

Your opinion is important

If you have any concerns or issues from your contact with the Family Law Court, you can speak to an Indigenous family liaison officer.

The Indigenous family liaison officer will not discuss the specific details of your case with other people or court staff without your permission.

See the Family Law Courts' fact sheet 'Complaints and Feedback' for more information.

You can also help the Court to help you by:

- Informing the Court if you have any particular needs or problems, including:
 - ~ concerns about your safety or the safety of your family when attending at court
 - ~ if you have a current Family Violence Order
 - ~ if you would like an interpreter, and
 - ~ if you would like a family member or support person to attend with you.
- Providing the Court with complete and accurate information.
- Informing the Court know if you cannot attend a scheduled conference or court event.
- Attending all scheduled court appointments and hearings unless excused by the Court.

If you would like to speak to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous family liaison officer call **1300 352 000** toll free.

For more information about the Courts and their services go to:

- www.familylawcourts.gov.au



FAMILY LAW COURTS

Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of the Family Law Courts

Indigenous families and the family law courts

The Family Law Courts help families to resolve problems they may experience as a result of separation and divorce. This includes when parents and family members cannot agree on arrangements for the children. Some of the issues may include: who the children will live with and how much time the children will spend with each parent or other family members.

If parents and family members cannot agree, they may ask the Family Law Courts to help them reach a decision about the children. The Courts may refer the family to community-based family counselling or family dispute resolution or arrange for a conference with a court-based family consultant. A family consultant can help the family discuss the issues and also help them to reach an agreement about the children.

See the Family Law Courts' fact sheet 'Family Consultants' for more information on the role of court-based family consultants.

The Family Law Courts strive to ensure the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are considered when going to Court. For example, the Courts must consider the rights of an Indigenous child to enjoy his or her culture, including the right to enjoy that culture with other people who share that culture.

The Courts must also consider any kinship relationships that may impact on an Indigenous child as well as the child-rearing practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. These are just some of the factors the Court considers when deciding what is in a child's best interests.

The Courts' Indigenous family liaison officers program

The Family Law Courts' Child Dispute Service has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Liaison Officers in the Northern Territory and Far North Queensland. These officers are Indigenous people who are well known and respected members of their local community.

Indigenous family liaison officers work with court-based family consultants in these locations to ensure that Indigenous families can access and use all the services of the Courts.

Indigenous family liaison officers also have a role to play in advising the Courts about how to make services more effective in responding to the needs of Indigenous families. This is achieved through discussion with Indigenous clients, community representatives and Indigenous agencies. The Courts use this important information to plan and develop improved services for Indigenous families.

Indigenous family liaison officers can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in many ways.

Indigenous family liaison officers CAN:

- Provide Indigenous clients with helpful information about the Courts.
- Help Indigenous clients tell their story when dealing with other court staff.
- Educate court staff regarding the culture and needs of Indigenous families.
- Help court staff in responding to the needs of Indigenous clients.
- Provide support, assistance and advice to Indigenous clients when appropriate.
- Provide information regarding local resources and make referrals to other agencies as appropriate.

Indigenous family liaison officers CANNOT:

- Give legal advice, or represent you in court.
- Speak on your behalf.
- Take sides in any dispute.
- Tell the Courts what to do.
- Tell you what to do.