



Gavin Pearce MP
Federal Member for Braddon

Statement

2 June 2023

North-West Family Law Court services

For nearly two years, those living across the greater North-West Coast of Tasmania, have been waiting for the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to confirm that it has secured a permanent venue to conduct its hearings in Burnie.

In September 2021, I wrote to the Attorney-General seeking an assurance that this was a priority for the Court.

In response the Attorney-General advised that “the Court is currently looking, **as a priority**, at potential premises in or around the area ...”

The recent announcement that the Court has now been removed from another temporary premise at the Burnie Arts and Function Centre, necessitating a move to Launceston for all hearings, is simply unacceptable.

Our region is one of the most disadvantaged in the state. The Court should clearly understand that this is not a workable solution. It is beyond the capacity of most families to incur the cost of travel, accommodation, childcare and other costs associated with attending hearings in Launceston.

This decision will have a serious impact on access to justice for those living in the region, and I fear, a devastating impact on our most vulnerable families, risking the safety of women and children.

The response from the Court that it will “continue to work with the various levels of government in an attempt to find a suitable solution and venue ...” does not give this matter the level of urgency it requires.

I have again written to the Attorney-General and asked the federal government to ensure that all resourcing and support necessary to facilitate the immediate return of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia to Burnie is made available.

ENDS