



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW CHIEF JUSTICE AND
DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FAMILY COURT**

Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock, today announced the appointments of Chief Federal Magistrate Diana Bryant as the new Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia and of the Hon Justice John Faulks as Deputy Chief Justice of the Court.

Ms Bryant will take up her appointment on 5 July 2004 following the retirement of Chief Justice Alastair Nicholson.

“Ms Bryant is the inaugural Chief Federal Magistrate of the Federal Magistrates Court, having held that office since May 2000,” Mr Ruddock said.

“As head of that Court, she has gained a reputation as an extremely capable judicial officer and administrator.

“Thanks in no small part to Ms Bryant’s outstanding leadership, the Federal Magistrates Court is making an extremely valuable contribution to an improved federal civil justice system.

“The Court is providing a quick and more accessible forum for litigants in less complex civil law disputes, enabling the Family Court and the Federal Court to focus on the more difficult and lengthy matters.

“I am pleased that Ms Bryant has agreed to provide further valuable service to the Australian community in this important new role.

“I am sure her considerable legal and administrative skills, and her personal attributes, equip her well for this challenging position,” Mr Ruddock said.

Justice Faulks is a judge of the Family Court of Australia. Before his appointment in 1994, Justice Faulks practised extensively in family law.

“Justice Faulks’ contribution to the Family Court over the past 10 years has been significant,” Mr Ruddock said.

“This experience equips him well to undertake the important responsibilities of his new office.”

The office of Deputy Chief Justice has been vacant since the retirement of the Hon Alan Barblett AO in 1998.

Justice Faulks is based in Canberra and takes up his appointment on 25 June 2004.

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Biographical details attached

BIOGRAPHY OF MS DIANA BRYANT

Ms Bryant is the inaugural Chief Federal Magistrate of the Federal Magistrates Court, having held that office since May 2000.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, Ms Bryant practised at the Victorian Bar from 1990 until 2000 where she specialised in family law and de facto property disputes, particularly at appellate level.

Through her family law practice, Ms Bryant also dealt with bankruptcy and human rights and equal opportunity matters. She was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1997.

Between 1977 and 1990, Ms Bryant was a partner with the firm of Phillips Fox in Perth where she practised as a solicitor and counsel specialising in family law. She was a Director of Australian Airlines from 1984 to 1989.

Ms Bryant holds Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees. She was admitted as a legal practitioner in Victoria in 1970.

BIOGRAPHY OF JUSTICE JOHN FAULKS

Prior to his appointment to the Family Court of Australia in 1994, Justice Faulks was a Senior Partner of Phillips Fox, practising extensively in family law.

He was Chairman of the Family Law Council of Australia from 1992 to 1995, and a Member of the Council between 1990 and 1992.

Justice Faulks was President of the Law Council of Australia from 1987 to 1988, Vice-President from 1986 to 1987, and Treasurer from 1984 to 1985.

He was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1969 and holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the Australian National University.