

**FAMILY LAW ACT 1975**

**IN THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT AND  
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA  
(DIVISION 2)**

**AT BRISBANE**

**No. (P)NCC3896/2023**

**BETWEEN**

**STEPHEN CHRISTOPHER COOKE  
(Applicant)**

**AND**

**HEATHER ANNE COOKE  
(Respondent)**

**AND**

**INDEPENDENT CHILDREN'S LAWYER**

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**ORDER 23/8/2024  
(IN CHAMBERS)**

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**FILE NO: (P)NCC3896/2023**

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**STEPHEN CHRISTOPHER COOKE (Applicant)**

**AND:**

**HEATHER ANNE COOKE (Respondent)**

**AND:**

**INDEPENDENT CHILDREN'S LAWYER**

**BEFORE:**

**SENIOR JUDICIAL REGISTRAR RICE**

**DATE:**

**23 August 2024**

**MADE AT:**

**BRISBANE (IN CHAMBERS)**

**UPON THE COURT'S OWN MOTION** in Chambers and there being no need for an appearance by or on the behalf of the parties

**THE COURT ORDERS UNTIL FURTHER ORDER THAT:**

1. Order 2 made on 8 August 2024 be varied such that the parties and their legal representatives (if any) shall attend Part 1 of the confidential Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Conference on **13 September 2024** at the following times:
  - a. the Applicant at **10.00am AEST**; and
  - b. the Respondent at **10.45am AEST**;


and unless otherwise directed by the Registrar conducting the FDR Conference, the Independent Children's Lawyer's appearance shall be excused from this part of the FDR Conference.



**THE COURT NOTES THAT:**

- A. This matter was listed for a confidential FDR Conference on 13 September 2024 (Part 1) at 3.00pm (Applicant) and 3.45pm (Respondent), and has been reallocated to the next available Registrar with changed times for the Part 1 due to a change to Registrar availability.
- B. All other orders made in respect of the confidential FDR Conference should be complied with.

By the Court

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop that tapers to a point on the left and ends with a small dot on the right.

Registrar



## Family Violence Information Sheet

This information sheet contains important information for litigants who have experienced, or are alleged to have perpetrated, family violence. This information is not a substitute for legal advice.

### About family violence

Family violence means violent, threatening or other behaviour that coerces or controls a member of the person's family (the family member), or causes them to be fearful (section 4AB *Family Law Act 1975*).

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (the Court) takes family violence very seriously. Protecting family members from the effects of family violence and ensuring the safety of all people engaged in the family law system, including when attending court, is a high priority for the Court.

### Safety at court

Parties concerned about their safety when attending court events can contact the Court's registry in which their matter is listed to arrange a safety at court plan prior to the listing.

### Legal and support services

The Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) is a free legal and support service provided by Legal Aid to assist family law litigants who have been affected by family violence. Litigants can attend the free Legal Aid Family Law Duty Service. For more information about FASS, see Family Advocacy and Support Services, Legal Aid, see the Legal Aid section of Find a Lawyer or contact the Court.

### Cross-examination

Division 4 of Part XI of the *Family Law Act 1975* provides that **unrepresented litigants** will be **unable** to cross-examine the other party at an interim or a final hearing if there are allegations of family violence **and**:

- i. either party has been charged with or convicted with an offence involving violence or threat of violence involving the other party: section 102NA(1)(c)(i)
- ii. a final Family Violence Order applies to both parties: section 102NA(1)(c)(ii)
- iii. an injunction has been made under section 68B or section 114 of the *Family Law Act* for the personal protection of one party against another: section 102NA(1)(c)(iii), or
- iv. the Court makes an order that personal cross-examination should not be permitted: section 102NA(1)(c)(iv).

In matters involving alleged family violence which **do not** fall into the above categories, the Court may permit personal cross-examination by an unrepresented party but must ensure alternative protections, such as cross-examination via video link, are implemented: section 102NB.

### **These provisions apply to all proceedings under the Family Law Act, not just parenting proceedings.**

Parties who are not permitted to personally cross-examine another party may retain private legal representation or apply to the Commonwealth Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties Scheme (the Scheme) to obtain legal representation. The Scheme is not means or merits tested, but applicants may be required to contribute to the cost of their representation. Applications are made through the relevant state or territory Legal Aid Commission. All applications to the Scheme must be made at least 12 weeks prior to the final hearing.

### **Unrepresented litigants who do not have legal representation either privately or through the Scheme will be unable to cross-examine the other party at the final hearing.**

Further information can be found on the Court's website: [www.fcfoa.gov.au/fl/fv/overview](http://www.fcfoa.gov.au/fl/fv/overview)

This information sheet provides general information only and is not provided as legal advice. If you have a legal issue, you should contact a lawyer before making a decision about what to do or applying to the Court. The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia cannot provide legal advice.

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