

Media Kit

Queensland's leading family law association



Family Law Practitioners' Association of Queensland

www.flpa.org.au

Media contacts:

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Leadership in family law



Factsheet

About FLPA

- FLPA is Queensland's leading professional body representing those practising in family law - solicitors, barristers, social workers, psychologists, members of the judiciary and associated fields.
- FLPA members range from large full service legal firms to small individual family law operators, to government funded providers to the industry and law students.
- A non-profit organisation, FLPA has more than 500 members in Queensland, northern New South Wales and the Northern Territory.
- FLPA aims to provide its metropolitan and regional members with leadership, education and practical resources to assist them in their day-to-day family law practice.
- FLPA monitors and promotes reform of family law which serves the needs and concerns of families.
- FLPA members can offer advice on matters including; separation, divorce, childcare issues, cohabitation, defacto relationships, pre-nuptial agreements, adoption, gay and lesbian rights, child hearings, child protection, domestic violence, wills and estate planning.
- FLPA members are committed to resolving family disputes in Queensland.



Factsheet

About family law

- Family law is the area of law that deals with particular family matters including divorce, children and property.
- In Australia, family law issues covering areas such as divorce, children's orders, parenting arrangements, property division and spousal maintenance are dealt with under the Family Law Act 1975.
- Child protection and domestic violence are dealt with under separate state and territory legislation.

About the Family Law Amendment

- On 22 May 2006, Australia passed amendments to its Family Law Act 1975, named the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006, which applies to any court matters involving children that were in court on or after 1 July 2006.
- The amendment aims to ensure that the best interests of children are met by ensuring that "children have the benefit of both their parents having a meaningful involvement in their lives, to the maximum extent consistent with the best interests of the child."
- The Family Law Act is administered by the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court.



Factsheet

Family law fast facts

- The **number of marriages** for every 1,000 people has generally fallen in the last 40 years (9.3 in 1970, 7.4 in 1980, 5.3 in 2001, 5.5 in 2008).
- **Cohabitation** before marriage has increased significantly in the last 40 years. In 1975, only 16 per cent of those married lived together beforehand, increasing to 23 per cent in 1979. . By 2008, however, 78 per cent of those married lived together beforehand.
- For those people who married in 1985–1987 and 2000–2002, the expected **average duration of their total married life** remained unchanged at around 32 years.
- The **number of divorces** for every 1,000 people more than doubled between 1975 and 1976 (from 1.8 to 4.6) when the Family Law Act 1975 came into force.
- The **number of divorces** for every 1,000 people has steadily declined in the last 30 years (2.7 in 1980, 2.8 in 1999, 2.2 in 2008).
- The **divorce rate from second marriages** is a little higher than that from first marriages.
- At 2.2, **Australia is in the top 10 countries** for the highest divorce rate per 1,000 people. The United States is higher at approximately 4.95, Russia at 3.36, and the United Kingdom at 3.08.
- Reporting of **domestic violence** has increased. Thirty-six per cent of women who experienced physical assault by a male perpetrator reported it to the police in 2005 compared to 19 per cent in 1996, and that 19 per cent of women who experienced sexual assault reported it to the police in 2005 compared to 15 per cent in 1996.
- **Contact arrangements** for separated parents has changed. The proportion of children who rarely had contact with their natural parent living elsewhere (less than once per year or never) has declined (30% in 1997, 26% in 2003, 28% in 2006-07 and 24% in 2009-10).

References:

Australian Institute of Family Studies , Americans for Divorce Reform
Australian Bureau of Statistics Lifetime marriage and divorce trends. (2007). (Cat. No. 4102.0). Canberra: ABS.
Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey, (2005), (Cat. No. 4906.0), Canberra, ABS.
Australian Bureau of Statistics Family Characteristics Survey, (2009-2010), (Cat. No. 4442.0 Canberra, ABS.,



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Deborah Awyzio

FLPA President

Principal, DA Family Lawyers

Deborah Awyzio has practised family law for more than 15 years.

An accredited family law specialist, she was appointed the Family Law Practitioners' Association of Queensland (FLPA) president in 2011 after two years as vice president.

Deborah is a council member of the Queensland Law Society and is also a representative on the Queensland Law Society council for the Attorney-General of Queensland.

Deborah is a member on the panels of:

- Independent court appointed children's representative in the Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court; and
- Court appointed separate representatives in the Children's Court and Children's Services Tribunal.



Deborah's practice specialty is court appearances in all areas of family law including the Family Court of Australia, Federal Magistrates Court, Children's Court and Children's Services Tribunal.

Deborah was admitted as a solicitor in Queensland in 1996 and has a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Information Technology from the Queensland University of Technology.

Deborah is the media spokesperson for the Family Law Practitioners' Association in Queensland and is able to make comment on a number of family law issues including:

- Separation and divorce
- Child care agreements
- Same sex relationships and rights
- Surrogacy
- The Family Law Act
- Domestic violence
- Child protection
- The Hague Convention