document.
- b) The Family Court of Australia provides resources free of charge to the Federal Magistrates Court in accordance with sections 90, 92, and 99 of the Federal Magistrates Act 1999. Resources provided free of charge include:
 - Family Court staff performing work on behalf of the Federal Magistrates Court (this includes Family Consultants, Registrars, Client Services, and some component of Registry Management Staff (Administrative Staff), and
 - Accommodation, including access to courtrooms.

It was estimated that the cost of resources provided free of charge by the Family Court to the Federal Magistrates Court during:

- 2005-06 was \$12.5m (page 287 2005/06 PBS); and
- 2006-07 was \$15.15m (page 300 of 2006/07 PBS).

Information Technology

The Information, Communication, and Technology Services (IC&TS) Division of the Family Court of Australia provides a range of services to:

1. The Family Court of Australia (FCoA);
2. Family Court of Western Australia (FCWA);
3. The Federal Magistrates Court (FMC); and
4. The Federal Court of Australia (FCA).

The Division consists of the following functional areas: Applications, Statistics, Infrastructure, Information Management, Library Services, Helpdesk, and Communications (Public Affairs). The figures provided concerning IT costs include Applications, Infrastructure, Information Management, and Helpdesk, but exclude Statistics, Library Services and Communications which are addressed separately later in the text. These Divisional elements have a total FTE equivalent of 35 (2005/06) and an annual expenditure of \$5.641m (2005/06) which includes fixed suppliers costs. This represents approximately 3.95% of the Courts annual budget (2005/06). The FMC has all these services provided, on the same basis, as they are provided to the FCoA and contributes towards some positions (< 100K pa.). When both Courts' annual expenditure (2005/06) are combined the total operating percentage spent on IT reduces to 3.23%.

This base operating cost is also offset by a number of other services used by other Courts. These include:

1. **Casetrack.** This system was developed by the FCoA in 2001, to provide case management services for family law, including the FMC when exercising its family law jurisdiction. In 2002, the FCoA offered the FCA the opportunity to leverage the FCoA's investment in Casetrack. Subsequently, the FCoA assisted the FCA with its Casetrack implementation and provides development, maintenance, and support of the FCA version of Casetrack using the Division's resources. This support also includes the provision of Disaster Recovery Protection, which is currently being enhanced to benefit all courts using Casetrack. The FCA contributes via a bureau charge of approximately \$850,000 pa for this service. The bureau charge is based on a cost recovery basis calculated as a pro rata (including on cost) based on the number of users in each Court using the system. The FCoA has not sought to recover any of its initial development cost from the FCA and does not seek to profit from the FCA through the bureau arrangement. The FMC also uses both FCoA supported versions of Casetrack for its Federal and Family law case management needs. The FMC is not charged by the FCoA for this service nor any development or enhancement of Casetrack for their family law purposes.
2. **The FCoA provides assistance in the development and enhancement of the Federal Law version of Casetrack as required.** The resources required for this purpose can fluctuate dependant on FCA demand. Usually, the resources consist of an application developer (charged with on-cost), Business System Analyst (charged without on-cost), and some testing and support resources. The charge for these resources is recovered from the FCA each month. One of the key benefits for all jurisdictions using Casetrack is any enhancement of the application for one jurisdiction can benefit the other.

3. The FCA's E-Search product was (http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/ecourt/ecourt_eseach_slide.html) conceived, developed, and is maintained by resources of the FCoA. This product provides Internet users with access to information, held by the FCoA on behalf of the FCA, which is contained within the FCA version of Casetrack. The FCA paid for this development effort and the ongoing support of the product is included in the above bureau charge. This service has been of significant value and benefit to the FCA.
4. The FCoA's file search (<https://filesearch.familylawcourts.gov.au/cws/index>) is an application that provides a subset of client information for parties to matters in the Family Law system. The information is provided via a unique combination of two case specific details, the client identifier and file identifier. These two items acts as a defacto user id and password. A further protection of client confidentiality is that personally identifying information such as address, client dates of birth, children's names etc are not presented. This service was provided to the FMC and the FCWA without seeking any capital or operating contribution.
5. E-Lodgement - The FCA intends to replace it current E-Lodgement system. The FCA's current E-Lodgment system is not integrated into Casetrack and requires the re-entering and re-keying of the information into Casetrack. The FCA intends to rebuild this E-Lodgement system and the FCoA will be using its resources to integrate this system into the Casetrack application. This effort by the FCA will provide valuable experience for the FCoA as it moves to implement electronic lodgement for family law clients. This product will be hosted externally but will rely heavily on Casetrack and the support services provided by the FCoA. The FCA will be funding 100% of this development.
6. Currently, the Commonwealth Courts Portal is a new service being advanced. The vision of the Portal is to provide users, particularly the legal profession, with a secure single point of access (user id and password), from the Internet, to information contained within the Federal and Family version of Casetrack. The vision was conceived by the Family Court and made possible by the decision of the FCA, FMC, FCoA and FCWA to use Casetrack. The FCA, FCoA, and the FMC have all made contributions to this project of \$300,000, \$300,000, and \$200,000 respectively with a first phase to be delivered in August 2007. This first phase is likely to run under budget by approximately \$150,000. There are obvious benefits to users of the system; not least amongst them is not having separate user id and password for each Court. There are also significant savings to all jurisdiction, and taxpayers, in advancing the provision of web services in this cooperative way.

Communications (Public Affairs)

The Communications Team within the Family Court of Australia has 4 FTE to provide communications support. Staff services all internal and external communications and products across the court. This team has also done considerable work in advancing the Family Law Courts and combined Registry projects in cooperation with the Federal Magistrates Court. The Family Court of Australia's Communications team also provides information (brochures, fact sheets, website) for the benefit of Family Law clients with matters in the Family Court and Federal Magistrates Court when exercising Family law jurisdiction.

Total Costs for the FCoA for the Financial Year 2006/07 - May Year to Date

	Adelaide Registry	Brisbane Registry	Coffs Harbour Rural Registry	Lismore Rural Registry	Rockhampton Rural Registry	Canberra Registry	Dandenong Registry	Darwin Registry	Alice Springs Rural-Registry	Hobart Registry	Launceston Rural Registry	Melbourne Registry	Albury Rural Registry	Newcastle Registry	Parramatta Registry	Dubbo Rural Registry	Sydney Registry	Wollongong Rural Registry	Townsville Registry	Cairns Rural Registry	National Support	National Enquiry Centre	Total		
Communications Office																					454,397		454,397		
Human Resources																					1,038,167		1,038,167		
Judges	1,168,738	2,298,560				308,765				315,008		3,031,415		641,996	1,597,427		2,754,990		346,527					12,463,424	
IT Staff																					5,290,895			5,290,895	
<i>Other Administrative Staff</i>	3,494,484	5,468,515	51,706	420,889	190,127	1,265,424	1,581,576	700,651	293,088	1,122,737	395,762	5,774,128	332,366	2,077,973	3,363,002	217,127	5,226,910	455,357	1,205,298	634,890	30,894,290	1,199,301		66,365,601	
Finance & Property Staff																									2,386,900
Library Services & Statistics																									1,678,522
Chief Justice & Support Staff																									1,527,202
Chief Executive Officer & Support Staff																									850,600
Director Child Dispute Services & Support Staff																									377,046
Principal Registrar & Support Staff																									497,689
National Corporate Costs																									22,672,803
Executive Director Client Services & support & Marshall																									903,528
Judges Support	233,925	574,726				112,429				66,353		594,701		97,785	280,432			615,537		66,282					2,642,170
Judicial Registrars & Support Staff	289,063	303,008																612,085							1,204,156
Client Service	1,245,987	2,045,028		120,436	110,207	452,370	706,904	185,365	33,523	364,043	126,396	2,294,955	92,136	733,473	1,407,631	67,956	1,583,248	170,975	337,003	159,486		1,199,301		13,436,421	
Senior Registrars & Support Staff	160,060	182,662										229,173													571,895
Registrars	555,710	729,500				173,150	271,864			207,259		804,027		214,345	414,629		598,415		99,200	72,987					4,141,087
Family Consultants & Liaison Officers	397,354	822,583		171,917		202,733	222,579	223,580	169,866	156,182	162,241	1,050,541	134,256	397,514	719,717	55,683	735,119	133,216	314,541	219,763					6,289,385
Administration	612,385	811,009	51,706	128,536	79,920	324,742	380,229	291,707	89,700	328,901	107,124	800,731	105,975	634,856	540,593	93,488	1,082,507	151,165	388,272	182,653					7,186,197
Depreciation	338,567	186,100	9,996	15,703	66,125	264,761	317,101	23,947	72,569	46,534	79,411	243,653	69,319	444,734	297,651	52,943	562,806	78,882	70,723	202,037	2,767,957	18,208		6,229,724	
Property Costs	4,139,374	5,790,235	129,719	308,277	104,890	1,207,760	681,721	429,299	80,725	576,820	123,743	8,156,100	102,870	763,920	3,665,630	119,519	6,524,832	241,431	321,755	284,908	1,064,152				34,817,680
Total	9,141,162	13,743,410	191,421	744,869	361,141	3,046,709	2,580,398	1,153,897	446,382	2,061,099	598,916	17,205,297	504,555	3,928,622	8,923,710	389,588	15,069,538	775,670	1,944,302	1,121,835	41,509,857	1,217,509			126,659,888

costs shown above are "employees and suppliers expenses combined" with Property costs and depreciation separately shown.

Table 3

Total FTE for the FCoA for the Financial Year 2005/06*

	Adelaide Registry		Coffs Harbour		Lismore Rural Registry	Rockhampton Rural Registry	Canberra Registry	Dandenong Registry	Darwin Registry	Alice Springs Rural-Registry	Hobart Registry	Launceston Rural Registry	Melbourne Registry
Communications Office													
Human Resources													
Judges	4	7					1				1		9
IT Staff													
<i>Other Administrative Staff</i>	55	92	1	3	3	21	29	9	3	16	5	101	
Finance & Property Staff													
Library Services & Statistics													
Chief Justice & Support Staff													
Chief Executive Officer & Support Staff													
Director Child Dispute Services & Support Staff													
Principal Registrar & Support Staff													
Executive Director Client Services & support & Marshall													
Judges Support	5	12					2				1		14
Judicial Registrars & Support Staff	2	2											2
Client Service	31	48	1	3	3	11	20	4	1	8	3	55	
Senior Registrars & Support Staff	2	4											2
Registrars	6	10				2	3			2			9
Family Consultants & Liaison Officers	7	13				3	4	4	2	2	2		15
Administration	3	3				3	2	1		3			3
Total	59	99	1	3	3	22	29	9	3	17	5	110	

* Budgeted FTE's provided as actuals are not available

Table 4

Total FTEs for the FCoA for the Financial Year 2006/07 - May Year to Date *

	Adelaide Registry	Brisbane Registry	Coffs Harbour Rural Registry	Lismore Rural Registry	Rockhampton Rural Registry	Canberra Registry	Dandenong Registry	Darwin Registry	Alice Springs Rural- Registry	Hobart Registry	Launceston Rural Registry
Communications Office											
Human Resources											
Judges	3	7					1			1	
IT Staff											
<i>Other Administrative Staff</i>	52	87	1	5	3	19	24	8	3	15	5
Finance & Property Staff											
Library Services & Statistics											
Chief Justice & Support Staff											
Chief Executive Officer & Support Staff											
Director Child Dispute Services & Support Staff											
Principal Registrar & Support Staff											
Executive Director Client Services & support & Marshall											
Judges Support	4	12					2			1	
Judicial Registrars & Support Staff	2	2									
Client Service	29	50	1	3	3	10	16	4	1	9	3
Senior Registrars & Support Staff	2	1									
Registrars	6	7				2	3			2	
Family Consultants & Liaison Officers	6	11		2		3	3	3	2	2	2
Administration	3	3				1	1	1		2	
Total	55	94	1	5	3	20	24	8	3	16	5

* based on actual FTE's