



Family Court of New Zealand

www.justice.govt.nz/family

Little's Lobby

Wednesday 1 September 2004

“Our Children Must be Secure at Home”

Openness

- The Family Court needs to be more open and it is inevitable that there will be further moves in that direction.
- Openness provides a window through which we can look at ourselves.
- Privacy and confidentiality have their place.

“While that situation has permitted dignity and privacy to remain intact, it has not necessarily permitted a clear view to be obtained on how some of us conduct ourselves. The picture is not always so pretty”.

Domestic Violence

- The position from July 2003 to June 2004.
- 4,899 applications made.
- 3,229 orders were made in the first instance without notice.
- 2,673 final protection orders were made.

Period June to June	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total number of applications filed	6970	6076	5927	5649	5218	4899
Applications Filed on Notice	758	592	683	728	742	633
Applications Filed Without Notice	6212	5484	5244	4921	4476	4266
Temporary Orders Made	5247	4522	4107	3768	3430	3229
Final Orders Made	4322	3842	3625	3290	2981	2673

Reasons for Decrease

- A gradual decrease in applications may be natural and inevitable.
- Once orders are made they endure.
- Those subsequently requiring protection may be less.
- There should be no assumption that the number of victims will be greater, from year to year.

“Domestic violence is a scourge and we must, to the best of our ability, ensure that children are secure at home. If this means that at times, we err on the side of being more protective than some would like, then I make no apology for it”.

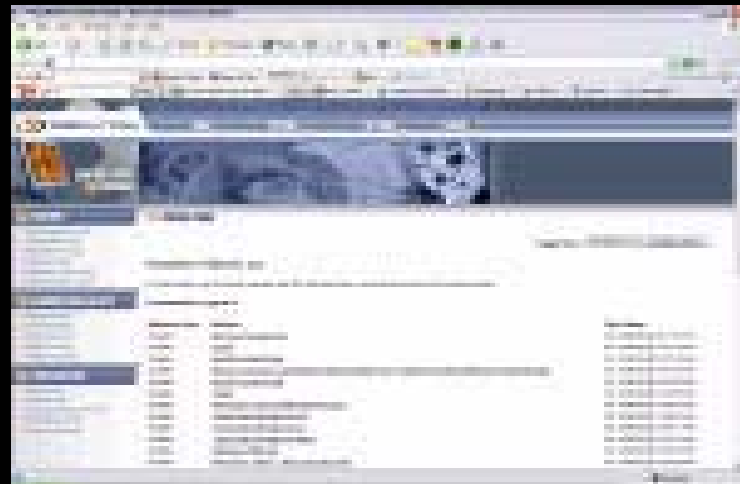
Access to Family Court

- Visits by those with a genuine interest are encouraged.



Access to Family Court

- Family Court website contains important information.
- Anonymised Judgments will protect privacy but help inform.



Court Protection of Children

- Protection through Children Young Persons and Their Families Act.
- Children are covered by protection orders issued by one adult against another.

Domestic Violence Orders

- Application filed in nearest Court.
- May be faxed to a Judge.
- To obtain an order without notice there must be a risk of harm or undue hardship.
- Judge must make an instant but balanced decision.
- We try to achieve safety for children but also secure normal parenting arrangements.

Families

What Matters

- A loving, nurturing home in which children can be brought up.
- Many conventional families are dysfunctional.
- We need to concentrate on providing love and security to our littlies.

Conclusions

- There is room for improvement and for some reform in what we do.
- Better programmes and support for victims of violence would be helpful.
- Domestic violence should be regarded by all of us as never acceptable or excusable.



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