

# FAMILY JUSTICE: STRENGTHENING THE FUNDAMENTALS

FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS | ANNUAL REPORT 2017





ONE JUDICIARY

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FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS  
S I N G A P O R E

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2017



Family and Juvenile Court  
 was declared in session by  
 The Honourable the Chief Justice Yong Pong How  
 On 11 January 2002  
First designed in 1928, it was gazetted a national monument in February 1988

**Vision**  
 Justice that protects,  
 empowers, restores.

**Mission**  
 Making justice accessible to  
 families and youth through  
 effective counselling,  
 mediation and adjudication.

**Values**  
 Every case, with fairness  
 Every outcome, a way forward  
 Every individual, with respect.



**ABOUT OUR LOGO**

The Family Justice Courts logo is a symbolic representation of shelter within the visual frame of a traditional courthouse. The outer maroon roof encapsulates the vision of the Family Justice Courts to be a source of justice that protects, empowers and restores individuals from troubled families. The inner roof reflects the commitment of those working within to build a vibrant, inclusive and cohesive community. An elegant typeface emphasises our aspiration to remain a modern and relevant, yet sturdy custodian of the rule of law.

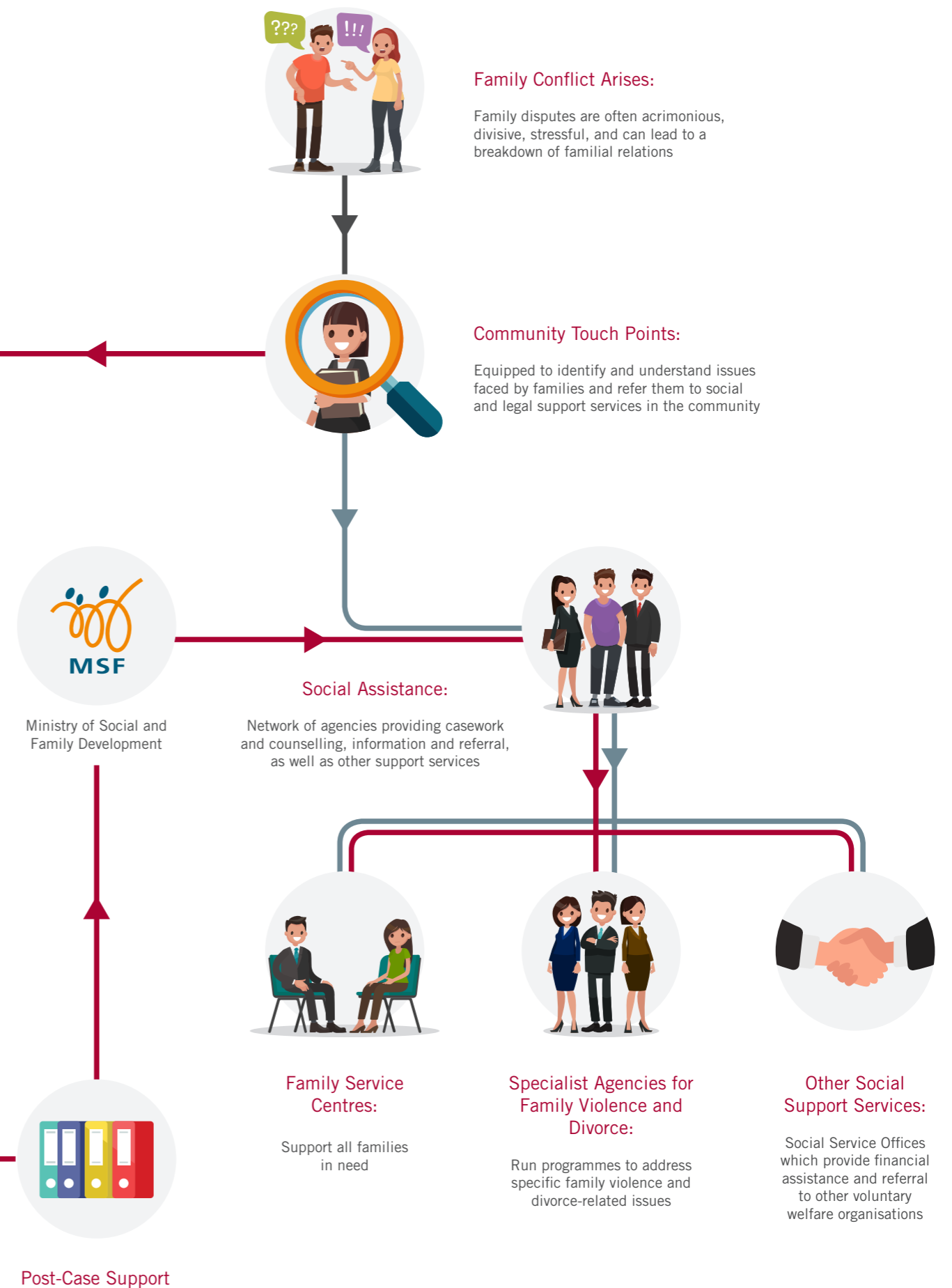
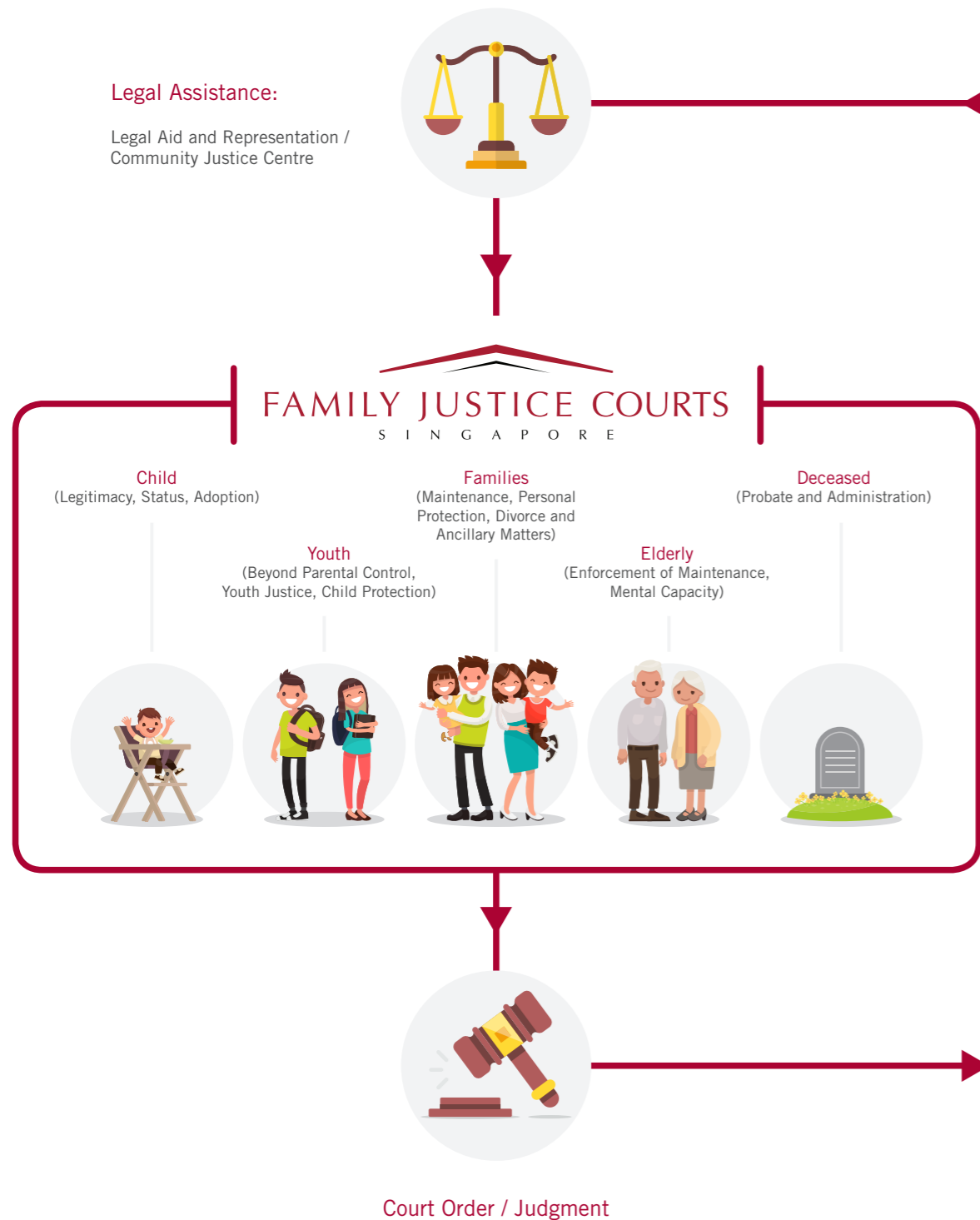
## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>06</b>
• Meeting the Needs of Families and Youth	08
• Foreword by The Honourable the Chief Justice	10
• Message from the Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts	14
• Overview of the Family Justice Courts	<b>20</b>
<b>Enhancing Access to Justice</b>	<b>21</b>
• Developing the Law and Process Innovations	21
I. Case Summaries Highlights 2017	23
II. Law Reform	24
III. Family Justice Rules	26
IV. Streamlined Processes	28
• Strengthening our Integrated Support Network	28
I. Increased Support	30
<b>Building Competencies</b>	<b>31</b>
I. Family Justice Practice Forum 2017 - Family Justice 2020: Through the Right Doors	33
II. Within the Family Justice Courts	35
III. In the Community	<b>37</b>
<b>Extending International Relationships</b>	<b>38</b>
I. International Advisory Council	39
II. Mediation Training in Manila	40
III. World Congress on Family Law and Children’s Rights 2017 in Dublin	41
IV. Regional and International Participation	<b>44</b>
<b>Year In Review</b>	<b>45</b>
I. Case Load Statistics	<b>47</b>
<b>The FJC Family</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES AND YOUTH

The "Family Justice Courts" is the collective name for the Family Division of the High Court, the Family Courts and the Youth Courts. The mission of the Family Justice Courts and our partners is to provide access to justice and support for families and youth in distress.

This info-graphic shows how every member of the family, young or old, obtains legal and social support through our family justice system.



## FOREWORD BY THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE



2017 was a significant year for the Courts as we took steps to respond to global trends in technology and globalisation. We made strides in embracing these developments and in strengthening partnerships with other stakeholders in the justice system, both locally and internationally, to improve our processes and enhance access to justice. This One Judiciary Annual Report showcases the work of the Supreme Court, the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts in this regard.

In April 2017, the State Courts launched the Employment Claims Tribunals to adjudicate employment disputes in a tribunal setting, thereby providing litigants with an affordable and expeditious way for resolving salary-related disputes. The Community Justice and Tribunals System, launched in July 2017, offers parties the convenience of filing and managing claims online. It also provides for electronic negotiation, which opens up the possibility that settlements may be reached without the matter even coming to court.

The Family Justice Courts similarly harnessed technology by developing the integrated Family Application Management System or “iFAMS” to streamline and simplify processes for all family violence and maintenance applications. With iFAMS, lawyers and court users can now access simplified user-friendly template application forms from convenient locations in the community.

Automation and artificial intelligence will continue to revolutionise the practice of law, and the Judiciary needs to embrace this. The Courts of the Future Taskforce has identified key initiatives to develop new capabilities for online dispute resolution and virtual hearings. Such IT-enabled services will go a long way in enabling accessibility to legal services in a timely and convenient manner.

Besides improving court processes, the Judiciary has also taken meaningful steps to work with stakeholders to improve outcomes for court users. The Victim Assistance Scheme, the product of a collaboration between the State Courts, Community Justice Centre, and the Singapore Police Force, provides victims of assault with reimbursement for medical expenses incurred as a result of the physical injuries sustained from the offence. At the same time, family-connect @ State Courts, a collaborative effort by the State Courts and the Singapore After-Care Association, offers family members of offenders who have been, or will be, sentenced to imprisonment with access to counselling as well as social, emotional and financial support.

On the international front, judicial networks and cooperation are continuously being strengthened. The judiciaries of Singapore and China have established an annual Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable, a historic first between China and an Asian country. The first Roundtable was held in Beijing in August 2017 and I am delighted to be hosting the second Roundtable in Singapore in 2018.

The Supreme Court also attended the inaugural Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts in London in May 2017 where courts from around the world gathered to share experiences and best practices on the judicial resolution of international commercial disputes.

On the family law front, the Family Justice Courts hosted the 2nd International Advisory Council meeting in August 2017. During this event, leading global thinkers in the field of family justice discussed developments in family law practice and jurisprudence, identified potential areas of research, and explored ideas and innovations to improve family practice.

Also on the subject of family law, to achieve more consistent and cost-effective outcomes, we have devised guidelines on child maintenance awards based on actuarial data. It is hoped that the publication of these guidelines in due course will reduce the acrimony and cost of child maintenance disputes.

Judicial training and development will remain important in ensuring that our Judges are able to discharge their judicial functions effectively. It was for this reason that the Singapore Judicial College was set up. Local judges and judicial officers now have about 40 training programmes to choose from.

I am confident that my colleagues on the Supreme Court Bench as well as the judicial officers and administrators from the State Courts and Family Justice Courts will continue to administer justice effectively and ensure access to justice for all.

I hope this Annual Report will offer you a glimpse into the work of the Judiciary over the course of the past year.

**Sundaresh Menon**  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court of Singapore

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS



## Introduction

Family proceedings are different from other civil proceedings. They affect children who are not parties to the court proceedings. The underlying issues that lead to family dysfunction often cannot be resolved by court orders alone. The Family Justice Courts (FJC) have engaged partners in the social services community to provide support to address the sources of conflict and assist families to move on to build a positive future. This annual report records some significant strides that the FJC has made towards providing multi-disciplinary court services and partnering other professionals in the community.

## Collaborations

The FJC has worked together with the Law Society on a consultation paper on possible amendments to the **Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules** in the context of family and related proceedings. With changes to the family practice landscape, it was timely to address the specific challenges faced by family lawyers.

The FJC has worked closely with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) in the past years. It has been working with MSF in the formulation of the **Vulnerable Adults Bill**. This new legislation seeks to safeguard “vulnerable” adults from abuse, neglect or self-neglect through care and protection as well as restraining orders. Work has also begun with the relevant ministries and agencies on the use of possible “**stop order legislation**” to prevent parents from removing children out of Singapore in breach of court orders.

The Family Justice Practice Forum, held on 14 July 2017, was jointly organised by the FJC, MSF and the Law Society. Themed as Family Justice 2020: “Through the Right Doors”, the event brought together eminent experts from the legal, psychological and social science sectors to discuss the practice of family justice.

## Processes and initiatives

Case management is especially important in family proceedings where parties are undergoing a difficult and emotional journey. We piloted a project in which we identified cases such as those with multiple applications and/or complex issues to be managed by a dedicated judge who will ensure good and fair control over all matters relating to the case. We refined our case management processes after the pilot and have implemented case docketing with robust case management.

The family justice system aims to facilitate harmonious resolution of disputes. An inter-disciplinary cross-agency committee of experts comprising actuaries, policy makers and family practitioners has been working on producing a **child maintenance table** using local data. Such a table when used as a judicial tool in determining the quantum of child maintenance, may have the effect of achieving greater consistency in maintenance awards, and may assist parties in reaching settlements. This will be explored further in 2018.

**Parenting Coordinators** are appointed by the Courts to work directly with the parents to facilitate communication and assist them in resolving disagreements arising from custody and access orders. In its pilot scheme, lawyers were trained to take on the role of Parenting Coordinators. In 2017, training was extended to professionals from the social science fields, expanding the number and variety of expertise of Parenting Coordinators available to parents.

The **integrated Family Application Management System** (iFAMS) was launched in July 2017. iFAMS is a comprehensive end-to-end system for applications for family protection and maintenance. The system covers electronic case filing, tracking, workflow routing, case hearing and generation of electronic letters, court orders and statistical reports. iFAMS can be expanded in future to include other Family Courts related applications. It will be integrated with other systems within the legal structure and serve as a technological backbone to enable the strategic building of the family justice system. iFAMS increases access to justice and provides an improved experience for users by offering them more options at the various stages of application and a better case management system. For instance, users can file their applications electronically through iFAMS, either at the Family Courts’ Registry or the Family Violence Specialist Centres in the community.

The recently established **Family Protection Centre** (FPC) uses “design thinking” to create a comfortable journey for family violence applicants in the Family Courts. It allows applicants of personal protection orders to move along the stages of intake assessment, counselling and affirmation seamlessly. FPC is also a one-stop centre designed to offer more privacy and assurance to applicants.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

### Looking ahead

It is important for family litigants to move on with their lives in positive ways, and not be mired in legal proceedings for a prolonged period of time. It would be of immense benefit for them to be supported with connections to appropriate therapeutic interventions and support in the community. The FJC's key priorities in 2018 include reviewing the reforms made and **strengthening our processes** to reduce costs, increase expediency and reduce complexity of proceedings. The "Committee to Review & Enhance Reforms in the Family Justice System" has been set up to review and improve the processes and initiatives established. Apart from representatives from the FJC, the committee members also come from the Ministry of Law and MSF, giving this committee a multi-disciplinary character.

Enhancing access to justice by possibly building up "low bono" schemes will also be explored. Separately, we will be looking into developing a toolkit to help law firms and litigants-in-person with the process for simple applications for probate. We will also consider how to use IT to support processes that enable harmonious resolution of disputes; "online dispute resolution" platforms will be studied and built up.

A strong family justice system relies on strong family law; developing our family law jurisprudence remains our priority.

### Appreciation

I wish to express our appreciation to Justice Valerie Thean who, as the first Presiding Judge of the FJC, spearheaded the many initiatives that continue to be developed today. She has worked with the greatest commitment to lay the foundations for a robust family justice system in Singapore. Much gratitude is due to the family judges and staff of the FJC, who worked tirelessly in a period when pioneering work heavily demanded much time and effort.

It is an honour and privilege for me to contribute to the building of the family justice system as Presiding Judge of the FJC, and I look forward to turning our aspirations into plans and reality.



**Debbie Ong**  
Presiding Judge  
Family Justice Courts



## OVERVIEW OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

The Family Justice Courts (FJC) are established pursuant to the Family Justice Act which was passed by Parliament on 4 August 2014. The Family Justice Act was enacted based on the recommendations of the Committee for Family Justice which was formed in 2013 to review how Singapore’s family justice system may be reformed to address the needs of youth and families in distress.

The FJC is a restructure of our court system to better serve litigants. By bringing together all family-related work under a specialised body of courts, we are able to frame disputes from the perspective of families and the individuals within. This is in contrast to other types of cases which are traditionally dealt with in an adversarial manner. In addition, we are able to provide a suite of family-specific services, enhance processes and identify relevant training programmes that develop family-specific skills in judges, lawyers and other family practitioners.

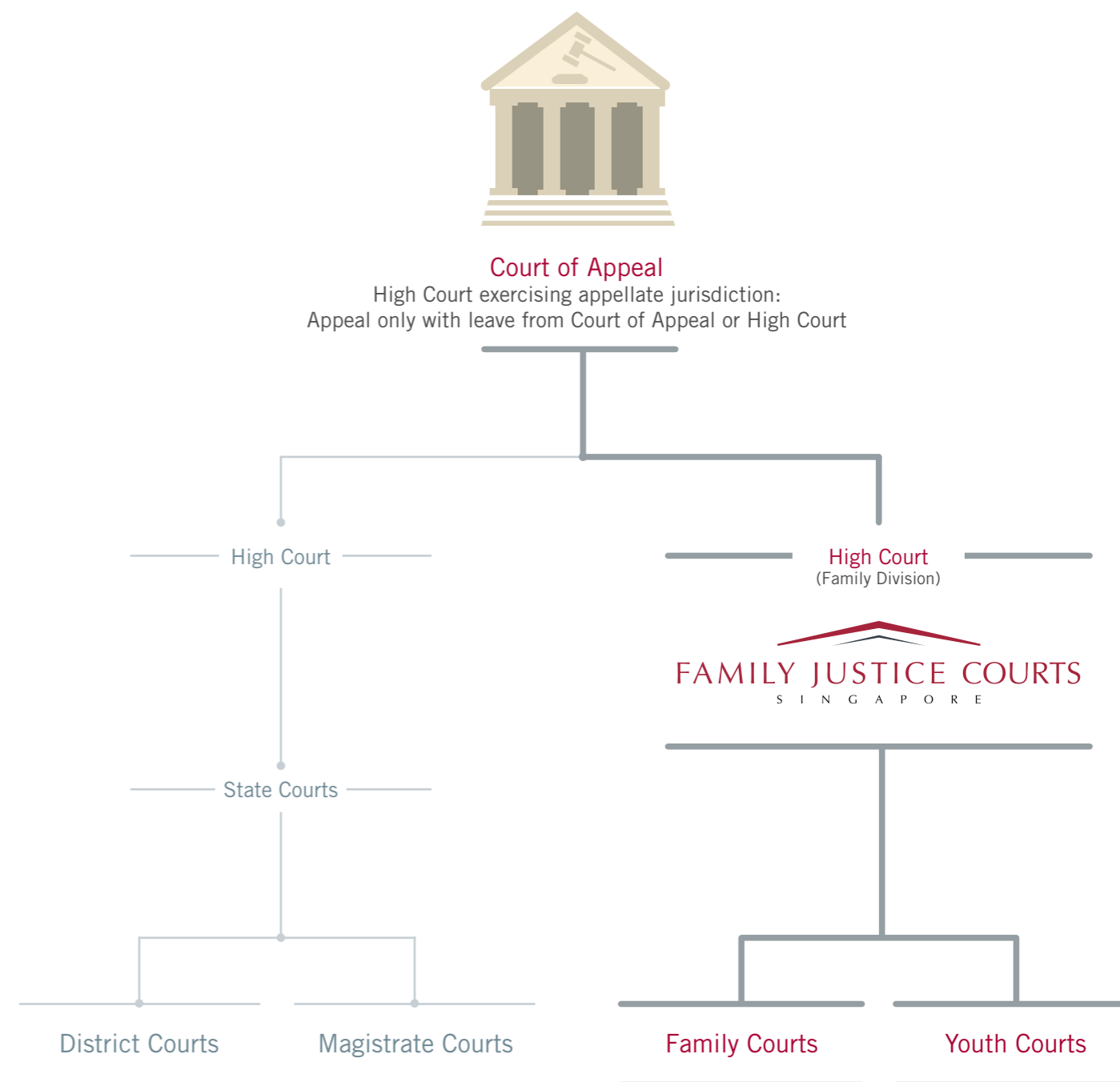
The “Family Justice Courts” is the collective name for a body of courts which comprise the Family Division of the High Court, the Family Courts and the Youth Courts. These Courts are administered by the Presiding Judge of the Family Justice Courts. The FJC hears the full suite of family-related cases including all divorce and related matters, family violence cases, adoption and guardianship cases, Youth Court cases, applications for deputyship under the Mental Capacity Act, and probate and succession matters.

More than a change of name, the Family Justice Courts are a fundamental restructure of our court system, creating a separate and specialist body of courts to manage the full suite of family related disputes.

The FJC deals with cases involving the following legislations:

- Administration of Muslim Law Act (Cap. 3)
- Adoption of Children Act (Cap. 4)
- Children and Young Persons Act (Cap. 38)
- Guardianship of Infants Act (Cap. 122)
- Inheritance (Family Provision) Act (Cap. 138)
- International Child Abduction Act (Cap. 143C)
- Intestate Succession Act (Cap. 146)
- Legitimacy Act (Cap. 162)
- Maintenance of Parents Act (Cap. 167B)
- Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act (Cap. 169)
- Mental Capacity Act (Cap. 177A)
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act (Cap. 178A)
- Probate and Administration Act (Cap. 251)
- Status of Children (Assisted Reproduction Technology) Act 2013 (Act 16 of 2013)
- Voluntary Sterilization Act (Cap. 347)
- Wills Act (Cap. 352)
- Women’s Charter (Cap. 353)

The diagram below illustrates how the FJC now operates as a separate set of specialist courts within the overall Court structure in Singapore.



- Overseen by the Presiding Judge of the FJC
- Hear all matrimonial, probate, adoption, mental capacity and youth issues
- Centralised Registry



### High Court (Family Division)

The Family Division of the High Court exercises original jurisdiction and hears appeals against the decisions of the Family Courts and the Youth Courts in family proceedings.



### Youth Courts

The Juvenile Court has been renamed the Youth Courts which hear cases related to children and young persons.



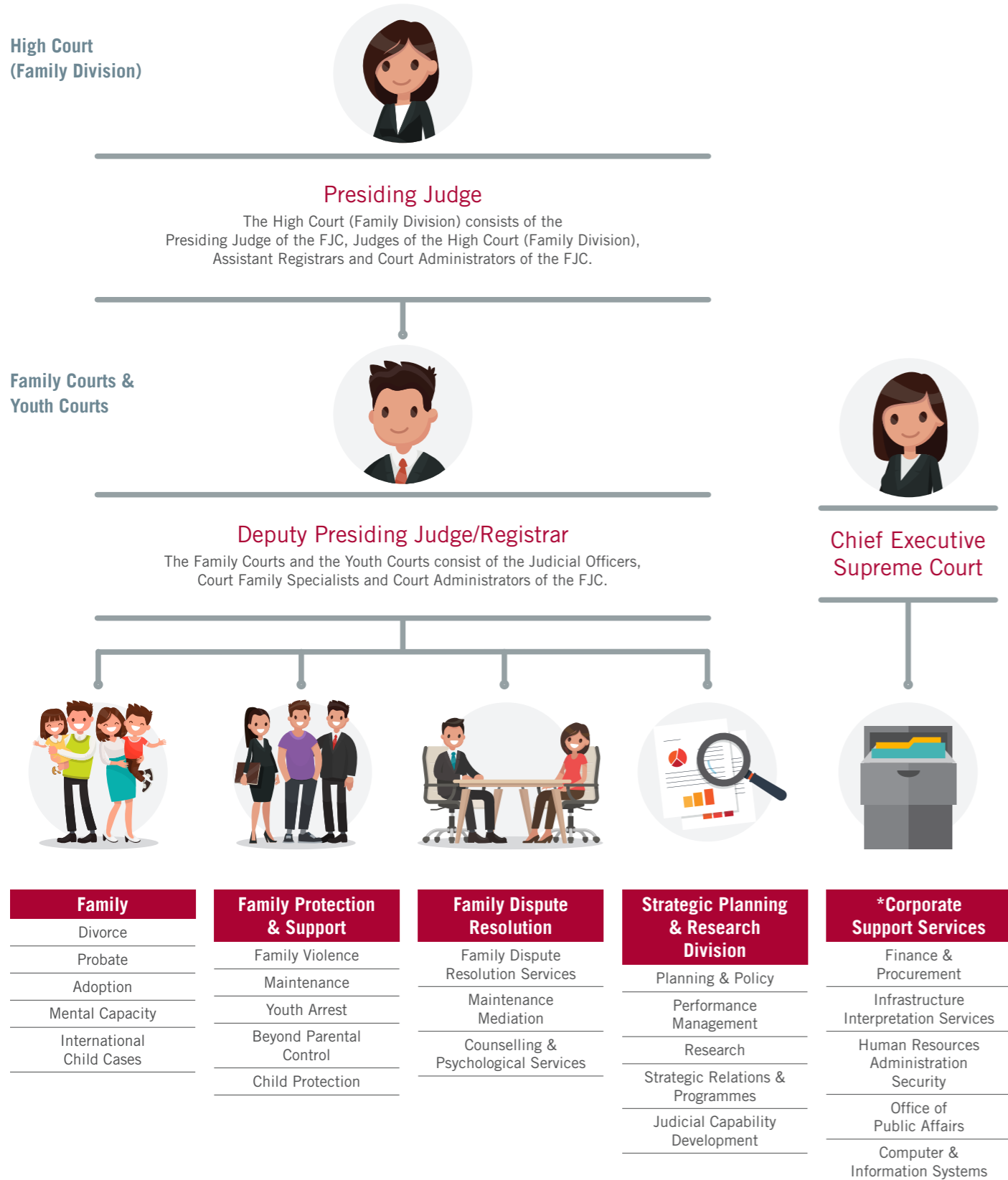
### Family Courts

The Family Courts hear all family proceedings except cases under the Children and Young Persons Act, which are heard by the Youth Courts.

The wide-ranging family jurisdiction incorporated probate and succession matters from the Civil Division of the State Courts and the High Court from January 2015.



## ORGANISATION CHART



\* Integrated Corporate Support Services with the Supreme Court

## HIGH COURT (FAMILY DIVISION)



Left to Right: Justice Debbie Ong, Presiding Judge of the FJC | Judicial Commissioner Foo Tuat Yien

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT



Seated from left: **Ms Juthika Ramanathan**, Chief Executive (Office of the Chief Justice) | **Mr Vincent Hoong**, Registrar (Supreme Court) | **Justice Debbie Ong**, Presiding Judge of the FJC | **Deputy Presiding Judge Chia Wee Kiat**, Registrar (FJC)

Standing from left: **District Judge Toh Wee San**, Group Manager (Family Division) | **District Judge Joyce Low**, Group Manager (Family Protection and Support Division) and Principal Director (Strategic Planning and Research Division) | **District Judge Kevin Ng**, Group Manager (Family Dispute Resolution Division) | **Mrs Clara Goh**, Deputy Chief Executive (Office of the Chief Justice) | **District Judge Jen Koh**, Deputy Registrar (FJC) | **Principal District Judge Muhammad Hidhir Abdul Majid** (Family Protection and Support Division)

## DEVELOPING THE LAW AND PROCESS INNOVATIONS

### I. CASE SUMMARIES HIGHLIGHTS 2017

The Court of Appeal and the High Court issued a total of 31 judgments that provided clarification and guidance on different aspects of family law and practice. Here are some of the highlights:

#### A. Division of Matrimonial Assets

- **The structured approach in *ANJ v ANK* should not be applied to long single-income marriages (*TNL v TNK* and another appeal and another matter [2017] SGCA 15)**

The Court of Appeal found that the structured approach in *ANJ v ANK* works well only in marriages where both spouses were working and are therefore able to make both direct and indirect financial contributions to the household.

This is because the *ANJ v ANK* structured approach tends to unduly favour the working spouse over the non-working spouse, as financial contributions were given recognition under both Steps 1 and 2 of the structured approach. This would almost inevitably result in some degree of artificiality: the Court would either have to award the non-working spouse a very high percentage in Step 2, or accord a very high weightage to Steps 2 and 3 of the approach. In some, if not most cases, the Court would have to do both.

As such, the Court of Appeal opined that the *ANJ v ANK* structured approach should not apply to division of matrimonial assets in long single-income marriages (being marriages where one spouse is the sole income earner and the other plays the role of homemaker) on the basis that it would not be consistent with the philosophy of marriage or its intention in *ANJ v ANK*, which was to avoid undervaluing indirect contributions.

#### B. International Child Abduction Act

- **The approach to determining “habitual residence” for the purposes of Article 3 of the Hague Convention and legal principles on determining consent under Article 13(a) of the Hague Convention (*TUC v TUC* [2017] SGHCF 12)**

The High Court held that the question of habitual residence is ultimately a question of fact to be determined having regarded all circumstances of the case, including the joint intentions of parents, the child’s reasons and perceptions of being in the new jurisdiction (in the case of older children), as well as the objective “indicia of integration into the social and family environment” in the new jurisdiction.

In general, in cases of the relocation of younger children and in cases of relatively short periods of residence in the new jurisdiction, the joint or shared intentions of the parents can be a significant factor in pointing towards whether there is any change in the habitual residence of the child. An intention on the part of only one parent for the child to change his or her habitual residence will seldom, if ever, have weight in this analysis.

The High Court also held that in determining whether the “consent” exception under Article 13(a) of the Hague Convention is applicable, the question to ask is whether on a balance of probabilities, the left-behind parent has unequivocally consented to the removal or retention of the child.

ENHANCING  
ACCESS TO  
JUSTICE

## DEVELOPING THE LAW AND PROCESS INNOVATIONS

### I. CASE SUMMARIES HIGHLIGHTS 2017

#### C. Maintenance

- **Where there is a child of special needs, the award of lump sum maintenance to the mother caring for the child may be ruled out (*TYS v TYT* [2017] SGHCF 7)**

The child in this case was on the autistic spectrum and required various classes to help improve the child's socialisation and communication skills.

The child would also be taking the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in two years' time. The High Court held that the child's special needs meant that the child would likely require a greater level of support and attention than other children. The child's sole source of support was the mother.

In view of the uncertainty of the child's future and amount of home support the child would potentially require, the mother may be unable to fully return to work. Hence, the High Court held that the indeterminacy of matters ruled out the award of lump sum maintenance to the mother and ordered periodic maintenance.

#### D. Miscellaneous Issues

- **Application for financial relief in Singapore after foreign divorce (*UFM v UFN* [2017] SGHCF 22)**

The parties in this case were both Indonesian citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents. Having been divorced in Indonesia and without first seeking a division of their matrimonial property in Indonesia, the wife applied under Chapter 4A of the Women's Charter to seek a division of a property jointly owned by the parties in Singapore.

There are two substantive criteria in the Chapter 4A provisions; the first addresses if it is appropriate for a Singapore court to grant the relief sought by the applicant, and the second concerns availability of the type of relief sought and the propriety of granting it.

The High Court held that the applicant need only to show that Singapore is an appropriate jurisdiction and not the most appropriate jurisdiction, *i.e.*, whether the parties' connection to Singapore is sufficiently significant.

- **Whether "exclusion" in S112 (2)(f) of the Women's Charter "rent-free occupation of the matrimonial home to the exclusion of the other party" meant that the exclusion had to be forced (*TRS v TRT* [2017] SGHCF 3)**

In this case, the husband argued that he did not have rent-free occupation of the matrimonial home because his occupation was not "to the exclusion of the other party" as he had not chased his then-wife out of the home nor refused her entry to the home.

On these facts, the husband rented out the matrimonial home for a few months. The High Court opined that rent-free occupation meant that one party occupied the house to the exclusion of any benefit to the other. If the wife had been welcomed to return to the matrimonial home as and when she wished, the husband would not have rented out the home. Importantly, the Court held that such exclusion does not have to be forced.

#### E. Relocation

- **The welfare of a child is the paramount principle in relocation of a child (*TSH and another v TSE and another and another appeal and another matter* [2017] SGHCF 21)**

The child was born in London in July 2012 before being brought to Singapore in July 2013 where the child had since been living. A judgement had been obtained in the UK for the return of the child to the mother living in the UK.

This case did not attract the application of the International Child Abduction Act (ICAA) because at the time the child was wrongfully retained, Singapore had not yet gazetted the UK as a Contracting State under the ICAA.

The High Court held that the welfare principle governs applications to relocate the child. It was also held that the doctrine of issue estoppel does not apply strictly in relation to proceedings involving the custody and upbringing of a child because the Court's overriding duty under Section 3 of the Guardianship of Infants Act (GIA) is to have paramount regard for the child's welfare. Therefore, none of the legal and factual findings in the UK judgement were capable of constituting *res judicata*.

### II. LAW REFORM

A key focus of the FJC is the reform of laws that impact families and youth. Continuing on efforts since its formation, the FJC deepened engagement with the fraternity of lawyers, partner agencies in Singapore and the global family justice community to refine the family justice regime in Singapore. The FJC's contribution to the proposed amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act, the Mental Capacity Act and the Vulnerable Adults Bill will see fruition in the next two years.

The FJC will also continue to refine and strengthen the tools and expertise available within the Courts and the larger family justice community to ensure better and more effective support for families in distress, to ready family justice for the future. To this end, an inter-agency committee to Review and Enhance Reforms in the Family Justice System or RERF Committee for short, was established at the end of 2017.

The RERF Committee co-chaired by Presiding Judge of the FJC, the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Law and the Ministry of Family and Social Development, is looking at enhancing access to family justice, identifying areas for law reform, reducing complexity, costs and increasing timeliness in proceedings and promoting alternative and multi-disciplinary approaches to conflict resolution. The report from the RERF Committee is expected to be completed by end of 2018.

The High Court found that although the father was capable of providing materially for the child, it was clear that if the child were to remain in the father's household, not only would the child be kept away from the mother, but also her role in the child's life would very likely be diminished.

In considering the impact of disturbing the status quo of the child's emotional and psychological wellbeing, the High Court held that the need to ensure a stable care environment does not override the need for the child to be reunited with the mother. As such, the High Court found it to be in the child's best interest to return to the UK under the mother's care.

#### F. Muslim Law

- **Whether the *inter vivos* gift made by way of *Hibah* was valid thus transferring ownership of a Housing Development Board (HDB) flat (*Haja Maideen s/o Ali Maricar v Roshan Begum Md Ali M* [2017] SGHC 164)**

The Deceased owned a HDB flat held in the Deceased's sole name, and an Inheritance Certificate was issued by the Syariah Court in Singapore. One of the beneficiaries of the Estate intended to sell the HDB flat and distribute the sale proceeds to all beneficiaries according to the proportion set out in the Inheritance Certificate. However, the Defendant opposed the sale and adduced a deed of gift, or *Hibah*, executed in India.

The High Court held that the issue of whether a Muslim has made a valid *inter vivos* gift or *Hibah* is within the jurisdiction of the civil courts, applying Muslim law to determine the issue. In addition, the High Court held that the determination of rights and interests in land in Singapore is governed by legislation, unless the legislation specifically provided that it did not apply to Muslims.

The Housing Development Act makes it clear that no HDB flat shall be disposed of without prior written consent of the HDB, and in this case it is not disputed that HDB's consent was not sought. Thus, the transfer was void and the HDB flat formed part of the Estate upon the death of the Deceased.

## DEVELOPING THE LAW AND PROCESS INNOVATIONS

### III. FAMILY JUSTICE RULES

The introduction of the Family Justice Rules (FJR) on 1 January 2015 was an important milestone for the FJC. For the first time in Singapore's legal history, all procedural rules for family proceedings were consolidated in one composite document. This development placed the FJC in a position to review and adapt these rules to cater to the unique nature of family proceedings.

Below are some of the initiatives implemented and amendments made to the FJR and where applicable, corresponding amendments made to the FJC Practice Directions in 2017.

#### A. Launch of Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS)

1. The FJC commenced the use of iFAMS, its new computerised system, on 10 July 2017. iFAMS predominantly deals with applications under Part VII and Part VIII of the Women's Charter (Cap. 353) which relate to protection orders and maintenance, including the enforcement of orders which are enforceable under the Women's Charter.
2. For the purposes of implementing iFAMS,
  - a. two new divisions were introduced in the FJR, namely:—
    - i. Division 68A—Electronic filing service for certain specified proceedings and matters and
    - ii. Division 69A—Change of solicitor for certain specified proceedings and matters; and
  - b. a new Part VIIA (Paragraphs 26A to 26N) was also introduced to the FJC Practice Directions.
3. Division 68A of the FJR provides for the establishment of iFAMS and matters relating to the filing of applications using the system. All applications are to be made and court documents will be issued using iFAMS, including Court Orders, Protection Orders, Summons, Warrants of Arrest and Warrants of Commitment.
4. Division 69A of the FJR provides for simplified procedures to report change of solicitors. In particular, law firms and law corporations are to take note of the new requirements when filing for the Notice of Appointment, Notice of Change and Notice of Ceasing to Act. From 10 July 2017, lawyers who represent parties in proceedings which are pending or ongoing in the Family Courts can file the appropriate Notice of Appointment.
5. Law firms, law corporations, and authorised users will be able to make applications under iFAMS in accordance with the FJR and the FJC Practice Directions using their CorpPass, whilst individuals can do so using their SingPass. In this regard, Rule 131BA(1) and Rule 131BA(2) were introduced to provide for a dispensation of a complainant's signature when the application is filed using his or her SingPass account or when the application is filed through social agencies.
6. To maximise the utility of iFAMS, the rules were also amended to bring about more efficient use of manpower and resources. For applications for maintenance, Rule 131BA(3)(b) allows the Magistrate, in appropriate cases, to issue a summons without requiring an examination of the complainant on oath or affirmation, thereby reducing the application process by a step. The affidavit of service by the court process server has also been replaced with an online declaration of service under Rule 131BB. This removes the need for the court process server to locate a Commissioner For Oaths, to affirm the affidavit of service.

#### B. Rule 101A FJR

1. Rule 101A of the FJR was introduced on 1 August 2017 to alleviate the trauma faced by victims of abuse, and other vulnerable witnesses, when being cross-examined in the context of family violence trials.

#### C. The Administration of Justice (Protection) Act 2016 (The AOJP ACT)

1. The AOJP Act was enacted by Parliament on 15 August 2016. With the AOJP Act, the law of contempt of court is now written into statute.
2. The amendments to the FJR support the implementation of the AOJP Act. Amendments to Rules 311, 611 and 612 of the FJR and deletion of Rule 614 of the FJR, largely mirror those for the Rules of Court, save that they do not deal with the leave to give the Attorney-General's Non-Publication Direction.

#### D. Amendments to Allow for the Use of the Maintenance Record Officers (MRO) in Maintenance (MSS) Proceedings

1. MRO is an officer of the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) appointed by the Courts in its fact-finding process in maintenance enforcement cases.
2. The MRO scheme is a collaborative effort between the FJC and MSF to enhance the court process in maintenance proceedings. A pilot was conducted in the Family Courts in the last quarter of 2016 and has since been reviewed. Under the pilot scheme, the MRO could only be appointed with the consent of the parties. The new rules in this regard empower the judge, in appropriate cases, to appoint an MRO without the need for parties to provide their consent. Such appointments can be made for cases headed for hearings after mediation fails.

3. Rules 114B of the FJR therefore sets out how the MRO is appointed, the MRO's role, and the manner in which the MRO's report may be used in Court. The MRO can also be cross-examined if the parties or the Court considers this necessary. The corresponding insertion of Paragraph 25A in the FJC Practice Directions sets out the process, following the appointment of the MRO by the FJC.
4. New Form 209A is to be used by the MRO to request the FJC for an order for a party to produce documents under Rule 114B(3) of the FJR and new Form 209B is to be used by a party to request for an examination of the MRO under Rule 114B(6) of the FJR.
5. Paragraph 25B provides that an applicant intending to make an application for an order under Part VIII of the Women's Charter may, with his consent, be referred by the FJC Registry for an assessment to ascertain the financial circumstances of the applicant or the respondent or both prior to the making of such application.

## DEVELOPING THE LAW AND PROCESS INNOVATIONS

### IV. STREAMLINED PROCESSES

To meet the future needs of family justice, the FJC is actively harnessing technology and design ideas to improve the user experience and make family justice accessible to all.

- **Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS)**

The iFAMS is a comprehensive end-to-end system for family protection<sup>1</sup> and maintenance<sup>2</sup> order cases brought before the FJC. iFAMS covers electronic case filing, tracking, workflow routing, case hearing, and generation of electronic letters, court orders, and statistical reports. This paperless system, which can be expanded in the future to include other family court-related applications and will be integrated with the systems of our partners within the eco-system, serves as a technological backbone to enable the strategic growth of a future-ready family justice system.

The iFAMS system increases access to justice and provides an improved experience for users by offering them more options at the various stages of application and a better case management system.



Officers accessing the iFAMS system

- **Family Protection Centre (FPC)**

The FPC is a dedicated space at the FJC, offering those exposed to family violence more privacy and comfort when applying for Personal Protection Orders (PPO). The FPC handles PPO applications in a seamless and comprehensive manner by allowing applicants to go through all the necessary stages at this one-stop centre, which features simplified applications forms, risk assessments with a counsellor, and facilities for affirmation of the supporting declarations before a judge.



Applicants waiting at the one-stop Family Protection Centre

- **On-site Psychiatrist Referral**

The on-site Psychiatrist (OSP) is an initiative adopted by the FJC which sees a psychiatrist from the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) stationed at the State Courts on a weekly basis as an OSP. The FJC is a key service touch-point for families seeking legal interventions in times of intense emotional, physical or psychological distress. Court users can be referred to the OSP by the FJC, serving as an aid in early detection and an important conduit to connect court users to early mental health assessment and support.

- **Child-Inclusive Resolution Process**

In addition to child-focused conversations with parents over the care of their children, parents and children in appropriate cases undergo the child-inclusive resolution process. A Court Family Specialist (CFS) will meet with children individually to understand how they are affected by parental conflict. The CFS will then highlight to parents the impact of their conflict and discuss the ways to work on co-parenting plans without exposing children to further emotional hurt. This child-inclusive resolution process seeks to ensure that children's views and experiences are considered by the parents in a sensitive way. This process aims to safeguard and aid the children in coping with transition or change due to parental separation and conflict. It also helps parents to focus on their children's best interests and not on their own needs.

- **Child Maintenance Table**

A multi-disciplinary committee was appointed by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon to develop a Child Maintenance Table for the FJC. The committee which comprised judges from the FJC, family law practitioners, social science experts and actuaries was tasked to study appropriate models from other jurisdictions, explore their usefulness and, recommend a localised model taking into consideration Singapore's laws. If used as a judicial tool in determining the quantum of child maintenance awards, the model should provide both greater objectivity and consistency. The table should also be able to provide guidance to parents on the appropriate maintenance amounts and assist them in reaching amicable settlements.

<sup>1</sup>The number of fresh applications for personal protection orders is 2,885 in 2015 and 2,811 in 2016.

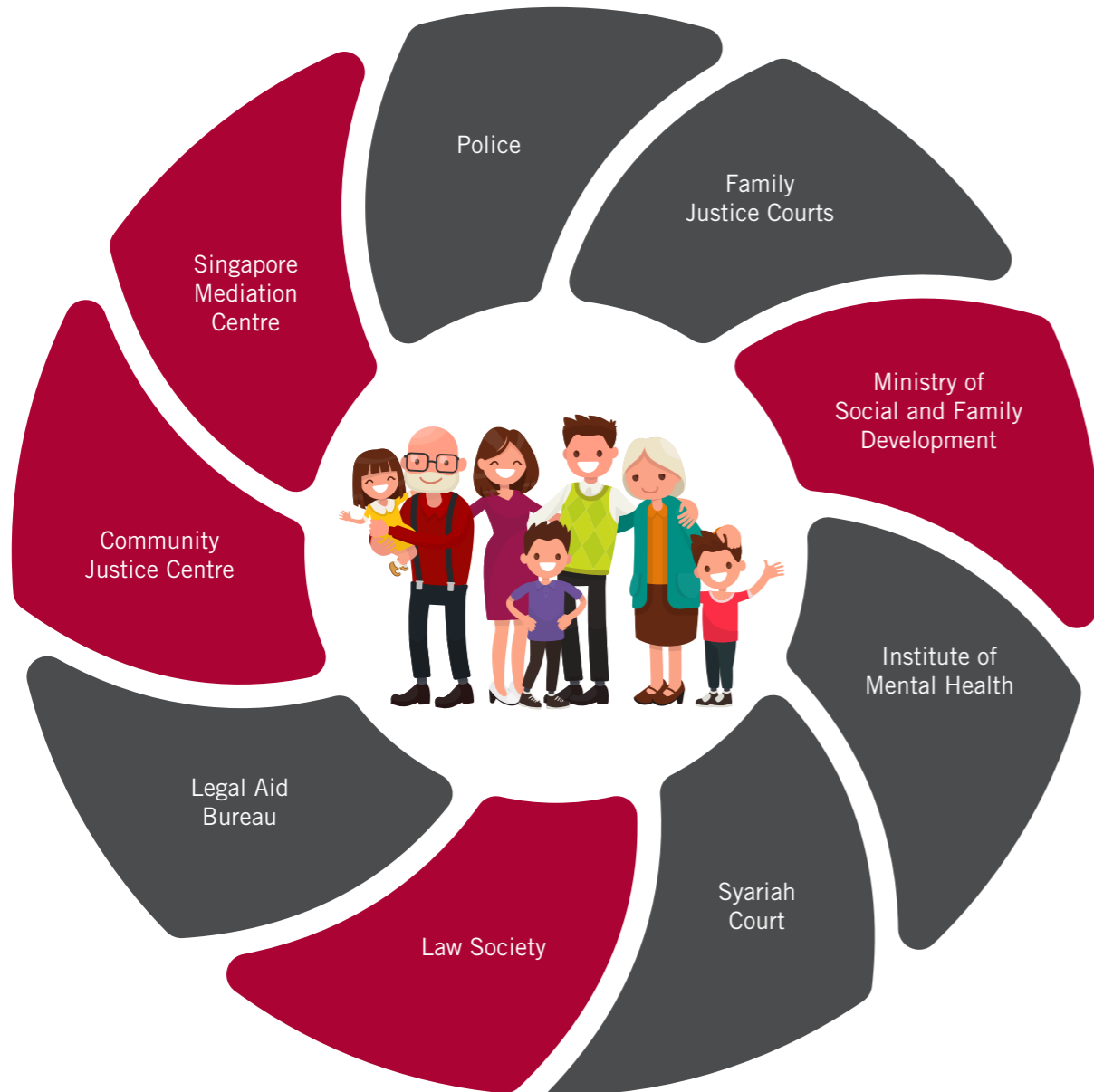
<sup>2</sup>The number of fresh applications for maintenance is 1,504 in 2015 and 1,434 in 2016.

## STRENGTHENING OUR INTEGRATED SUPPORT NETWORK

### I. INCREASED SUPPORT

The Courts come into the frame of family life at a critical juncture. While each case has its unique complexities, the FJC's approach is to use the moment to protect the vulnerable, empower individuals to resolve their disputes with a sustainable outcome, and to restore viable relationships. Yet we do not do this alone.

Working with our partners, we hope to provide holistic, multi-disciplinary support to families and youth in distress and prevent escalation of the dispute as early as possible, and after court resolution, to support them in finding new pathways ahead. Our network comprises:



- **Child Representative**

A Child Representative (CR) presents a child's best interests to the Courts and serves to ensure that it is the focus of any decision relating to the child. The FJC can order the appointment of a CR in cases where the Court considers it necessary for a child's welfare and well-being. The CR represents the voice of the child, and provides an objective assessment of the arrangements that are in the best interests of the child. There are currently 26 CRs.

- **Parenting Coordination**

The Parenting Coordinator (PC) is essentially an educator, a facilitator, a coach, and a mediator all rolled into one. A relatively new Alternative Dispute Resolution process for parents, a PC is appointed by the judge to help parents implement the parenting plan contained in the court order, including orders related to child access. The PC does so by teaching parents how to co-parent, helping parents communicate with one another, and helping them find ways to resolve parental disputes or disagreements through consensus instead of bringing the conflict back to Court. This way, the PC minimises the need for parents to regularly return to the Court for new orders, among other things. The ultimate goal is for the parents to be able to co-parent and to resolve conflict on their own.

A PC is typically appointed for a period of between six months and two years, giving parents the time to learn how to co-parent. 61 persons have undergone PC training, amongst them lawyers and social science professionals.

- **Maintenance Record Officer Scheme**

A Maintenance Record Officer (MRO) is appointed by the Courts in its fact-finding process in maintenance enforcement cases. An MRO's role is to look into the parties' financial situation, prepare a report based on documents produced and information obtained directly from the parties, and to identify payers who defaulted on maintenance payments even though these payments were within their means. In the process, the MRO may also identify and refer parties deserving of financial and social assistance for the necessary support and services under the various schemes currently available. In 2016, a pilot MRO scheme was conducted and has since been reviewed. The MRO scheme was recognised as part of the court process in November 2017, with amendments made to the Family Justice Rules to empower the judge, in appropriate cases, to appoint an MRO without the need for parties to provide their consent as well as other new rules to facilitate the MRO's work. Additionally, for the purposes of referral to the above-mentioned assistance in appropriate cases, potential applicants for maintenance may be referred by the FJC Registry for an assessment to ascertain the financial circumstances of the applicant or the respondent or both, prior to their making of such application.

- **Stop Orders**

In matters of child custody, the Courts may order that a child not be brought out of jurisdiction unless permission of the Court is granted or where parties agree. Studies have shown that the consequences of breaching such orders are serious and potentially long term and irreversible on a child. In this respect, the FJC works with the relevant agencies to strengthen the legislative framework for dealing with such matters and implement measures to prevent the departure of children at exit points.



**BUILDING  
COMPETENCIES**

## I. FAMILY JUSTICE PRACTICE FORUM 2017: FAMILY JUSTICE 2020 - THROUGH THE RIGHT DOORS



The launch of iFAMS and Family Protection Centre at the Family Justice Practice Forum 2017

Jointly organised by the FJC, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Law Society of Singapore, the Family Justice Practice Forum 2017 was held on 14 July 2017 at the Supreme Court Auditorium. Attended by about 350 participants, the Forum brought together eminent experts from the legal, psychological and social science sectors to discuss the family justice practice.

With the theme “Family Justice 2020 - Through the Right Doors”, the Forum focused on family practitioners and how they can better serve the needs of troubled families in the context of the family justice system. “Through the Right Doors” summed up the frame of the FJC’s work: be it within the Courts or in the family justice community, we seek to help families go through the right doors to bring about a measure of healing and a new way forward. The family practitioner, whether a lawyer, mental health professional or social worker, is an integral part of this search for access to justice through the right door.

In his opening address, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon stressed the critical role of the family lawyer within the family justice eco-system and highlighted three key aspects:

### i. The evolving role of the family lawyer

As a first responder, the lawyer is strategically placed within the eco-system to play an influential role in dampening legal conflict and enabling parties to adopt initiatives that have been introduced to enhance the family justice system. The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon further explained the evolving role that lawyers play in respect of the latest judicial developments and initiatives, particularly their supporting role in facilitating the judge-led approach to problem-solving together throughout the litigation process. Lawyers play multiple roles - serving as troubleshooters, advisors, educators, and even the voices for children through the child representative scheme - as they guide their clients in making constructive decisions, *i.e.* encouraging mediation and counselling to achieve more sustainable outcomes, in navigating their way through the family justice system and beyond.



## I. FAMILY JUSTICE PRACTICE FORUM 2017: FAMILY JUSTICE 2020 - THROUGH THE RIGHT DOORS

### ii. Need for a mindset change

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon also pointed out that a mindset change is required for the appreciation of this evolving role. Contemporary best practice lawyering in family work recognises the role of lawyers as problem-solvers, collaborating with other partners in a multi-disciplinary environment within the family justice system. Increasingly, lawyers have evolved beyond the confines of traditional adversarial action and moved towards interest-based negotiation and creative problem-solving approaches in order to protect the true and broad interests of clients and their families.



The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon delivered his opening address at the Family Justice Practice Forum



Then Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, delivered remarks on "The Family Justice Eco-System"



Panel discussion on "Family Violence: Legal and Practical Solutions to Help Families"

### iii. The importance of ethics

Progressing in tandem with this less-adversarial model of family justice, lawyers are evolving beyond their traditional roles as advocates for their clients. They need to be sensitive to the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult at the heart of the case, as well as to the familial relationships that continue thereafter. In this regard, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon spoke about the importance of ethics in guiding lawyering and touched on the upcoming set of professional conduct rules and Best Practices Guide to help family lawyers navigate the difficult ethical issues they encounter as a result of multiple competing demands.

Speaking on what lies ahead for family justice, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said, "The future of family law is bright. It promises many professional opportunities to those committed to this fascinating area of practice; but it also calls for a fresh mindset and perspective. We on the Bench will continue to pay close attention to the growth and development of a Family Justice eco-system that is responsive to the needs of our people and that seeks to minimise the harm to our future by paying special attention to the affected children."

## II. WITHIN THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

The FJC has embarked on programmes and training to increase understanding and build competencies both within the organisation as well as in the community.

### • List of Training Programmes Conducted within the FJC

Date	Topic	Speakers/Trainers
28 FEBRUARY	Parenting Co-ordination	<b>District Judge Kevin Ng</b> Group Manager Family Dispute Resolution Division Family Justice Courts
1 MARCH	Competency Development Workshop	<b>Centre for Organisational Effectiveness</b>
22 MAY	The Division of Matrimonial Assets in Singapore	<b>Professor Leong Wai Kum</b> Faculty of Law National University of Singapore
	Parenting Co-ordination Shifting to a "Judge-led" System for Family Law Proceedings	<b>Assistant Professor Eunice Chua</b> School of Law Singapore Management University
20 JUNE	Learning Journey to CNB	<b>Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB)</b>
20 - 21 JUNE	Training on iFAMS	<b>District Judge Colin Tan</b> Family Division Family Justice Courts
22 JUNE	Corporate Cohesion @ Gardens by the Bay	<b>People Matters Committee</b> Family Justice Courts
23 JUNE	Learning Journey to Family Violence Specialist Centre and Divorce Support Specialist Agency	<b>PAVE</b> and <b>Centre for Family Harmony</b>
13 JULY	Training on Cognitive Bias Training on Domestic Violence	<b>Dr Robert A. Simon, Ph.D.</b> Licensed Psychologist Forensic Psychology Consulting
23 AUGUST	Judicial Stress and Wellness	<b>Ms Carly Schrever</b> Judicial Wellbeing Project Advisor Judicial Collage of Victoria, Australia
6 - 8 SEPTEMBER	High Conflict Divorce: Dynamics, Evaluation and Issues	<b>Dr Robin Deutsch, Ph.D.</b> Director The Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law William James College, USA
20 OCTOBER	Skills on How to Interview and Talk to Children	<b>Dr Daniel Fung</b> Chairman of the Medical Board <b>Dr Cai Yiming</b> Emeritus Consultant Institute of Mental Health
21 NOVEMBER	Updates on the Maintenance Records Officer Scheme	<b>(then) District Judge Masayu Norashikin</b> Family Protection and Support Division Family Justice Courts <b>Ms Jocelyn Tay</b> Assistant Manager Family Support Division/Family Development Group Ministry of Family & Social Development
7 DECEMBER	Annual Law Wrap	<b>Justice Debbie Ong</b> <b>District Judge Kimberly Scully</b> <b>District Judge Eugene Tay</b> <b>District Judge Adriene Cheong</b> Family Justice Courts
5 - 8 DECEMBER	Learning Day	<b>Centre for Organisational Effectiveness</b>
8 DECEMBER	"Creation Is...": Learning and Bonding through Pottery	<b>Rohei Corporation Pte Ltd</b>

## II. WITHIN THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

- List of Training / Visit Programmes Conducted by the FJC for Stakeholders

Date	Organisation
28 FEBRUARY	Thye Hua Kwan Centre for Family Harmony @ Commonwealth
1 MARCH	Social Work Faculty, Singapore University of Social Sciences
22 MAY	Medical Social Services, Changi General Hospital
	Social Work Faculty, National University of Singapore
20 JUNE	Friends of Litigants in Person (FLiP) programme, Community Justice Centre
20 - 21 JUNE	Social Service Offices @ Tampines/Pasir Ris/Punggol, Ministry of Social & Family Development
22 JUNE	Honorary Volunteer Special Constabulary Officers, Singapore Police Force
23 JUNE	School Counsellors, Ministry of Education
13 JULY	Internship programme, Singapore Academy of Law
6 - 8 SEPTEMBER	<i>Through the Wooden Doors</i> , Community Justice Centre
20 OCTOBER	<i>Introduction to Family Violence</i> , Social Service Institute
21 NOVEMBER	Honorary Volunteer Special Constabulary Officers, Singapore Police Force



DJ Eugene Tay conducting a briefing for a stakeholder group

## III. IN THE COMMUNITY

- Research on Outcomes of Counselling and Mediation

The mandatory counselling and mediation programme was introduced in September 2011, for parties with children who intend to divorce. Since that time, the programme has seen over 4,500 families. The programme provides families with an opportunity to avoid a trial process, which is often detrimental to the post-divorce parent-child relationship.

The programme has helped resolve the issues concerning the children in at least 80% of cases. However, the FJC wants to find out whether the programme has indeed helped these families in the time after the divorce.

The FJC and the National Institute of Education (NIE) are collaborating on a longitudinal (*i.e.* over a period of time) research to explore the outcomes of 300 families who undergo mandatory counselling and mediation for divorce and ancillary matters.

This study will measure the impact of the FJC child-centric approach on both parents and children. More than a thousand fathers, mothers and children are expected to be involved. This will allow the FJC to better understand the changes in parental conflict, parent-children relationships, and most importantly, the children's well-being. The research findings could also assist the FJC, community agencies and policy makers improve programmes and policies.

- Family Mediation Training and Accreditation Programme

Together with the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) and the Singapore International Mediation Institute (SIMI), the FJC has established the Singapore Family Mediation Training and Accreditation programme for persons wanting to practice family mediation. To date, there are 72 trained specialist family mediators.

Since October 2016, the FJC has been directing selected cases for private mediation.



A Court Family Specialist in a counselling session

### III. IN THE COMMUNITY

- **Divorce Support Specialist Agencies**

The FJC has collaborated with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Divorce Support Specialist Agencies (DSSAs) to support families in the event of post-divorce issues.

One example is the Supervised Exchange & Supervised Visitation programme handled by the DSSAs. Set up on 1 April 2016 for cases with difficulties in access handover or where access has to be supervised, the FJC referred 179 families to them in 2017. Another DSSA programme is the Mandatory Parenting Programme introduced on 1 December 2016. This Programme provides consultation sessions for parties who have children, before they file for divorce.

- **Friends of Litigants-in-Person (FLiP) Programme**

The FJC partnered with the Community Justice Centre (CJC) to meet the needs of an increasing number of litigants-in-person (LIPs). The Friends of Litigants-in-Person (FLiP) programme, modelled after the McKenzie Friend, was conceived to empower LIPs when they conduct their own trial. A FLiP volunteer essentially offers practical assistance to LIPs such as providing emotional support and explaining key information and instructions by the attending judge during a court hearing, thus empowering LIPs to conduct their cases with confidence.

In 2017, FLiP had provided assistance to 31 cases at the Family Justice Courts.



The Friends of Litigants-in-Person volunteers



**EXTENDING  
INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS**

## I. INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The International Advisory Council (IAC) was established on 1 April 2016 to provide a platform for comparative learning as it is recognised that increasingly complex family issues and the rise of globalisation call for solutions that are multi-dimensional. Global thought leaders in the field of family justice and from the common law and civil law jurisdictions, including judges, academics and social science experts, were therefore invited to join the IAC to discuss and share perspectives on developments in family law, practice and justice; identify potential areas of research; and generate ideas and innovations that may be adopted to place the FJC at the forefront of family court practice.

The eight IAC members are:

- **The Honourable Diana Bryant AO, QC**  
former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia
- **Justice Jacques Chamberland**  
Judge of the Court of Appeal, Quebec, Canada
- **Emeritus Professor Dagmar Coester-Waltjen**,  
University of Göttingen, Germany
- **Justice Michael Hartmann**  
Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Appeal, Hong Kong
- **Sir Mathew Thorpe**  
former Judge of Appeal of the Court of Appeal, United Kingdom
- **Professor Linda Silberman**  
New York University, USA
- **Dr Robert Emery**  
University of Virginia, USA
- **Dr Robin Deutsch<sup>1</sup>**  
The Center of Excellence for Children,  
Families and the Law at the William James College, USA

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon chaired the 1st IAC Meeting, which was held on 28 September 2016 and saw lively discussions on a variety of important topics on family law. The momentum of these engaging conversations was built upon at the 2nd IAC Meeting, which took place from 29 to 30 August 2017 and was chaired by then Presiding Judge Valerie Thean. Participants of the 2nd IAC Meeting included Judge of Appeal Andrew Phang, current Presiding Judge Debbie Ong, Judicial Commissioner Foo Tuat Yien, Judicial Officers as well as court counsellors and psychologists from the FJC. Eminent local academics were also invited to present papers at this meeting, with topics on the agenda covering matrimonial property division, children's issues, complexities of international abduction and relocation, research areas, and future trends.



Professor Leong Wai Kum from the National University of Singapore Law Faculty presenting her paper at the 2nd IAC meeting

## II. MEDIATION TRAINING IN MANILA

The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon also held a working dinner with IAC members on 29 August 2017, during which he outlined his vision for family justice and invited the members to share their views. Recognising the importance of continued collaboration between the Courts and other stakeholders in the family justice eco-system, The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon had earlier hosted a lunch for Judges and IAC members, as well as Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, then Minister for Social and Family Development; Ms Indraneel Rajah, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Law; Mr Chew Hock Yong, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social and Family Development; and the co-chairpersons of the Family Law Practice Committee, Ms Michelle Woodworth and Mr Raymond Yeo.



The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon hosting lunch

On 25 and 26 October 2017, an introductory training programme on family mediation was conducted for the ASEAN Family Judges Forum. This forum comprises judicial representatives from ASEAN countries.

The mediation training was carried out by trainers from the FJC and the Singapore Mediation Centre, with support from the Syariah Court of Singapore and the Philippine Judicial Academy. The two-day programme covered the basic elements of mediation and a broad overview of the issues encountered in family mediation, such as family violence, parental gatekeeping, child abduction, and relocation matters.

Participants were able to practise new-found skills and knowledge through role-playing activities, and more importantly, learn from the trainers as well as one another on how various jurisdictions approached the resolution of family conflict in a non-adversarial manner. The training programme was well received by the participants.



The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon with IAC members, High Court Judges and FJC Judges

<sup>1</sup>Dr Deutsch was appointed to the IAC on 1 April 2017

### III. WORLD CONGRESS ON FAMILY LAW AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 2017 IN DUBLIN

The World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights (WCFLCR) exists to enhance, promote and protect the human rights of children and young people. As a global platform, the WCFLCR brings together individuals and organisations of influence in the legal and justice system from all over the world, and encourages interdisciplinary dialogue between lawyers, judges, healthcare professionals, politicians, social workers, community and government representatives, human rights advocates, and private sector representatives. The WCFLCR meets every four years to assess, discuss, and exchange ideas on the law, public policy, and affiliated professional areas that impact upon the rights of children.

At the close of the 7th WCFLCR held in Dublin from 4 to 7 June 2017, then Judicial Commissioner Valerie Thean, Presiding Judge of the FJC, was invited on stage for the announcement of Singapore as the host of the 8th WCFLCR in 2020<sup>2</sup>. Besides providing an invaluable platform for the training of judges, academics, lawyers, and social workers in Singapore, this opportunity to host would also help to position Singapore on the international stage as thought leaders in the practice of family law and justice.



## SINGAPORE TO HOST 8<sup>th</sup> WORLD CONGRESS ON FAMILY LAW AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

*"The area of family law and children's rights remain exciting, challenging and fast-moving areas of legal scholarship and practice. The World Congress for Family Law and Children's Rights has established itself as the leading international forum for discussion and deliberation on these issues.*

*It is therefore with great pleasure to announce that the World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights will partner with the Family Justice Courts of Singapore to co-host the 2020 World Congress in Singapore."*

Geoffrey Sinclair, Chairman, World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights, on behalf of the Board.

<sup>2</sup>The Singapore Tourism Board made the bid for Singapore to host the event and had sought the FJC's support

### IV. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

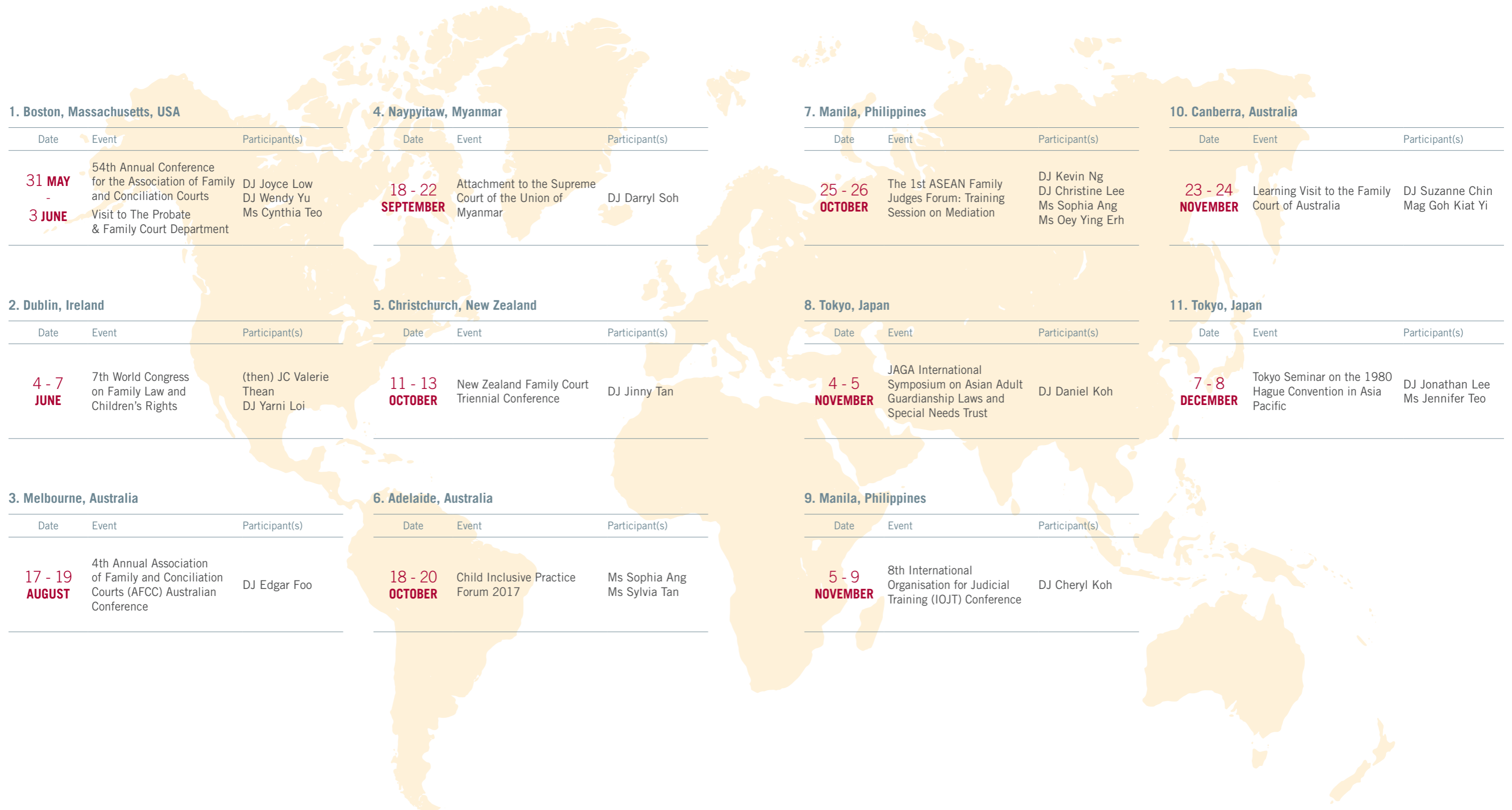
In 2017, the FJC hosted and participated in a number of regional and international events.

#### • Overseas Guests Hosted by the FJC

Date	Guests
16 FEBRUARY	<b>Mr Musa Heybet</b> Deputy Undersecretary, and delegation Ministry of Justice Turkey
15 MARCH	<b>Mr Craig Dent</b> Chief Executive Officer, and delegation State Trustees Limited Victoria, Australia
20 MARCH	<b>Delegation of lawyers</b> Japan Federation of Shiho-shoshi's Associations Tokyo, Japan
6 APRIL	<b>Delegation of judicial and government officers</b> on programme by Singapore Judicial College—"Strategies of Case Management: Challenges, Solutions and Innovation with a Focus on ADR Methods" Bangladesh
14 JUNE	<b>Judge Dale Kemp</b> Circuit Judge Federal Circuit Court of Australia
10 JULY	<b>Delegation of judicial and government officers</b> on programme by Singapore Judicial College—"End-to-End Court Technology Programme" Various countries
17 AUGUST	<b>Delegation of senior Judges from various jurisdictions</b> on programme by Singapore Judicial College—"Leadership in Court Governance" Various countries
18 SEPTEMBER	<b>Mr James Burke</b> Legal Adviser Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales United Kingdom
24 OCTOBER	<b>Mr Christophe Bernasconi</b> Secretary-General The Hague Conference on Private International Law The Netherlands
30 OCTOBER	On Judiciary-wide Induction Programme by Singapore Judicial College: <b>Judge Pranee Setjintanin</b> Specialised Court of Appeal Thailand Court of Justice <b>Judge Suwannee Palabutr</b> Nakhonsithammarat Municipal Court Thailand <b>Ms Yin Yin Han</b> Deputy Director Yangon Regional High Court Myanmar <b>Mr Zaw Thura</b> International Relations and Research Department Supreme Court of the Union of Myanmar
29 DECEMBER	<b>Delegation of Family Law Professors</b> Various universities Japan

## IV. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

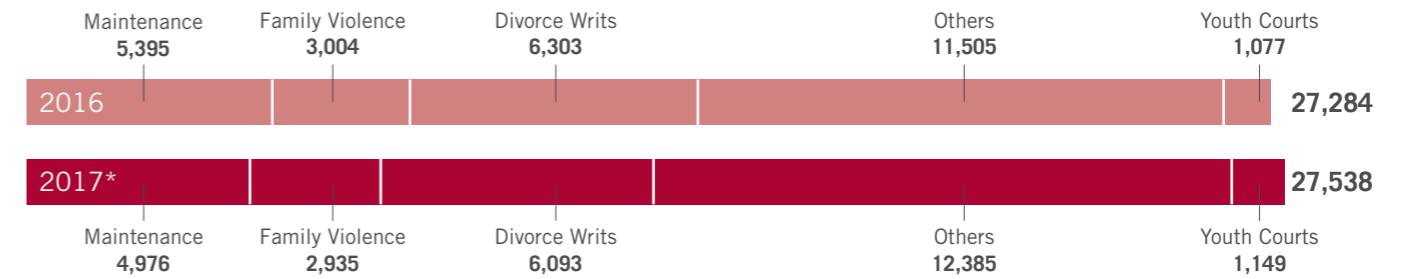
### Overseas Conferences Attended by the FJC



## I. CASELOAD STATISTICS

The FJC handled a total of 27,538 cases in 2017. This is an increase of about 1% of cases compared to 2016. Divorce, Maintenance and Probate cases made up more than half of the total caseload handled by the FJC in 2017.

### Family Justice Courts



#### Maintenance



#### Fresh Applications



#### Enforcement of Maintenance Orders



#### Variation/ Rescission/ Suspension of Maintenance Orders



#### Enforcement of Maintenance of Parents Tribunal Orders



#### Enforcement of Syariah Court Orders



#### Family Violence



#### Fresh Applications for Personal Protection Orders (PPO)



#### Variation/ Rescission of PPO



#### Breach of PPO



#### Divorce Writs



## I. CASELOAD STATISTICS

### Others

2016	11,505
2017*	12,385

### Adoption

2016	404
2017*	414

### Probate

2016	5,222
2017*	5,922

### Originating Summons

2016	757
2017*	900

### Breach of Syariah Court Orders

2016	241
2017*	174

### Summonses (Family)<sup>1</sup>

2016	4,881
2017*	4,975

### Youth Courts

2016	1,077
2017*	1,149

### Youth Arrest Charges

2016	751
2017*	812

### Beyond Parental Control<sup>2</sup>

2016	80
2017*	86

### Child Protection Orders<sup>2</sup>

2016	219
2017*	246

### Youth Summons Case/Youth Court Notice<sup>3</sup>

2016	27
2017*	5

(\*) Figures for 2017 are subject to revision

<sup>1</sup> Includes Divorce, Originating Summons (Family), Probate and Adoption Summonses

<sup>2</sup> Refer to number of youths

<sup>3</sup> Formerly refers to Police Summonses/Summonses & Tickets, and Other Charges



THE FJC FAMILY



Judges from the Registry



Judges from Family Trial and Probate, Adoption and Mental Capacity Registries



Judges from the Family Protection and Support Division



Judge-Mediators and Mediators from the Family Dispute Resolution Division



Officers from the Family Division



Officers from the Family Protection and Support Division



Officers from the Family Dispute Resolution Division



Officers from the Probate, Adoption and Mental Capacity Registries



Team of Case Managers assisting Judges with docketed cases



Team of Court Interpreters



Team of Court Family Specialists from the Counselling and Psychological Services Department



Mediators and Registry Officers from Maintenance Mediation Chambers



**Officers from Strategic Planning and Research Division****Officers from Integrated Corporate Support Services**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Family Justice Courts would like to thank all who have contributed to the work of the FJC from its beginnings and in this publication of Family Justice: Strengthening the Fundamentals.

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