



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

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FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR ALL PARENTING ORDERS

All people applying to the Family Court for a parenting order must first attend family dispute resolution under changes to family law, except where there is child abuse, family violence or in matters of urgency, Attorney-General Robert McClelland said today.

The changes will take effect from 1 July 2008 and are designed to help separating families resolve disputes without litigation. The changes were foreshadowed as part of the 2006 family law reforms.

The new requirements affect all applications to the court for a parenting order under Part VII of the *Family Law Act 1975* relating to children's matters, irrespective of whether previous applications to the court have been made.

"Currently, people are only required to attend family dispute resolution if they have lodged a new application for a parenting order after 1 July 2007," Mr McClelland said.

"These new measures reinforce that the Government is determined to develop a culture where access to the Courts in family disputes is a matter of last resort."

"The exceptions to family dispute resolution will remain in cases where there is child abuse or family violence, or in matters of urgency," Mr McClelland said.

A parenting order is a set of directions made by a court about a couple's parental responsibilities. When a parenting order is made, each person affected by the order must follow the order.

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