Family Law Lawyer discusses filing and listing of family law proceedings in circuit locations

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A long sigh of relief and joy comes from family law lawyers across New South Wales in the wake of new processes entering the profession in 2023.

Commencing in January 2023, parties that wish to commence family law proceedings in circuit locations will be granted the opportunity to choose their first return dates. This can be conducted entirely remotely through accessing the Commonwealth Courts Portal.

Family law lawyers will advise that Circuit lists service rural and regional areas of states in Australia. In other words, they provide legal services and access to the justice system to client's living remotely. Such a change will bring the same access to the Courts and benefit of the case management pathway like those residing in larger cities.

How will these changes be implemented?

Further to this development, first return events will be heard before a dedicated Circuit Judicial Registrar. These events will be available and will subsequently occur in a frequent manner as is the case in larger registries. To accommodate for quick and easy access, these listings will be attended by family law lawyers and judicial officers through Microsoft Teams.

Does this change the process of an Interim Hearing?

Family law lawyers working with circuit courts will be able to attend interim hearings before a Senior Judicial Registrar. This will be able to occur remotely and electronically (via Microsoft Teams), or in person, depending on the specific circuit location.

Will the same Judicial Registrar hear these matters?

Specific circuit locations will have one Judicial Registrar assigned to them. This will ensure there is consistency for the parties and where possible the same Senior Judicial Registrar will conduct interim hearings.

So where are the circuit locations?

The following locations (in NSW) will be available on the Commonwealth Courts Portal for first return dates in early 2023:

- Albury
- Armidale
- Broken Hill
- Coffs Harbour

- Dubbo
- Lismore
- Tamworth
- Wagga Wagga
- Wauchope/Forster

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Disclaimer

Family law situations can be complex and sometimes they can involve serious issues. Information outlined is proposed to provide general guidance only. Due to the seriousness of legal matters as well as the uniqueness of your individual situation, professional advice should be sought. For advice, please contact one of our Family Lawyers