



FAMILY LAW

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11 May 2011

Meredith Harrison
NT Legal Aid Commission
Locked Bag 11
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Madam

RE: NT LEGAL AID REFERRAL LIST

I refer to the above and confirm that I recently had a meeting with the partners of DS Family Law to discuss our firm's future. The Darwin office of DS Family Law has just celebrated its second year of operation so it was timely to consider the direction of the office.

After discussing these matters with the partners it has been decided that the Darwin Office of DS Family Law will no longer be taking on legal aid referrals given the volume of work that is currently coming through our office and the vast difference between the Legal Aid rate and the hourly rate of our solicitors. We have avoided making this decision for some time due to our social conscience though we cannot avoid the financial reality any longer.

We ask that DS Family Law be removed from the list of private solicitors willing to accept Legal Aid referrals. I currently have two Legal Aid matters remaining which we will see to the end.

There may be limited circumstances in the future where we do apply for Legal Aid on behalf of a client, though we no longer wish to be advertised as a firm willing to accept Legal Aid referrals. We anticipate that we will still have clients who meet the means test for Legal Aid conferences and we will continue to encourage clients to engage in such Family Dispute Resolution. We will also have some clients who were fee paying but run out of money towards the end of their case. These clients may become eligible due to the fact that their legal funds already expended exceed the contribution that they are assessed to pay. These may be the types of matters in which our firm applies for grants of Legal Aid.

We will naturally reconsider our position in relation to the acceptance of Legal Aid referrals on an annual basis and we will notify Legal Aid should this position change.

Please do not hesitate to contact the writer if you wish to discuss any of these matters.

Yours sincerely

KRIS NORRINGTON
Barrister & Solicitor