



Australian Government



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

SOUTH
AUSTRALIA



FAMILY LAW PATHWAYS NETWORK SA 2025 FORUM

For the Children

Thursday 5 June 2025 | 8.30am registration | 9.00am– 4.30pm

Adelaide Pavilion Function Centre
Cnr South Terrace and Peacock Road Adelaide

Event Program

- 8.30am - 9.00am **Registration**
- 9.00am - 9.15am **Welcome – Chairperson Ashley Kent**
Ashley Kent, chairperson, Pathways steering committee, a member of the Family Law Committee of the Law Society and a family dispute resolution practitioner. Ashley has practiced as a lawyer for 42 years (retiring in 2023), exclusively in family law and for his last 27 years at the Legal Services Commission.
- 9.15am - 9.30am **Welcome to Country**
Michael Kumatpi Marrutya O’Brien, also known as Uncle Mickey, is a senior Aboriginal man of the Kurna (Adelaide Plains) and Narrunga (Yorke Peninsula) people and a passionate advocate for Aboriginal culture, language and history.
- 9.30am - 10.15am **Family law for the children: A judicial perspective**
Justice Chris Mead has been a justice of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (“FCFCOA”) since 2019. She was appointed to the Federal Circuit Court of Australia in 2000, was admitted to the bar in 1991 and admitted as a solicitor in 1978.
- 10.15am - 11.00am **The Child’s Voice**
Tessa Kong will discuss the ways to bring a child’s voice into the court and mediation so that the best outcome for the child is achieved.
Tessa Kong is a clinical psychologist with over 15 years’ experience working with children, young people and adults. Tessa’s expertise includes conducting assessments for the FCFCOA and Youth Court of South Australia.
- 11.00am - 11.30am **Morning break**
- 11.30am - 12.15pm **Working with Children and Parents**
This session will explore the emotional impact of separation on children, in particular when there is ongoing conflict between the parents exploring issues such as parental loss and grief, trust and communication, conflict and emotion and the importance of looking after oneself and making balanced decisions for the sake of the children.
Andi Doerr is the coordinator of the Families in Focus Program at AnglicareSA. He has 10 years of experience working in post separation services and as a family dispute resolution practitioner. He has also been involved in teaching mediation and Family Dispute Resolution at university and in the VET system. Andi is presenting with **Sarah Samson**, who is a children’s worker in the KidsAreFirst program and experienced facilitator in the Children’s Contact Service and **Chanchal Yandav**, a children’s worker in the KidsAreFirst program.
- 12.15pm - 12.35pm **Post Separation Cooperative Parenting with a Regional Perspective**
This session will explore education and support for parents along the continuum of separation – the recently separated, those entering mediation and those with Orders. Particular consideration will be given to the challenges and benefits of working with families in a regional area.
Prue Sinoch is the Regional Manager of Relationships Australia SA in the Riverland. She is a lawyer, social worker and family dispute resolution practitioner and has worked in the family, health and community services sector in regional South Australia for 20 years.

- 12.35pm - 1.00pm **Creating space for children to speak about family separation**
Children and young people deserve space to talk to their experience of family life after separation. Practitioners working with children and young people must listen for stories of hope, risk and resilience. Tools like Kids' DOORS can support practitioners listen to their stories.
- Dr Jamie Lee** is the Practice Manager Family DOORS at Relationships Australia SA. He is a counselling psychologist with more than 19 years' experience working with children and their families in the non-government and public sectors.
- 1.00pm - 2.00pm **Lunch**
- 2.00pm - 2.45pm **Child Focussed Information session**
This session will consider the topics covered in a child focussed information session including the impacts of separation, parenting plans, utilising children's contact services and the cultural lens.
- Natalia Olson** is the managing solicitor at Community Justice Services SA Ltd where she has worked in a variety of roles for 7 years. **Sandra Constantine** is a family dispute resolution practitioner and group facilitator at the Noarlunga Family Relationship Centre operated by Uniting Communities ("NFRC"). She has a social work degree and has worked in a variety of roles in the NFRC since 2018.
- 2.45pm - 3.15pm **Independent Children's Lawyers (ICLs)**
Michelle Fernando is undertaking research with Georgina Dimopoulos of Southern Cross University as to the impacts on ICLs of the new duties to meet with children. The project is funded by the Law Foundation of SA. Michelle will report on preliminary findings of the research which involves interviews with South Australian ICLs and a study of cases.
- Dr Michelle Fernando** is an Associate Professor in law at the University of South Australia where she has been since 2012. Her research focuses on how the child's voice is heard in parenting disputes and in cases involving international child abduction.
- 3.15pm - 3.30pm **Afternoon break**
- 3.30pm - 4.20pm **Recent changes under the Family Law Act**
This session will include consideration of:
- *How the changes relate to children; and*
 - *How to utilise these changes - and the Act generally - to obtain the best outcome from a child's perspective including considerations where there is a cultural lens.*
- Senior Judicial Registrar Jordan Lewis** was appointed to the FCFCOA in 2023. Prior to this he practiced in family law as a solicitor from 2008 and as a barrister from 2016, until his appointment to the FCFCOA. **Melissa Boyle** is a barrister at Elizabeth Evatt Chambers. She was admitted as a barrister in 2019 and a solicitor in 2010.
- 4.20pm - 4.30pm **Closing from the chairperson Ashley Kent**
- Additional information**
- *For those wanting a certificate for professional development purposes, there will be a QR code to scan at the end of the Forum.
- *Please note photos may be taken during the forum. If you don't wish to be included in photos, please notify the chairperson, otherwise your image may be included in the photos.
- This program has been printed on recycled paper.

About the South Australian Family Law Pathways Network

The South Australian Family Law Pathways Network (SAFLPN) consists of a three-tiered structure: the Steering Committee, the membership, and a broad network of family law service providers. It is a coordinated network of organisations and professionals operating in the broader family law system in South Australia. The goal of the SAFLPN is to foster dialogue and collaboration between service providers to assist separating and separated families to access services in metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres in South Australia. The SAFLPN is managed and coordinated by the Senior Coordinator Ruth Beach.