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FAMILY COURT CEO CASTS DOUBT ON PWC REPORT CLAIMS

Chief Executive and Principal Registrar of the Family Court Warwick Soden has cast doubt on a key assumption in a management consultants' report, which the government has used to justify its planned amalgamation of the Family and Federal Circuit Courts.

The PwC report entitled [*Review of the efficiency of the operation of the federal courts*](#) states, as a key assumption, that:

PwC has been informed that, in practice, both the courts hear matters of similar complexity.

The report's conclusion – that the Family Court is less efficient than the Federal Circuit Court because it takes longer to deal with family law cases – is directly related to this assumption.

But when questioned during Senate Estimates today, Mr Soden said:

*My expectation would be, and I think the Judges of the Family Court would correctly assert that the cases that they dealt with are in the **more complex***

*category. So I think, in other words, I think it's fair to say that the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court deal with complex cases, but the Family Court deals with the **very complex cases**.*

The government's reliance on a single management consultant's report – without talking to a single family actually caught up in the family law system – always seemed bogus.

Now the Chief Executive of the Family Court itself has punched a hole through the report's credibility.

The government needs to consult properly, and come up with a better explanation for why it thinks its model is the right one for reform, and will not simply result in significant upheaval for no real change.

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