

# Family Law

**Thursday 17 August 2023**

**Session 2 – 11.00am – 12.00pm**

## **Panel: Preparing for change – again: The Family Law Amendment Bill 2023**

The draft *Family Law Amendment Bill 2023* (Cth) proposes some significant changes to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), particularly around parenting and considerations for determining the child's best interests. This expert panel will examine the proposed changes for both practitioners and clients, including from historical, legal, and practical perspectives. The panel will discuss the impact of the expected changes on the way family lawyers conduct matters, including advice around potential outcomes, and consider the areas of conjecture when it comes to interpreting and applying the legislative amendments.

### **Meet the speakers**

#### **Moderator: Jacqueline Dawson, Chair, Specialist Accreditation Board, Law Society of New South Wales and Principal, Sexton Family Law**

Jacqueline Dawson is the Principal of Sexton Family Law and an Accredited Specialist in Family Law. Admitted to practice as a solicitor in 1994 and an Accredited Specialist since 2001, Jacqueline began practice in early 1995 with the firm then known as Robyn Sexton & Associates and remained as a principal of the firm when Judge Sexton was appointed to the Federal Magistrates Court. Jacqueline is a Councillor of the Law Society of NSW. Within the NSW Law Society, she is presently Chair of the Specialist Accreditation Board, Co-Chair of the Family Law Committee, Deputy Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee and a member of the Audit Risk and Finance Committee. She also serves as a member of the Legal Aid NSW Board, and a committee member of the Sydney University Law Extension Committee and of the Legal Qualifications Committee of the Legal Profession Admission Board.

#### **The Honourable Colin Forrest SC, Barrister, Family Law Chambers**

Colin Forrest is in practice again at the private Bar after having resigned from his position as a trial judge on the Family Court of Australia in early 2021 after ten years of service. Colin provides his services as an Arbitrator and Mediator in all family law disputes across Australia. He is also available to mediate in other areas of law including succession law, administrative law, and anti-discrimination law. Colin holds Queensland statutory appointments as the Chair of the Prostitution Licensing Authority and as a Judicial Sessional member of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, hearing and determining cases there on a part-time basis. Colin is a member of the Bar Association of Queensland, the Family Law Practitioners' Association of Queensland (a past President), the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and the Queensland Board Member of the Australian Institute of Family Law Arbitrators and Mediators (AIFLAM).



## **Dr Henry Kha, Senior Lecturer, Macquarie University**

Dr Henry Kha is Senior Lecturer in Law at Macquarie University. His main research interest is in all aspects of family law from both a legal historical and a contemporary perspective. Henry was previously lecturer at the University of Auckland and tutor at the University of Queensland. Henry was a legal associate in the Family Court of Australia, and he was admitted as a lawyer in New South Wales. He was the Australian National Rapporteur to the International Academy of Comparative Law on “Plurality and Diversity in Law: Family Forms and Family’s Functions” in 2021. Henry’s research was cited in the 2019 Australian Law Reform Commission report, *Family Law for the Future*. He has appeared on television and radio to discuss family law issues, including on ABC and SBS.

## **Susan Warda, Partner, Mills Oakley**

Susan Warda is a Partner with national law firm Mills Oakley, an Accredited Specialist in Family Law, a collaborative lawyer, and a trained Parenting Coordinator. With extensive expertise in family law matters that involve complex financial issues, including property settlements dealing with family businesses, multiple assets, and superannuation splitting, she is highly regarded for both her knowledge and her professional approach. Susan is a fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) and her achievements have seen her named again by Best Lawyers Australia Family Law 2024 as well as a Leading Family & Divorce Lawyer Sydney, and a Leading Family Lawyer, High Value & Complex Property Matters in the 2023 Doyle’s Guide. An active member of the profession and the community, Susan holds Board positions with the Australian Association of Collaborative Professionals and Variety – the Children’s Charity Asia Pacific.