

The Family Court has introduced several proposals for reform as part of its on-going review process. A bill will be introduced in late 2012 to consult on these proposals.

- Introduction of a Family Dispute Resolution service

This will be a mandatory step before accessing the Court, and will involve mediation and possibly counselling and reconciliation. It will cost \$897, to be paid equally between the parties and with hardship provisions based on legal aid criteria.

- Track based court system for handling cases

Fast track - For urgent applications, often involving violence

Simple track - For single issue applications, no lawyers and no legal aid allowed

Standard track - For serious or complex issues, lawyers only available at trial stage

- Change DV programme provider framework to make it more flexible

Loosen regulation on providers, so that more flexibility is available in programme content. Providers will design individualised plans for each respondent.

- Mandatory Parenting Through Separation for free

- Increasing the maximum penalty of breaching protection orders from two years to three years

- Simplified Court processes with questionnaire style affidavits

- Lawyer for the child only appointed in serious cases

