



## Family Law Courts launch a 1300 number

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The Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court of Australia today launched a nationwide 1300 phone number to assist people seeking advice with divorce or family law procedures.

Calls will be automatically redirected to a family law registry close to the caller's location until the national inquiry centre at Parramatta commences operations early next year.

The inquiry centre is part of new shared arrangements between the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia in relation to family law matters to make the court process less stressful for separating couples.

In a joint statement, the Chief Executive Officers of the Family Court of Australia, Richard Foster, and the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia, John Mathieson, said the phone line would make the courts more accessible to clients who were often stressed and confused about their separation.

"People going through separation are often unsure which court to approach, or what they need to do in the courts, but the new phone line gives them direct access to the court system and steers them in the right direction," Mr Foster said.

"The courts receive about 12,000 calls a week and the inquiry centre provides a consistent quality service for all. Trained court staff will answer any inquiries about the procedures for seeking divorce or orders about children and property, about the necessary forms and other inquiries.

"Callers will pay only the first 25 cents of their call, from anywhere in Australia, with the balance being funded by the courts."

Mr Foster said the inquiry centre could not give any legal advice or relationship counselling as that was not the courts' role, but that staff could refer callers to these services.

The national number is 1300 352 000.

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