

Justice Review Task Force Appoints New Working Group to Improve BC's Family Justice System

VANCOUVER — A new Working Group with representatives from the judiciary, the legal profession and the Ministry of the Attorney General will be looking for ways to improve BC's family justice system, Richard Margetts, Chair of the BC Justice Review Task Force announced today.

"The Family Justice Reform Working Group has been given a mandate by the JRTF to explore options for fundamental change in the family law system that will better serve the parents and children who access it," said Mr. Margetts.

The BC Justice Review Task Force was established on the initiative of the Law Society of BC in March 2002 and is a joint project of the Law Society, the Attorney General, the Canadian Bar Association BC Branch, the BC Provincial Court and the BC Supreme Court.

The new Working Group will develop recommendations for changes to the family court system in BC. It will also re-examine the concept of unified family court and will make recommendations on the delivery of family justice services outside of the court system, such as non-adversarial and settlement-oriented processes.

"Since 1976, 16 reports on the family justice system in BC have been prepared by a variety of committees, commissions, working groups, practitioners and consultants," said Mr. Margetts. "This body of work represents a wealth of knowledge and insight into the family justice system. The work of the Family Law Working Group will build on this material and on the experience and expertise of its members, working in consultation with family law lawyers and others in the province."

The Working Group will commence work immediately and is anticipated to deliver their final recommendations to the Justice Review Task Force by September 2004.

For background information on the Justice Review Task Force and the Family Justice Working Group see the Working Group's Terms of Reference on the JRTF's website at: www.bcjusticereview.org

Members of the Working Group are:

The Honourable Madam Justice Alison Beames
Supreme Court of BC
Kelowna

The Honourable Associate Chief Judge John Threlfall
Provincial Court of BC
Kelowna

Richard Bjarnason
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