

Media Release



Wednesday, 19 October 2016

Australia's largest legal conference honours 40 years of the Family Law Act

The [National Family Law Conference](#) has commenced in Melbourne today with a comprehensive 3-day program featuring distinguished legal experts from Australia and overseas.

With more than 1000 family law professionals from across the country in attendance, the Conference is Australia's largest regular legal event.

Chair of the Law Council of Australia's Family Law Section, Wendy Kayler-Thomson, said this year's Conference will mark the 40th anniversary of the commencement of the Family Law Act - a milestone in Australia's legal history.

"The Family Law Act was revolutionary. It created no-fault divorce and recognised the homemaker and parent contribution in property division. It enshrined in law the principle that, when judges make parenting decisions, the best interests of the child is the paramount consideration," Ms Kayler-Thomson said.

The program includes the Hon Elizabeth Evatt AC, the first Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia and the first female appointed to an Australian federal court.

The Commonwealth Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, will address the Conference, along with Chief Justice the Hon Diana Bryant AO and Chief Judge John Pascoe AC CVO.

For full details of the program and session times go to <http://www.familylaw2016.com.au/program/>

Program highlights are attached.

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*The Law Council of Australia is the national voice of the legal profession,
promoting justice and the rule of law.*

Program Highlights

Wednesday 19 October	
State of the Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, Commonwealth Attorney-General • The Hon Chief Justice Diana Bryant AO, Family Court of Australia • Chief Judge John Pascoe AC CVO, Federal Circuit Court of Australia • Wendy Kayler-Thomson, Chair of Family Law Section
The Peter Nygh Memorial Lecture: gaps and problems in federal and state responses to family violence- what did the Royal Commission find?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hon Marcia Neave AO • The Hon Justice Judith Ryan, Family Court of Australia
Parenting disputes of the future? The family law implications of early child-sperm donor contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Fiona Kelly, La Trobe University Law School
Thursday 20 October	
It seemed like a good idea at the time: defending or challenging a pre-nuptial agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Marks QC, Victorian Bar • Jamie Burreket, Broun Abrahams Burreket • Craig Henderson, Lander and Rogers
Thinking allowed: controversies in family law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leigh Sales, ABC Journalist • Sarah Ferguson, ABC journalist • Ian Kennedy AM, Kennedy Partners • Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Adolescent Psychologist
Friday 21 October	
Celebrating 40 years of the Family Law Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hon Elizabeth Evatt AC • The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC • The Hon Chief Justice Diana Bryant AO, Family Court of Australia • Chief Judge John Pascoe AC CVO, Federal Circuit Court of Australia • The Hon Justice Stephen Thackray, Chief Judge, Family Court of Western Australia • The Hon Professor Richard Chisholm AM, Australian National University