



Newcastle Mediation Programme Update

October 2005

Following on from our Mediation Update in early June we can now report on the outcome of the second Newcastle Mediation Pilot Programme.

At the last callover in April 2005 a total of 14 District Court matters were ordered to mediate by Judge Sidis. Of those, 4 matters settled at mediation, 6 matters settled shortly after mediation or before trial, and 4 matters remain ongoing.

We have carried out an evaluation of the Programme by sending a voluntary questionnaire to the practitioners involved in the 14 matters. We sincerely thank those who have taken the time to complete and return the questionnaire. The responses we have received so far, even in relation to the matters which did not settle on the day of mediation, indicate the following:

100% of responses indicated that the participants would recommend the mediation process to others to assist them in resolving a dispute.

100% of responses indicated that the mediators understood the dispute, and were completely impartial during the mediation.

95% of responses indicated that the mediators assisted the participants to understand the process of mediation, and that the participants were confident in the ability of the mediators to conduct the process so as to put them at their ease and give them an equal opportunity to participate in the mediation.

60% of responses were "very satisfied" with mediation as a method of resolving their dispute, (including the selection of the matter for mediation, their expectations of and experience at the mediation, the conduct of the mediation and its outcome).

In a number of matters which did not settle at mediation but which were subsequently settled, it was clear that the process of mediation helped to resolve or narrow some of the issues between the parties, thus either increasing the chances of the matter settling before trial or reducing the time that would be spent on those issues at trial.

The next step in the Mediation Programme is to run mediation accreditation courses in Newcastle, and to set up a local organization dedicated to the promotion of mediation as a method of dispute resolution. This is currently being organised jointly by the Women Lawyers Association (Newcastle Chapter) and the Newcastle Law Society.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Mediation Programme or the above projects please contact Liz Pinnock on 0405 118 681 or Felicity Wardhaugh on 4925 5500.