

Family *Law*

CONFERENCE 2024

Thursday 26 September | 9:00 am – 4:15 pm

CPD hours 5.75

In Person

JW Marriott (Ballroom)
22–26 Albert Street, Auckland 1010

[Register here](#)

Online

[Register here](#)

Tickets

Early Bird (30% discount)

(closes 13 September)

Member: \$420 + GST

Non-Member: \$591 + GST

Full Price

(closes 25 September)

Member: \$600 + GST

Non-Member: \$845 + GST



✉ cpd@thelawassociation.nz

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The *Law*
Association

The *Programme*

Time	Mins	Session	Presenters
8.30am	30	Registration and coffee	
9.00am	5	Opening address	Chairperson
9.05am	30	The Role of the Family Court Associate: <i>In this session, Family Court Associates Singh and Tolich will introduce themselves and their role. They will provide insights into what their involvement in cases looks like, and how counsel can best assist them in their role.</i>	Family Court Associate Singh Family Court Associate Tolich
9.35am	55	Trial Strategy and Client Management – Insights into effective courtroom strategies and managing client expectations: <i>In this session, panellists will discuss effective courtroom strategies and the importance of managing client expectations in family court cases. They will share insights on client preparation, the significance of well-drafted affidavits, and the development of a strong theory of the case to guide trial strategy. The session will also address the ethical challenges of client preparation, including cross-examination, and highlight techniques for managing client emotions and expectations through effective communication.</i>	Alissa Bell Stephen McCarthy KC Ben Snedden Moderator: Stuart Cummings
10.30am	45	Without Notice Applications – Wins and woes: <i>This session will be practical in its focus and aims to include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'back to basics' review of jurisdictional thresholds for interlocutory/substantive applications, under different statutes, the Court's powers and processes on a without notice application when they are (and are not) successful; • Applicants: the duty to fully and frankly disclose all material facts; • Certification requirements of lawyers as officers of the Court, including what does (and does not) constitute reasonable enquiries; • Respondents: the impact (including delays in progression) and options (including applications to rescind) for those served with orders made without notice to them; • Examination of the infamous authority on point: <i>Martin v Ryan</i>; • A discussion of evidential issues more broadly and a consideration of other relevant cases. 	Kesia Denhardt Aroha Fletcher

Time	Mins	Session	Presenters
11.15am	45	Networking Break 1	
12.00pm	60	Challenges Faced in Family Law Practice – Pragmatic and Constructive Solutions: <i>This session will address the real and pressing challenges family lawyers face today, offering a comprehensive analysis of key conflict triggers during proceedings and practical solutions to prevent them. We will explore topics such as the critical importance of careful decision-making when issuing without notice applications, strategies for drafting effective COCA orders, and best practices for managing cases, including those involving addiction and family violence. The safety of both clients and practitioners will be central to the discussion.</i>	Louise Reed Brintyn Smith Shahn Tagelagi Moderator: Stuart Cummings
1.00pm	45	Advocacy for Junior Family Lawyers: <i>This session will provide bar and bench perspectives on best practice advocacy for conferences and in hearings, balancing CoCA and FCA obligations in a court setting, and some common errors and how to avoid them.</i>	Her Honour Judge Morrison Mark Sandelin
1.45pm	45	Networking Break 2	
2.30pm	45	Effective Communication: <i>Participating effectively in the communication involved in legal settings can be challenging for many children, young people and adults. Legal professionals need to recognise when they need to adapt their communication so information and processes make sense to people. They need to know how to ensure people can have their say. This session will explore practical communication strategies lawyers can use in Family Court work.</i>	Sally Kedge
3.15pm	55	Alternative Dispute Resolution: <i>This session will focus on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), covering key aspects of the FDR process and mediation, including collaborative and traditional approaches. Explore RP and COCA/FDR mediation models, arbitration, and effective strategies for recording enforceable settlements and court orders. Enhance your practical insights and strategies to refine your ADR expertise and better serve your clients.</i>	Rosemarie Brown Timothy McMichael Kate Wiseman
4.10pm	5	Closing address	Chairperson
4.15pm	105	Networking 4.15–6.00pm	

Our *Presenters*

The *Law*
Association

Chair of the Conference

Stuart Cummings *Barrister, Surrey Chambers*

Presenters

Her Honour Judge Morrison

Family Court Associate Singh

Family Court Associate Tolich

Alissa Bell

Partner, McVeagh Fleming

Rosemarie Brown

*Lawyer & Mediator, Clark & Brown
Lawyers*

Kesia Denhardt

*Barrister, Ponsonby Chambers &
Kate Sheppard Chambers*

Aroha Fletcher

Senior Associate, Stace Hammond

Sally Kedge

*Speech-language Therapist and
court-appointed Communication
Assistant; Director/Coordinator of
Talking Trouble Aotearoa NZ*

Stephen McCarthy KC
Barrister

Timothy McMichael
Director & Mediator

Louise Reed

Barrister, Southern Cross Chambers

Mark Sandelin

Barrister, Mills Lane Chambers

Brintyn Smith
Barrister

Ben Snedden

Barrister, Hobson Chambers

Shahn Tagelagi

Solicitor, Denham Bramwell Lawyers

Kate Wiseman

*Associate Member, Bankside
Chambers*

Meet Our *Presenters*

Chair of the Conference

Stuart Cummings

Barrister, Surrey Chambers

Stuart commenced practicing in 1979 as an old-fashioned law clerk while completing his law degree. After admission in 1982, Stuart practiced in the criminal and family courts before specialising exclusively in family law from the late 1980s. Stuart has practiced as a Barrister Sole since 1990, was a contributing author to Brookers Family Law on Relationship Property and is convenor of The Law Association Family Law Committee. His practice is now principally in the areas of relationship property and complex COCA cases.

Presenters

Her Honour Judge Morrison

Judge Morrison sits in the North Shore Family Court. Prior to her appointment in May 2022, she was a family law barrister, Lawyer for Child, Lawyer for Subject Person and Lawyer to Assist practising in the Wellington region, where she had spent most of her career, which also included time as an instructor and Programme Manager at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies. Her iwi affiliations include Te Arawa and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui.

Family Court Associate Singh

Family Court Associate Singh is one of the first 6 Family Court Associates appointed earlier this year. She is based in the North Shore and Hastings courts. FCA Singh was previously a barrister at Halcyon Chambers and a lawyer with Oranga Tamariki. She was previously a member of The Law Association's Family Law and Mental Health and Disability Law committees.

Family Court Associate Tolich

Mr Tolich started his working career in 1980 at McElroy Duncan and Prebble and left in 1983 to undertake post-graduate studies at Oxford University. He returned to New Zealand in 1986 and joined Rice Craig in Papakura as a solicitor and later partner, remaining with that firm until 2008. In 2009 he joined Corban Revell as a consultant and continues to hold that position. Prior to his appointment as FCA, he worked primarily in the Family Court, including conducting Mediations, Senior Lawyer for the Child and Lawyer for Subject Persons work in most Courts in the Auckland area. Mr Tolich was appointed to take up the role on 2 April 2024, based in Auckland Family Court with a secondary court responsibility in Palmerston North Family Court.

Alissa Bell

Partner, McVeagh Fleming

Alissa is a partner and Chair of the Board at McVeagh Fleming. She has been practising family law since 2003, initially in Christchurch before joining McVeagh Fleming in Auckland in 2011. Alissa specialises in relationship property, estate, and trust disputes, care of children, family violence and mediation. She is also an accredited NZLS Panel of Mediators Family Specialist, a trained Collaborative Practitioner, and a Lawyer for Child.

Rosemarie Brown

Lawyer & Mediator, Clark & Brown Lawyers

A Chartered Accountant from the Waikato with 35 years in business across a range of sectors and multi-disciplinary teams gave Rosemarie an insight into disputes and people. Rosemarie began mediating in 2006 in Australia then New Zealand. Rosemarie now works as a lawyer in Hamilton and mediator in Auckland. She is an experienced mediator, FDR, PFM and Voice of Child provider and member of collaborative teams as a Lawyer, Mediator and Financial Neutral.

Kesia Denhardt

Barrister, Ponsonby Chambers & Kate Sheppard Chambers

Kesia is a barrister practising in Auckland. She is a member of both Ponsonby Chambers and Kate Sheppard Chambers. She handles all types of family law matters, with a particular interest in relationship property issues arising out of a separation, complex parenting and protection disputes, and reproductive law. Kesia enjoys making contributions to the legal profession beyond the work she does in practice. She has written and presented legal seminars for NZLS, TLA and Legalwise on various family law issues. She has authored and featured in articles for LawTalk, LawPoints, LawNews, and At The Bar; and is a regular contributor to The Family Advocate. Kesia is an appointed member of the FLS Advisory Panel focussed on family law reform. She has been an appointed member of a number of other committees, including the Auckland Women Lawyers' Association and a NZLS Lawyers Standards Committee. Kesia is also an ambassador of White Ribbon New Zealand; appointed in recognition of her work in assisting victims of family violence.

Aroha Fletcher

Senior Associate, Stace Hammond

Aroha Fletcher is a Senior Associate at Stace Hammond. She specialises in family law, helping clients navigate and resolve disputes, particularly in high-conflict cases involving children. She is a member of Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa and the Family Law Section and has been involved in community initiatives to assist people's access to family lawyers. Aroha currently assists various ethics committees in resolving disciplinary actions for different professional bodies. She previously practised on the North Shore and has been involved in the Royal Commission's Inquiry into abuse of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in State and faith-based care in Aotearoa New Zealand between the years 1950-99.

Sally Kedge

Speech-language Therapist and court-appointed Communication Assistant; Director/Coordinator of Talking Trouble Aotearoa NZ

Sally Kedge is a speech-language therapist and Communication Assistant in justice settings. She is the Director of a social enterprise, Talking Trouble Aotearoa NZ, which partners with children, young people and adults involved with justice, care and protection, and mental health processes to improve communication environments. The Talking Trouble team provides communication assistance in courts, Family Group Conferences, police interviews, at the Parole Board, and in related settings, and also delivers professional development and projects with stakeholders.

Stephen McCarthy KC

Barrister

Stephen was a partner in a small suburban Auckland firm for 20 years before commencing practice as a barrister in 2006. He was appointed a KC in 2021. Stephen's practice is now predominantly property and trust focused but he has appeared in cases involving care of children over the years.

Timothy McMichael

Director & Mediator

Timothy is the Resolution Expert Oceana/Pacifica for OurFamilyWizard, and an active FDRP and parenting co-ordinator in Aotearoa New Zealand, where he also maintains a busy Family Law and Mental Health practice in Auckland and Palmerston North. He also is a currently published academic researcher and author, and Vice President of Pacifica Congress, – Asia/Pacifica's largest Family Justice membership group and peak body and the Chair of the Family Court Association Auckland. Timothy is a past winner of many Aotearoa New Zealand awards including the 2020 Kiwi Bank New Zealand of the Year Local Heroes Awards, the 2017 NZ Law Awards – Mediator of the Year, and was the Winner of the Resolution Institute 2015 Practitioner Award for Significant Contribution to DR – for the development and/or promotion of DR in their communities.

Louise Reed

Barrister, Southern Cross Chambers

Louise is a barrister at Southern Cross Chambers. She graduated from the University of Auckland in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts (History) and a Bachelor of Laws, and was admitted in October 2004. Louise has practised in Auckland since then, in family law, employment law, insurance law and general civil litigation. Since 2009, Louise has practised exclusively in the area of family law and has interests in proceedings concerning children's issues, proceedings under the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988, Relationship property, Spousal Maintenance and Family Violence. Louise is also regularly appointed as court appointed counsel – lawyer for child and counsel to assist. Louise is one of the Family Law Section representatives for Auckland Central as well as being a member of The Law Association Family Law Committee.

Mark Sandelin

Barrister, Mills Lane Chambers

Mark is a barrister practising at Mills Lane Chambers in Auckland. He has over 35 years' experience as a commercial litigator. He specialises in relationship property and trust litigation and also acts as counsel in a range of commercial disputes. Mark joined the independent bar in 2020 and before that he was a litigation partner at national law firm MinterEllisonRuddWatts for 28 years. In his early career as a litigation partner at MinterEllisonRuddWatts, Mark specialised in litigation involving financial services and receivership and insolvency law. He transitioned to Relationship Property and Trust Litigation approximately 15 years ago and this is now his primary focus. Mark has extensive experience in running civil litigation matters in the Family Court, High Court and Appeal Courts.

Brintyn Smith

Barrister

Brintyn (Tūhoe) is a family law barrister based in Warkworth and Auckland. He deals predominantly with complex care of children, family violence, relocation, and care and protection matters. He also undertakes relationship property work. Brintyn accepts Family Court appointments to act as Lawyer for Child. He is also an Instructor at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies (IPLS). Brintyn is passionate about and actively advocates for the safety and well-being of practitioners. He also has an interest in matters of practice and procedure, alternative dispute resolution and elder law.

Ben Snedden

Barrister, Hobson Chambers

Ben is a practising family law barrister. He has 22 years' experience as an advocate. Ben has also qualified as a solicitor advocate in England.

Shahn Tagelagi

Solicitor, Denham Bramwell Lawyers

Shahn joined Denham Bramwell in May 2021 following ten years at Qantas Airways in London and Perth. His aviation career has given Shahn strong people skills, firstly as a flight attendant and later in human resource management and training & development roles on the ground. Shahn has a keen interest in parenting matters, including the return of children in Hague Convention proceedings. He works with community organisations and private clients in parenting disputes and family violence cases. He can assist with legal advice on family law issues, conflict resolution and mediation. Shahn regularly appears in the Family Court as a litigator.

Kate Wiseman

Associate Member, Bankside Chambers

Kate is a dispute resolver active in mediation, arbitration and collaborative resolution. Her work encompasses a broad range of commercial, property and family disputes. She has particular expertise in resolving family disputes concerning trusts, estates, companies and relationship property. She has a special interest in governance disputes, especially those concerning shareholders, incorporated societies, charitable trusts and body corporates.

Before coming to the law she had a 20 year career in business. She has held governance roles continuously since 2004, currently as an elected member of the governing bodies of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand (AMINZ) and the Collaborative Law Association of New Zealand.

See you *there!*



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