

PRESS RELEASE
20 January 2009



Grandparents, a third option for parenting

More Grandparents may be able to gain custody of their grandchildren as the family courts and the federal government acknowledge the role of grandparents in parenting.

Family lawyer from **msl|michael sing lawyers**, Anton A Richardson, said Grandparents are encouraged to take a more active role in parenting cases where the parents are unable to cope.

"More and more frequently, Judges look to the grandparents to assume the parenting role in cases of dysfunctional parenting, whether on a temporary or permanent basis" said Mr Richardson.

Mr Richardson's comments were made in the midst of Attorney General Robert McClelland's announcement that the Rudd Government will provide increased resources to the Family Law system to improve and maintain the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren.

This follows on from the Attorney General's August 2008 announcement that an additional \$400,000 would be allocated to Legal Aid Commissions to assist grandparents and other relatives of children in accessing family dispute resolution services.

When a parenting order is made, the Courts regard the child's best interests as the paramount consideration.

The Court will consider the benefit to the child of having a meaningful relationship with both of the child's parents, whilst also considering the need to protect the child from physical or psychological harm from being subjected to, or exposed to, abuse, neglect or family violence.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has been commissioned to examine the reforms that were brought about by the 2006 changes to the Family Law Act, which increased grandparents' rights in parenting proceedings.

Anton A Richardson is a Family Lawyer at **msl|michael sing lawyers** and is also an Australian Accredited Mediator in accordance with the Australian National Mediator Standards.

ENDS

For More Information Contact:

Anton A Richardson, Senior Family Lawyer

Ph: 07 5597 8888

E: aarichardson@mslawyers.com.au

Amber Tunnicliff, Marketing & Communications Executive,

Ph: 0413 944 850 or 07 5597 8888

E: atunnicliff@mslawyers.com.au