

## PART FOUR: ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

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Section 89 of the *Federal Magistrates Act 1999* provides for the Federal Magistrates Court to administer its own affairs. Under section 12 of the Act, the Chief Federal Magistrate is responsible for the orderly and expeditious discharge of the business of the court. Federal magistrates take a collegiate approach to court administration. Advisory committees provide direction on various aspects of court administration.

### COURT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

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The federal magistrates are responsible for the administration of the court, subject to some specific matters that are the exclusive responsibility of the Chief Federal Magistrate. In order to facilitate the administration of the court, federal magistrates have established a number of committees that met regularly throughout the year. Most committees are convened via teleconference either before court or during the lunch break. The committees are as follows:

- ~ Audit committee
- ~ Business information management committee
- ~ Court users and systems committee
- ~ Ethics committee
- ~ Judgment committee
- ~ Judicial education committee
- ~ Legal (Rules) committee
- ~ Pro bono committee
- ~ Primary dispute resolution committee
- ~ Self represented litigants committee

### AUDIT COMMITTEE

The audit committee is a statutory committee established in compliance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act*. It is chaired by Maurie Kennedy PSM and has two federal magistrates and the registrar of the court as members.

The committee met on three occasions during the year. The main issues considered during these meetings related to internal audit reviews undertaken as part of the internal audit plan for 2002-03. These included internal audit reports on revenues, expenses and contracts. The committee also considered a range of other matters associated with financial statements, evaluation of the fraud control plan and risk management.

The committee benefited greatly from the input received from Australian National Audit Office representatives who attended the committee meetings as observers.

## **BUSINESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

This committee oversees the management of the Federal Magistrates Court's business information and systems, meeting monthly via teleconference. Business information includes information technology systems, knowledge management, training and corporate systems.

The core functions of the committee are:

- ~ Development of business information strategy and assessing the information technology to support the strategy
- ~ Planning the delivery of the benefits of the business information strategy
- ~ Setting, reviewing and monitoring the information management budget
- ~ Monitoring developments in knowledge management and information technology.

Together with the court users and systems committee, this committee has been involved in the implementation of Casetrack throughout the Federal Magistrates Court.

The committee identified the need for an Information and Knowledge Manager and that position has been filled. The occupant of that position has been involved in assessing the information technology needs of federal magistrates and staff, and has been assessing software for valuing superannuation interests.

Other issues considered by this committee during the past year include the acquisition of computer replacements, the provision of divorce application forms to the public on-line, portable transcript recording devices and the technology available to facilitate hearings using audio and video-conferencing.

## **COURT USERS AND SYSTEMS COMMITTEE**

The court users committee has a useful role to play in court services policy development.

Some of the issues that have been considered by the committee throughout the year have included:

- ~ Development of a circuit policy
- ~ Video-conferencing guidelines
- ~ Standardising order templates
- ~ Service charter
- ~ File management and compliance issues

This committee, along with the business information management committee, has been involved in the implementation of Casetrack.

Another significant project of the committee was a 'docket system appraisal'. The docket system is the method by which the Federal Magistrates Court manages its judicial workload. The docket system operates, with minor variations, in all locations and essentially ensures that each case is managed by the judicial officer who will make the final determination. The committee is undertaking an audit to clarify how the system is working in practice and to ensure greater uniformity in case management practices.

The committee also fosters regular meetings between members of the court, registry staff, user groups and representatives from professional associations. These meetings provide useful forums for users to highlight issues pertaining to court services and practice and procedure.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

This committee considers ethical issues and provides practical advice in relation to ethical matters. While recognising that the primary responsibility of deciding whether or not a particular activity is appropriate rests with the individual judicial officer, there are times when the guidance of colleagues is useful. The committee seeks to provide practical guidance on the ethical conduct expected of judicial office holders as well as general protocols in relation to matters such as the handling of complaints and protocols for complaints about delays in reserved decisions.

## JUDGMENTS COMMITTEE

This committee oversees the management of the court's judgments and provides recommendations on what decisions should be published. The court aims to have all written decisions available in electronic form through the court's web site and other key legal research sites. The court is grateful to the Australasian Legal Information Institute for providing a readily accessible and comprehensive library of the court's decisions.

In 2002-03, federal magistrates faced the challenge of balancing the delivery of reserved judgments with the limited time available in chambers to write *ex tempore* judgments. The significant increase in the number of migration cases has contributed to this concern. Priority is given to the production of written reasons if there is an appeal. The court's

protocol requires that where a judgment is reserved, the judgment should be delivered within eight weeks. In relation to general federal law matters the data demonstrates that 85 per cent of reserved judgments are delivered within that time. Forty-five per cent of decisions are delivered contemporaneously with the hearing.

The committee also considered the issue of standardised catchwords for court decisions, which are critical in the electronic distribution and access of judgments.

The committee also gave consideration to the naming and editing of family law and child support judgments pursuant to section 121 of the *Family Law Act 1975*.

The court considers that publication of its decisions is an important accountability and information tool, it promotes understanding of the work of the court and enhances transparency.

Over 700 decisions were posted on the court's web site during the year. The published decisions broadly reflect the court's workload in the various jurisdictions, however, in many family law and child support cases no written reasons are produced. During the year, 39 per cent of decisions published on the web site were in the migration jurisdiction, 28 per cent in family law, 15 per cent in bankruptcy, 6 per cent in human rights, 4 per cent in child support, 3 per cent in administrative law and 1 per cent in trade practices. The remaining decisions related to matters of practice and procedure.

## JUDICIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This committee has met regularly throughout the year, and has been involved in:

- ~ Devising a judicial orientation program for new federal magistrates
- ~ Planning for the on-going judicial training needs of federal magistrates
- ~ Developing tools for improving judgment writing skills
- ~ Conducting a survey of educational/library facilities
- ~ Setting guidelines for attendance at external judicial courses.

As a new federal court, which is growing in terms of judicial officers and areas of federal jurisdiction, the committee has an important role to play.

A program has been devised for new federal magistrates which includes a mentoring component and training specifically designed to meet the needs of federal magistrates.

The training of federal magistrates is addressed at their biannual meeting. In addition, the committee has encouraged federal magistrates to attend external training programs run by bodies such as the Judicial Commission of NSW, the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and Judicial Conference of Australia.

## LEGAL (RULES) COMMITTEE

A role for the legal (rules) committee is to review the court's rules ensuring that they continue to assist the court to operate informally and efficiently. The rules are regularly reviewed to accommodate new areas of jurisdiction.

The committee has been involved in a number of significant projects.

The committee is grateful for the help and assistance provided throughout the year from the Office of Legislative Drafting.

### HARMONISED BANKRUPTCY RULES PROJECT

The Federal Court and the Federal Magistrates Court have been involved in this joint project to develop harmonised court rules for bankruptcy proceedings. During the year a set of draft harmonised rules were circulated to stakeholders for comment. While not proposing significant changes to the existing bankruptcy rules it is considered advantageous to have harmonised rules of the two courts.

### FAMILY LAW RULES REVISION PROJECT

The Family Court commenced a rule revision exercise in July 2001. During the year the Family Court issued a draft for comment. Many of the proposed changes to the Family Law Rules (and forms), if implemented, may lead to the committee considering appropriate amendments to the court's rules and forms.

### SUBMISSIONS BY THE COURT

The committee also oversees legislative proposals that may impact on the court and considers various legislative reform proposals. When appropriate, the court provides a submission. Some of these have included:

- ~ A submission to the Advisory Council on Intellectual Property in the context of their consideration of *Extension of the jurisdiction of patent, trade mark and design matters to the Federal Magistrates Court*.
- ~ A submission to an issue paper prepared by the *Joint Taskforce report on the Use of Bankruptcy and Family Law Schemes to avoid Payment of Tax*.
- ~ Recommendations from the Federal Costs Advisory Committee.
- ~ Reports and discussion papers raising issues pertaining to the jurisdiction of the Federal Magistrates Court, prepared by bodies such as the Australian Law Reform Commission, Family Law Council and others.

## PRIMARY DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

The role of the primary dispute resolution committee is to develop policy and monitor the delivery of primary dispute resolution (PDR) services of the Federal Magistrates Court. During 2002-03, the committee monitored the following projects:

- ~ Implementation of the recommendations of the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group in particular, the membership of the PDR Coordinator in various projects which have been implemented across Australia.
- ~ Referrals to community based organisations.
- ~ Conciliation conferences in family law property matters conducted by Relationships Australia in Melbourne and Brisbane.
- ~ Referral of family reports to external report writers.
- ~ Provision of family reports by the Family Court.
- ~ The development of a new PDR brochure.
- ~ The survey of PDR service providers.
- ~ The response of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC) Alternative Dispute Resolution terminology discussion paper.
- ~ The rules relating to PDR processes in the proposed new Family Law Rules.

## PRO BONO COMMITTEE

This committee oversees the pro bono schemes that operate in the Federal Magistrates Court.

The increasing familiarity with and popularity of the Federal Magistrates Court has seen a growing number of litigants appearing without legal representation. The court has established a pro bono scheme that operates slightly different in each state. The approach varies due to the court's objective of ensuring that its program complements any existing methods of assistance. The court's scheme is not intended to substitute legal aid and litigants are encouraged to explore other avenues of assistance.

A court-based pro bono scheme is in operation, similar to that which operates in the Federal Court. Part 12 of the *Federal Magistrates Court Rules 2001* sets out rules in relation to the court-administered scheme which are similar to Order 80 of the *Federal Court Rules*. This allows a federal magistrate to decide whether a person will be referred for assistance.

Referrals for pro bono have generally been confined to general federal law matters, particularly in migration matters.

In Melbourne, assistance to migration litigants is also available through Victoria Legal Aid, which has established a Migration Duty Solicitor Scheme. The scheme has been

operating since July 2002 and provides free advice to unrepresented litigants who are entering migration-related proceedings in the Federal Magistrates Court and the Federal Court in Melbourne.

In addition to the court-based pro bono scheme, a further scheme has been operating in the Sydney registry since July 2001. The 'Sydney pilot' consists of a panel of solicitors representing four of the larger firms. They can provide initial advice and, in appropriate cases, representation at the hearing. While originally established as a pilot program, the scheme is now permanent, the number of firms increased and a special migration panel established. A similar scheme now operates in Adelaide. The court plans to extend the scheme to Melbourne in the near future.

The court is grateful for the help provided by the Federal Court staff in assisting with the pro bono scheme. In addition, it appreciates the generosity of those members of the legal profession who agree to give their valuable time voluntarily to assist in such matters.

## SELF REPRESENTED LITIGANTS COMMITTEE

The role of this committee is to address and monitor issues affecting self represented litigants. The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss issues concerning self represented litigants as well as the impact of people representing themselves on the court. The committee's interest in self represented litigants extends across all jurisdictions of the court.

In identifying the needs of self represented litigants, the committee has designed a project that will enable it to obtain direct feedback from self represented litigants. The project titled 'a day in the life of a self represented litigant' will monitor the progress of a selected number of self represented litigants in family law, child support and general federal law.

The committee has also been active in the development of two projects aimed at targeting contravention (of child orders) and child support applications. The projects will focus on enhancing court services and information available to self represented litigants in these two areas.

The committee has a keen interest in promoting new assistance programs for self represented litigants as well as strengthening its relationships with existing legal aid and pro bono organisations.

The committee monitored and will continue to monitor over the next 12 months the following projects:

- ~ A day in the life of a self represented litigant
- ~ Contravention pilot in Brisbane

- ~ Child support pilot in Melbourne
- ~ Links with the Family Court and the Federal Court self represented litigant projects
- ~ Collating a national directory of organisations providing assistance to self represented litigants

This committee works in close consultation with the pro bono, court users and legal rules committees to ensure that the needs of self represented litigants are being met across all levels of the court.

## CORPORATE PLAN

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The 2001-04 corporate plan for the Federal Magistrates Court is based around an overall goal of providing a simple and accessible venue for the resolution of less complex federal law disputes. It identified six key result areas:

- ~ Primary dispute resolution
- ~ Public information
- ~ Effective court services
- ~ Technology
- ~ Effective use and management of resources
- ~ Developing relationships with stakeholders.

Priorities identified within these key result areas are:

- ~ Developing systems to manage high workloads
- ~ Providing regional services
- ~ Managing stakeholder expectations
- ~ Developing the relationship between the judiciary and the staff of the court
- ~ Maintaining the independence of the court.

Federal magistrates meet biannually to consider strategic planning issues and to review strategic directions for the court. Key strategic goals for the next five years include:

- ~ Delivering affordable, user friendly and accessible justice for all parties
- ~ Being a broadly-based, multi-jurisdictional court, dealing with less complex federal matters
- ~ Achieving growth necessary to meet increasing demand by the end of this next developmental period
- ~ Developing robust court-wide practices, procedures and systems to benefit all users.

Organisational objectives of the court are linked to individual performance of staff through the performance management program. During 2002-03, the national administrative staff of the court were also involved in a planning workshop to develop implementation strategies which would align with the strategic directions identified by federal magistrates.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

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The Federal Magistrates Court has implemented a risk management policy and plan. These were developed after participating in a series of workshops on risk management sponsored by Comcover, the Commonwealth's insurable risk scheme and following a process of identifying major risks.

A review of the risk management plan is scheduled for completion in 2003-04.

## FRAUD CONTROL AND INTERNAL AUDIT

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A fraud control plan is in place based on a fraud risk assessment covering all aspects of the work of the Federal Magistrates Court. The fraud control plan includes appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting procedures and processes that meet the needs of the Federal Magistrates Court and comply with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines. There were no instances of fraud detected during the year and no investigations undertaken.

Internal audit services are provided by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. Audits were conducted during 2003-03 relating to: expenses, leave entitlements, payroll and allowances, and contracts management. No control or compliance deficiencies involving significant or unacceptable risk were identified.

## THE APS CODE OF CONDUCT

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The APS values and code of conduct are central to the terms and conditions of staff of the Federal Magistrates Court as reflected in the Certified Agreement 2003-06.

The APS values and code of conduct are also promoted in the Federal Magistrates Court through induction, on the intranet, and through a performance management and development program linked to values associated with professionalism, integrity, teamwork and innovation.

During 2002-03, the Federal Magistrates Court conducted a values workshop for the majority of staff to explain and promote the adoption of organisational values.

## SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

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The Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Magistrates Court is Peter May. The Chief Executive Officer assists the Federal Magistrates Court in the conduct of its administrative affairs. The Chief Executive Officer has the power of a secretary under the *Public Service Act 1999* and the responsibilities of the chief executive of an agency under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

The principal executive group of the Federal Magistrates Court comprises:

Adele Byrne, Registrar

Brian Scammell, Chief Finance Officer

Steve Agnew, Coordinator of Court Services

Susan Cibau, Coordinator of Primary Dispute Resolution Services

## REMUNERATION

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The Remuneration Tribunal determines remuneration for the federal magistrates and Chief Executive Officer.

During 2002-03, the senior executives were remunerated at the Australian Public Service Executive Level 2 range, in accordance with the *Federal Magistrates Court Certified Agreement 2001-03*. There are no employees at the Senior Executive Service level.

The performance management program for staff of the Federal Magistrates Court provides for performance linked advancement within a salary range at various levels. The higher pay point then becomes the employee's nominal salary. If employees are at the top point of the salary range for their level there is no further advancement in salary, but those employees are eligible for a three per cent performance based bonus. Performance bonuses for 2002-03 were paid following the end of the reporting period. The aggregate amount of performance pay was \$13 364, in relation to seven employees. The Chief Executive Officer was also paid a 15 per cent bonus in 2002-03 for the 2001-02 financial year amounting to \$19 378.05, in accordance with a determination made by the Remuneration Tribunal.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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The Federal Magistrates Court was made a prescribed agency under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* with effect from 1 July 2000.

The major source of revenue for the operations of the Federal Magistrates Court is an appropriation from government. The appropriation amount for 2002-03 was \$12.057 million.

During 2002-03, operating expenses were \$13.4 million. This resulted in an operating loss of \$1.3 million. This was a planned operating loss, approved by the Minister for Finance, involving use of previously accumulated surpluses to offset 2002-03 expenses. The major expenses in 2002-03 were \$7.9 million in respect of employee expenses and \$5.2 million relating to supplier payments.

The Federal Magistrates Court relies on infrastructure and support provided by the Family Court and Federal Court. In particular, those courts provided registry services for the Federal Magistrates Court as the court does not have its own registries. Both of those courts have supplied estimates of resources provided free of charge to the Federal Magistrates Court. The aggregate amount is approximately \$12.5 million, and is reflected in the financial statements included with this annual report. The work that the Federal Magistrates Court now undertakes is work that would have previously been undertaken by the Federal Court and Family Court. The cost of resources provided by those courts is therefore a cost that those courts would otherwise have incurred as part of their operating costs had the Federal Magistrates Court not been established.

During the first two years of operation, revenues from government for the operation of the Federal Magistrates Court exceeded expenses incurred, resulting in relatively significant retained earnings. This surplus was largely a consequence of lower than anticipated start-up costs. In the May 2003 Budget, the Government announced that it would fund two additional federal magistrates and support costs, to be offset by the repayment of \$4.4 million in retained earnings. This repayment was made in 2002-03 and is reflected in the Statement of Financial Position as an equity adjustment. The other major equity adjustment relates to a repayment of \$0.439 million in interest earnings following the government's decision to discontinue the agency banking incentive scheme.

The Federal Magistrates Court receives revenue on behalf of the government (administered revenue not available to offset Federal Magistrates Court operating costs), mainly for court fees. The amount received in 2002-03 was approximately \$10 million.

## ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE FEDERAL COURT AND FAMILY COURT

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Arrangements were made in 2000 by the Chief Federal Magistrate, pursuant to legislative provisions, for the Federal Court and the Family Court to carry out certain functions on behalf of the Federal Magistrates Court. Supporting arrangements have been made,

under section 100 of the Federal Magistrates Act, for staff of the superior courts to be made available for the purposes of the Federal Magistrates Court.

In addition, arrangements have been made to use the courtrooms and to share the registries and other facilities of those courts. Both courts provide registry services for clients of the Federal Magistrates Court. The Family Court also provides information technology infrastructure and support services to the Federal Magistrates Court.

A memorandum of understanding with each of the superior courts supports these arrangements. The memorandums were due to be revised in June 2003. Discussions about the new arrangements have commenced, but have yet to be finalised.

## PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

In general, the Family Court and the Federal Court are funded for property costs relating to areas occupied or used by the Federal Magistrates Court. Property related issues are therefore generally managed by those courts. However, the Federal Magistrates Court participates in the National Law Courts Building Management Committee and, during 2002-03, forums relating to the Adelaide Commonwealth law courts building project, to ensure the court's future requirements are met.

The activities of the Federal Magistrates Court do not have implications for Ecologically Sustainable Development that require reporting under section 516A of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. However, the Federal Magistrates Court adopts measures, with other jurisdictions within Commonwealth law courts buildings, to minimise impacts on the environment. These include recycling schemes and measures to reduce energy and water consumption in those buildings.

## MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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### CERTIFIED AGREEMENT

During 2002-03, a new agreement was negotiated directly with staff covering terms and conditions for three years to 30 June 2006. The agreement was certified by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 30 June 2003.

The agreement supports the Federal Magistrates Court objective of providing a simple and accessible forum for the resolution of less complex disputes by:

- ~ Recognising the significant contribution and effort of FMS employees
- ~ Providing remuneration and conditions that are competitive and affordable
- ~ Promoting flexibility and responsiveness to new challenges facing the court

- ~ Encouraging employees to support continuous improvement
- ~ Providing a safe and healthy workplace
- ~ Promoting work and life balance.

Key features of the agreement are:

- ~ Salary increases of 3.5 per cent on 1 July 2003 and 1 July 2004, and 4 per cent on 1 July 2005
- ~ The continuation of a performance management program linked to Federal Magistrates Court objectives, and salary advancement linked to performance
- ~ Flexibility in managing leave and attendance, recognising the need for staff to balance work and non-work priorities
- ~ A commitment to training and staff development
- ~ Emphasis on the APS values and code of conduct.

Fifty-six staff, including part-time staff, were covered by the certified agreement as at 30 June 2003. Staff engaged through employment agencies on a temporary basis are paid by the agency and are not covered by the Federal Magistrates Court certified agreement.

The salary ranges for staff are shown in part eight. Staff are eligible for membership of the Commonwealth public sector superannuation schemes. Apart from assistance with study, there are no fringe benefits available to staff engaged by the Federal Magistrates Court under the certified agreement or under Australian Workplace Agreements.

#### *AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS*

During 2002-03, the Federal Magistrates Court engaged suitably qualified and experienced legal professionals to perform the statutory functions of registrar on a sessional basis to deal primarily with undefended dissolution of marriage proceedings (excluding certain orders relating to children). These positions are filled on a casual basis at a level equivalent to an Executive Level 2 and under terms and conditions specified in individual Australian Workplace Agreements, rather than under the Federal Magistrates Court certified agreement. Seven sessional registrars were a party to Australian Workplace Agreements as at 30 June 2003.

#### *WORKPLACE DIVERSITY*

The Federal Magistrates Court has a workplace diversity plan in place, which was signed by the Chief Federal Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer and is available to all staff on the intranet.

## *DISABILITY STRATEGY*

The Federal Magistrates Court's workplace diversity plan includes strategies relating to people with disabilities. In relation to court clients, the Federal Magistrates Court also has a complaints/grievance mechanism and participates in court building forums which address issues relating to court access for people with disabilities. The Federal Magistrates Court has a charter which provides a commitment to assisting people that might have physical, hearing, visual, language or geographical barriers to accessing the court. The court is co-located with other federal courts and participates in a national building management committee, which addresses building access issues on a periodic basis.

## *OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY*

The Federal Magistrates Court aims to provide a safe and healthy work environment for staff.

The Federal Magistrates Court has issued an occupational health and safety handbook for staff which highlights the need to maintain a safe and healthy work environment and identified staff roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety.

Initiatives undertaken during the year included the following:

- ~ Ergonomic assessments conducted by CRS Australia on an identified needs basis. These assessments provide staff with advice and information on work station set-up, working posture, stretching and work breaks. Where necessary, additional or replacement equipment has been provided.
- ~ An agreement with a professional employee assistance provider is in place to provide staff and their immediate families with access to voluntary, free and confidential counselling about any problems which affect their lives, work performance or job satisfaction.
- ~ The new certified agreement, which was negotiated during 2002-03, and comes into effect on 30 June 2003, includes health promotion initiatives for employees.
- ~ Flexible working arrangements are in place to assist in managing work and family issues, and staff are encouraged to access recreation leave provisions for a reasonable rest break each year.

In relation to security, the Federal Magistrates Court is co-located with the Family Court and the Federal Court and relies on the safety measures put in place by those courts regarding security and building management. The marshal of the Family Court is also the marshal of the Federal Magistrates Court, and provides security advice and management for both courts.

The court is participating in a review of Commonwealth court security being facilitated by the Attorney-General's Department.

There were no accidents or dangerous occurrences during the year and no investigations were conducted. The Federal Magistrates Court was not required to give any notices under section 68 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*. No directions under section 45 or notices under sections 29, 46 or 47 of that Act were given to the Federal Magistrates Court during 2002-03.

### TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In 2002-03, the main focus of systems related training has been on the new case management system, Casetrack, and major office applications in use in the Federal Magistrates Court, particularly Lotus Notes and the standard Microsoft Office applications. Training was also conducted throughout the year on the use of on-line databases for legal research.

The Federal Magistrates Court also supports continuing professional development through staff attendance at seminars and conferences and through a study assistance program. One senior employee is participating in the Family Court's Administration Development Program. The study assistance program provides financial assistance and access to leave for studies relevant to the objectives of the organisation.

Staff have an opportunity to identify other training and development needs as part of the performance management program.

A new induction program was developed and implemented for new staff during 2002-03.

The majority of staff attended two national conferences conducted during the year where they had opportunity to be briefed on new work practices and systems, exchange views on best practice, and workshop particular issues. For example, the most recent conference included a session on the client service charter and provided practical strategies for dealing with challenging clients in the court environment.

The total amount spent on externally provided training (including seminars and conferences), study assistance and computer-based training in 2002-03, was approximately \$58 381. This figure excludes staff wage costs for the time spent at training, and excludes on-the-job training.