

The Law
Reform
Commission

Report No 46

GROUPED PROCEEDINGS
IN THE FEDERAL COURT
Summary of report
and draft legislation

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Canberra 1988*

Note: This volume sets out in summary form the Commission's main recommendations on the issues raised in the Terms of Reference. The full Report, separately available, sets out in detail the material on which the recommendations are based.

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The Law Reform Commission is established by section 5 of the Law Reform Commission Act 1973 to review, modernise and simplify the law. The first members were appointed in 1975. The offices of the Commission are at 99 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW Australia (Tel (02) 231 1733; VOCADEx (02) 223 1203).

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Terms of reference

ACCESS TO THE COURTS

I, ROBERT JAMES ELLICOTT, Attorney-General, HAVING REGARD TO —

- (a) the function of the Law Reform Commission, in pursuance of references to the Commission made by the Attorney-General, of reviewing laws to which the Law Reform Commission Act 1973 applies, namely —
 - (i) laws made by, or by the authority of, the Parliament, including laws of the Territories so made; and
 - (ii) any other laws, including laws of the Territories, that the Parliament has power to amend or repeal,with a view to the systematic development and reform of the law, including, in particular —
 - (i) the modernisation of the law by bringing it into accord with current conditions;
 - (ii) the simplification of the law; and
 - (iii) the adoption of new or more effective methods for the administration of the law and the dispensation of justice;
- (b) the provisions of section 7 of the said Act which provide that, in the performance of its functions, the Commission shall review such laws with a view to ensuring that such laws do not unduly make the rights and liberties of citizens dependent upon administrative rather than judicial decisions; and
- (c) criticism of the restrictions in the present law upon the capacity and right of persons to be heard in courts and proposals which have been made relating to class actions,

HEREBY REFER to the Law Reform Commission, as provided by the Law Reform Commission Act 1973, for REVIEW of the laws to which the said Act applies relating to —

- (a) the standing of persons to sue in Federal and other courts whilst exercising federal jurisdiction or in courts exercising jurisdiction under any law of any Territory; and
- (b) class actions in such courts,

AND TO REPORT UPON —

- (a) the adequacy thereof;
- (b) any desirable changes to the existing law in relation thereto but having regard to any constitutional limitations on Commonwealth power; and
- (c) any related matter.

IN MAKING ITS REPORT the Commission will also have regard to its function in accordance with section 6(1)(d) of the said Act to consider and present proposals for uniformity between laws of the Territories and laws of the States with a view to such proposals being considered by the States.

DATED this first day of February 1977

RJ Ellicott QC
Attorney-General

Participants

The Commission

In accordance with the Law Reform Commission Act 1973 s 27(1), this Reference was dealt with by a Division of the Commission. At the date of completion of this report, the Division comprised the following members:

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** The recommendations, statements of opinion and conclusions in this report are those of the members of the Commission alone. They should not be taken to represent the views of the consultants or of the organisations with which they are associated.

Summary of Report

Introduction

1. On 1 February 1977 the Attorney-General referred to this Commission two matters relating to the access of citizens to the courts:

- the standing of persons to sue in federal and other courts whilst exercising federal jurisdiction or in court's exercising jurisdiction under any law of any Territory
- class actions in such courts.

This report deals with the second of these matters, class actions.

Are new procedures needed to deal with multiple wrongs?

The question

2. The question is whether there is a need to introduce any new form of representative or class procedure to deal with multiple wrongs. The term 'multiple wrong' describes situations where a single person has caused loss, damage or injury to a number of people in circumstances where there is a legal liability to pay compensation or some other monetary relief or where injunctive or declaratory relief is available. In an age of mass production and distribution of goods and services, the potential for loss or damage to be caused on a mass scale is high. While the overall damage may be great, the amount of damage incurred by an individual may be relatively small in proportion to the cost of legal services and of court proceedings.

Barriers to access

3. If cost factors preclude enforcement of rights, or if people are ignorant of their legal rights or intimidated by the legal system, loss or damage for which the law says compensation should be paid goes uncompensated. It is borne, not by the person causing it, but by the person who suffers it. Cost and other barriers which inhibit peoples access to the courts should be lowered if it is cost effective to do so, so that people can receive the compensation to which the law says they are entitled. Unless the cost to the individual of recovering compensation can be reduced, a person may be held accountable for causing damage of \$500 000 to one person but escape liability if damage of \$1000 is caused to each of 500 people.

Efficient use of resources

4. Even if those affected by a multiple wrong each have substantial claims which justify bringing individual legal proceedings, unnecessary costs may be incurred by those parties and the community if the same issues have to be heard

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and determined separately for a number of people. An efficient use of resources would involve procedures that enable common issues to be determined in one proceeding for all affected. A multiplicity of proceedings could be avoided and consistency of decision making promoted.

What is a class action?

5. Class actions enable a single applicant to bring proceedings on behalf of a group or class of people with similar claims against the same respondent. There are two features of class actions which set this kind of procedure apart from other procedures involving multiple parties:

- class actions may include claims for damages, the amount of which may vary from person to person
- proceedings can be commenced without the need to identify each member of the class and without the consent of each member.

A general feature of class actions in those jurisdictions where they exist is that class members can opt out of the proceedings on receiving notice of their commencement if they do not wish to be included. The traditional representative proceedings rule, which is available in most Australian jurisdictions, allows one person to commence proceedings on behalf of numerous persons who have the same interest in the proceedings. This rule has been interpreted by the courts to be limited to cases where the relief sought is an injunction or declaration. It cannot be used to claim damages. Other multiple party procedures (such as joinder and consolidation) permit damages to be claimed but require the consent of the parties in most cases. There is no procedure in federal jurisdictions under which proceedings claiming damages can be brought on behalf of a class or group of persons.

Effect of class actions and related procedures

6. *Promoting access and efficiency.* The recommendations in this report are concerned with

- reducing the cost of court proceedings to the individual
- enhancing access by the individual to legal remedies
- promoting efficiency in the use of court resources
- ensuring consistency in the determination of common issues
- making the law more enforceable and effective.

There are many programs and procedures which help to promote access to the courts and efficiency in the use of judicial and other resources. They include legal aid, small claims tribunals, community dispute resolution, industry self-regulation and commercial arbitration. There are also provisions for public action to be taken in cases of multiple wrongdoing, particularly by the Trade Practices Commission and Royal Commissions and inquiries. Finally, there are court procedures for dealing with multiple claims including representative actions, joinder, consolidation and test cases.

7. *Deficiencies in the system.* These programs and procedures are not, however, comprehensive. What is absent is a procedure enabling private action to be taken in cases of alleged multiple wrongdoing to secure a binding decision in respect of all affected. Court procedures have been inadequate to deal with cases of multiple wrongdoing except on an ad hoc basis. Specific deficiencies are

- individuals have no means of obtaining legal remedies in courts where the amount of the claim, though significant, does not warrant the cost of legal proceedings; in any event, where claims arise from multiple wrongdoing, individual litigation is not an efficient use of resources
- alternative, less expensive means of resolving small claims are not available in all cases; alternate means require individual action and are inadequate to deal efficiently with multiple wrongdoing
- there is no effective federal procedure by which claims for damages arising from multiple wrongdoing can be grouped together so that common issues can be dealt with at the same time, thus reducing the cost of litigation to the individual and avoiding a multiplicity of proceedings
- there is no federal procedure enabling proceedings to be brought for damages on behalf of a group or class of people who have suffered loss or injury as a result of a multiple wrong.

8. *Advantages of a new grouping procedure.* Where a number of people suffer loss, injury or damage as a result of a multiple wrong, a class action or other effective grouping procedure could help to reduce costs for each member of the group as well as promote efficiency in the administration of justice. Where the claims are 'individually recoverable' (that is, where amount at issue is more than the cost of recovering it), the primary policy goals of such procedures are to enable the most efficient use to be made of resources to ensure consistency in decision making. Where the claims are 'individually non-recoverable' (that is, where the cost of legal proceedings is high in relation to the amount claimed), the grouping of claims may reduce the costs of litigation to the individual and thus enhance access to the remedy the law already provides. There are, however, some claims which are so small that, even where efficient, economic and fair grouping procedures are available, the costs of recovery will exceed the total benefits of litigating. It is not necessary to extend new procedures to this kind of case. The object of new procedures should be to reduce the costs of litigation where it is necessary and worthwhile in the interests of justice, not to encourage abuse or the pursuit of the trivial.

Examples of cases where a new grouping procedure would be desirable

9. There are number of examples which illustrate the kinds of cases in which such a grouping procedure would be desirable.

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- *Misleading advertisement by credit union.* A pamphlet was distributed by a large credit union advertising insurance for persons entering into personal loans. It suggested that loan payments would be covered by insurance in the event of sickness or injury for as long as any disability lasted. A number of individuals who had obtained loans in response to the advertisement were unable to meet their payments due to illness. It was discovered, however, that their insurance cover only applied if they were totally or permanently incapacitated. Proceedings were instituted by the credit union for the recovery of money owing. The defendants concerned alleged that they had been misled to believe that the insurance would cover them in the event of partial incapacity. Separate proceedings have been necessary in respect of each individual affected to determine whether the representation was misleading or deceptive. In each case separate applications, statements of claim, requests and replies in relation to further particulars, lists of documents on discovery and other procedural steps have been required.¹ The costs involved in such duplication could have been avoided if the claims could have been run as one proceeding. Another borrower has now been identified complaining of alleged misrepresentation arising from the credit union's advertised insurance scheme. The proceedings already commenced concerning the issue whether the representation was misleading or deceptive will not obtain help for this borrower or any other individuals who are later identified. A grouping procedure might ensure that further proceedings would not be brought in respect of common issues.
- *Injury caused by IUD.* Approximately 1500 Australian women are involved in a claim against AH Robins' Australian subsidiary for injuries arising from the use of the Dalkon Shield birth control device. The claims were initiated in the Supreme Court (NSW) by way of ten summons on behalf of groups of named plaintiffs with common heads of damage. This course of action was taken partly to avoid the large scale duplication of issuing separate statements of claim and filing fees in relation to each individual claimant. An application was made by the defendant, AH Robins Pty Limited, to strike out the proceedings on the basis that the summons were in breach of the requirements of the Rules and an abuse of the Court's process. In response to the application to strike out the proceedings, the solicitors for the plaintiffs sought orders allowing one or more plaintiffs' actions to be nominated as 'lead' actions so that duplication of pleadings and procedural steps such as discovery could be avoided. This case illustrates the difficulties of commencing proceedings on behalf of a large number of individuals and the inadequacy of the current procedures.² A grouping procedure would have enabled proceedings to be commenced on behalf of all affected.

¹ *Zoneff v Elcom Credit Union Limited* Federal Court (Sydney registry) G863, 1988.

² See eg *Burford v AH Robins Pty Ltd* Supreme Court (NSW) No 12530 of 1986.

- *Losses by cruise passengers.* An attempt was made to bring representative proceedings for 83 passengers on a cruise ship who suffered injury and lost baggage when the ship sank. The Supreme Court (NSW) decided that a representative proceeding could not be used to claim damages. Individual claims would be needed. The lack of an effective means of resolving common issues in one proceeding adds to the cost and delay of the case for all involved.³
- *Camera goes out of production.* A leading camera manufacturer marketed a brand of instant camera over a number of years. It announced that it will no longer produce film for its instant cameras, an action which renders the camera useless. The Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth) gives customers a right to recover in such cases. Under existing procedures the costs of bringing litigation for the recovery of loss incurred in such circumstances would clearly outweigh the amount to be recovered in respect of any individual claim. A grouped proceeding could enable the costs to be shared among a substantial number of persons and enable legally enforceable rights to be pursued in such cases where recovery of loss may otherwise have been impracticable.

In cases such as these, an effective grouping procedure could reduce the cost of enforcing legal remedies in cases of multiple wrongdoing. The cost and other barriers which impede people from pursuing a legal remedy could be overcome if one member of a group, all similarly affected, could commence proceedings on behalf of all members. The grouping of claims could also promote efficiency in the use of resources by enabling common issues to be dealt with together. Appropriate grouping procedures are an essential part of the legal system's response to multiple wrongdoing in an increasingly complex world.

The Commission's recommended procedure

Introduction

10. The Commission has devised a detailed, cost effective scheme for the grouping of claims in the Federal Court which balances the interests of all parties and achieves the goals of access and court efficiency.

Federal Court and its jurisdiction

11. Because the Federal Court has evolved specific techniques which would be useful in overcoming management problems which may arise in grouped proceedings, the Commission recommends that the use of the procedure be confined in the first instance to the Federal Court. In the long term, after experience and assessment, it may be given a broader application to State or Territory courts exercising federal jurisdiction or jurisdiction under Territory law. The main federal areas where the procedure would operate are

³ *Dillon v Charter Travel Co Ltd* (1988) ATPR 40-872.

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- proceedings against the Commonwealth
- claims under federal laws (for example, pursuant to the Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth))
- under federal administrative law
- under federal tax law
- under federal industrial and intellectual property law.

Grouped proceedings, not a representative proceeding

12. *The procedure is a 'bundle' of proceedings being conducted together, not a representative procedure.* For constitutional reasons the procedure recommended by the Commission involves each person with a relevant and related claim being made a party to a separate proceeding, rather than being represented by one of their number in a single proceeding. A proceeding is commenced for each member of the group, even if they have different causes of action, claim different relief or rely on different bases of jurisdiction. All these proceedings are then 'bundled together' and conducted by one of the group together with his or her own proceeding. That person is called a principal applicant and that proceeding the principal proceeding. The other applicants are called group members and their proceedings group members' proceedings.⁴ There would be as many separate proceedings as there are group members plus the principal applicant's proceeding. The claims of the principal applicant must include a claim in respect of a federal or Territory matter as defined⁵ and the jurisdiction of the Federal Court is extended to cover these claims, but only where the grouped procedure is invoked. The claims of the group members must be in respect of that federal or Territory matter or must relate to it.⁶ This extension of jurisdiction of the Federal Court, relating only to grouped proceedings, would give the Court comprehensive federal jurisdiction so that related claims can benefit from the grouping procedure. This approach is consistent with the principles embodied in the recent cross-vesting legislation.

13. *Consent of group members not necessary.* It is not necessary for group members to consent to the commencement of their proceeding but, on receiving notice that the proceeding has been commenced, a group member may choose to opt out by either discontinuing his or her proceeding or conducting it himself or herself as an individual proceeding.⁷ This approach is compatible with all the different purposes served by the grouping of claims, including

- ensuring that all persons with the same interest in an issue are bound by a single decision on that issue; if members have identical interests, an action or decision in respect of one can, without injustice, be taken to apply to the others

⁴ cl 7.

⁵ cl 5.

⁶ cl 11.

⁷ cl 8, 19.

- reducing costs and increasing efficiency by enabling a single determination of issues which are common to members of the group
- enhancing legal access remedies by overcoming cost barriers or lack of knowledge.

The only way of achieving all these policies is by enabling proceedings to be commenced in respect of all persons who have related claims arising from the same wrong without requiring their consent, while preserving their interests and freedom of choice by enabling them to opt out without penalty. Freedom of choice is only a reality in cases where it is possible for group members to pursue their rights individually. Where a person is unable to pursue a remedy individually because of cost or other barriers, that person may have no other means of obtaining legal redress. If it is necessary to obtain the consent of that person before commencing proceedings, many people may be excluded from a remedy because they were not known or did not know they were entitled to a legal remedy. One of the purposes of grouped proceedings, that is, to enhance access to legal remedies, would be defeated if it were necessary to obtain consent in advance.

Criteria for commencement

14. *Number of proceedings.* To commence grouped proceedings there must be at least seven group members plus the principal applicant, making eight in all.⁸ It should not be necessary to identify the group members by name.⁹ Establishing a minimum number promotes the efficiency of the procedure and ensures that cases are not grouped where consolidation or joinder is more appropriate. Where there are less than eight applicants, the Court should have a discretion to allow grouped proceedings to continue or to separate the proceedings and direct that they be continued as individual proceedings.¹⁰

15. *Relationship between proceedings.* Even if the circumstances giving rise to relief are the same, the relief claimed may differ. For example, in Admiralty cases arising out of the sinking of a ship, there may be claims for personal injury by some passengers and claims for property damage by others. While group members' proceedings need not be for the same relief as the relief sought in the principal proceeding, or in other group members' proceedings,¹¹ the material facts giving rise to each claim for relief in each group members' proceeding must be the same as, or similar or related to, the material facts giving rise to a claim for relief in the principal proceeding.¹² In addition, each group member's proceeding must contain at least one question of law or of fact that is common

⁸ cl 10.

⁹ cl 13.

¹⁰ cl 10.

¹¹ cl 9.

¹² cl 12(1)(b).

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to the proceedings of each other group member and the principal applicant.¹³ These requirements ensure that there is a community of interests between group members and the principal applicant.

16. *No certification procedure.* Although certification procedures are required for class actions in the United States, Quebec and South Australia, the Commission does not recommend such a procedure. There is no need to go to the expense of a special hearing to determine that the requirements of a grouped proceeding have been complied with, as long as the respondent has a right to challenge the validity of the procedure at any time.

Later causes of action

17. Individuals whose cause of action does not accrue until after grouped proceedings have been commenced will not be included in the group unless the Court, on application by any party or a potential group member, gives leave to include such causes of action in the grouped proceeding.¹⁴ An example of a situation where this may be appropriate is the mesothelioma claims in Western Australia. Where a person is diagnosed after the commencement of the proceedings, the Court may find that it is proper to enable his or her claim to be dealt with in the grouped proceeding. The Court could allow actions which accrued by a specified date to be included.

Protection against abuse

18. The recommended scheme has a number of provisions which ensure that the procedure will be cost effective and that there will be little, if any, scope for trivial claims or blackmail suits.

- *Cost effectiveness.* Where the claims are divergent or complex, the overall costs to the parties and to the administration of justice may be more than the combined cost of separate proceedings. Where the Court is unable to deal with grouped claims economically as compared with individual proceedings, the proceedings can be separated. Each group member would become responsible for conducting his or her own claim.¹⁵
- *Impracticability of distribution.* If the costs that the respondent would have to bear in relation to identifying group members and distributing to them any monetary relief would be excessive having regard to the total amount in issue, the proceedings should not be grouped. To preserve the right of individual group members to conduct or to bring their own proceedings, the Court should be able to separate, stay or dismiss any of the proceedings without prejudice to any further claim by group members.¹⁶

¹³ cl 12(1)(a).

¹⁴ cl 15.

¹⁵ cl 20.

¹⁶ cl 17.

- *Inclusion of all potential group members.* If the principal applicant fails to include all group members in the application, those excluded would not have the opportunity to be part of the proceedings and the respondent would not have the benefit of a common binding decision in respect of all potential claimants.¹⁷ In this case proceedings can be stayed on the application of a potential member or of the respondent.
- *Blackmail actions.* There will be little scope for principal applicants to commence proceedings which have no merit in the hope of forcing a settlement. First, the Court can dismiss the proceedings if they are frivolous, vexatious or an abuse of process.¹⁸ Secondly, the general rule that the loser pays the winner's costs, which the Commission recommends not be changed, means that the principal applicant will be liable for costs if the case fails. These costs would be higher than for individual proceedings. Consequently there would be a stronger disincentive to the commencement of blackmail suits than is the case for individual proceedings.

19. *Principal applicant to have conduct of group members' proceedings.* The principal proceeding and all the group members' proceedings of which the principal applicant has the conduct are conducted as one proceeding and treated as one proceeding for the purposes of the Federal Court Act of Australia 1976 (Cth) and the Federal Court Rules (Cth).¹⁹ In general terms, the principal applicant has the conduct of group members' proceedings and a step taken by the principal applicant in a group member's proceeding binds the group member.²⁰ To avoid duplication of procedural steps, a group member can take a step in his or her own proceeding only with leave. Similarly, a respondent may not take a step against a group member without leave.²¹ The principal applicant can be replaced if he or she is not conducting group member's proceedings in their interests.²²

Conduct of proceedings

20. *Group members may need to assume conduct of their proceedings in relation to individual issues.* Although there must always be at least one common question of law or of fact which has to be determined for all group members, there may be issues which must be decided separately in relation to each group member, for example, the quantum of damages to which a party is entitled following determination of liability. Where individual issues arise, the Court is able to give a group member the conduct of his or her proceeding so far as it relates to those issues.²³ There may also be issues which relate to some but not all group members. For example, a grouped proceeding which alleged

¹⁷ cl 14.

¹⁸ cl 6(1)(c).

¹⁹ cl 16(2).

²⁰ cl 16(1).

²¹ cl 16(4).

²² cl 23.

²³ cl 21.

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discrimination in employment may include the claims of those who applied for a position but were not hired and those who were retrenched. Extra principal applicants may be required where there are sub-groups which need to be represented separately in the proceedings.²⁴

21. *Notice must be given to group members.* Because the consent of group members is not required to commence their proceedings, appropriate steps must be taken to inform them that proceedings have been commenced and that they may opt out of those proceedings.²⁵ There are other situations where group members must receive notice, including where application has been made to approve a settlement and where money has been brought into Court.²⁶ The Court also has a discretion to order notice at any other appropriate time, including where the principal applicant needs to be replaced or another principal applicant is needed to represent a sub-group.²⁷ Because the cost of personal notice to group members may be quite high, it is not required unless it is reasonably practicable and not unduly expensive. In most cases notice by press advertisement or by radio or television broadcast will be sufficient.²⁸

Conclusion of proceedings

22. *Approval must be given for settlement, discontinuance etc of proceedings.* In the interests of group members, the Court has to approve any proposed settlement of their proceeding or the acceptance of any money paid into Court by the respondent in respect of their proceeding. If the principal applicant wishes to discontinue group members' proceedings, the Court's approval is also required.²⁹ A group member may settle or accept money paid into Court in respect of his or her own proceedings at any stage in accordance with the Federal Court Rules, without leave.³⁰

23. *The Court may make an aggregate assessment of monetary relief.* There may be some cases where it will be appropriate for the Court to determine the total quantum of liability of the respondent to some or all group members without specifying the amount to be paid to each person. Examples of situations where such aggregate assessment may be appropriate are where

- the number of group members and the extent of each of their claims can be obtained from the respondent's records or otherwise, without the need for further assessment
- the total liability of the respondent can be established without determining the share of each member of the group
- the total liability of the respondent can be determined in some other way with reasonable accuracy.

²⁴ cl 22.

²⁵ cl 18(1).

²⁶ cl 18(2)-(3).

²⁷ cl 18(5).

²⁸ cl 18(7).

²⁹ cl 28(1)(2).

³⁰ cl 28(5).

One global assessment of monetary relief will, generally speaking, be a more efficient and cheaper means of giving judgment than many separate assessments, particularly in cases where there are relatively small claims which would not justify the cost of individual proof. However, an aggregate award can only be made where the assessment can be made with reasonable accuracy.³¹ In cases where the extent of damages varies from person to person and is not capable of calculation on a global basis, aggregate assessment will not be possible.

24. *Surplus or residue.* Aggregate assessment of damages will determine the respondent's liability in relation to all group members whether or not they have been identified. Some may not come forward to claim their money even if notice is given. The respondent is able to apply for the repayment of any amount not required for payment to group members who do not come forward within the time prescribed by the Court.³² Returning any unclaimed money to the respondent is in keeping with the primary aim of the procedure, which is to compensate individuals in an efficient and cost effective manner, not to penalise respondents. The basic rule is that the residue is to be returned unless it would be unjust to do so because, for example, exemplary damages have been awarded. Given the fact that an aggregate assessment will be appropriate only in limited circumstances and that failure to return any residue to the respondent will be the exception rather than the rule, the occasions on which there is an unreturned residue are likely to be very few.

Costs

25. The existing costs rule are retained in relation to grouped proceedings so that, in the normal course, the loser would be ordered to pay the party-party costs of the winner. Consequently, if grouped proceedings were unsuccessful, the principal applicant would have to bear the entire solicitor-client costs (because group members would not be a party to any contract with the principal applicant's solicitor to pay these costs) plus a share of the party-party costs awarded to the respondent. As parties, group members would, on ordinary principles, be liable for their share of party-party costs. In the context of grouped proceedings, this would be impracticable and could possibly work injustice. The Commission therefore recommends that group members be immune from paying the respondent's costs unless they conducted their own proceedings.³³ The principal applicant would thus be solely liable for the party-party costs if the action fails. Where the action is successful, the principal applicant would also be liable for the balance of solicitor-client costs not covered by party-party costs paid by the respondent. In either case, win or lose, the principal applicant will be liable for higher costs than if individual proceedings were an effective part in the Court's procedures. Some modification to the costs regime is desirable if grouped proceedings are to be brought. A contingent fee agreement between the principal applicant and the solicitor, providing for no fees to be paid if the case is lost and for a higher than normal fee if the case is successful, would

³¹ cl 30(3).

³² cl 30(8).

³³ cl 31(1).

mean that the principal applicant would not be liable for solicitor-client costs in unsuccessful cases. Such an agreement could provide for a contribution to solicitor-client costs from group members in successful cases. A contingent fee should not be calculated as a percentage of any amount recovered.³⁴ additional fees should be calculated as an increase on scale costs or on some other non-percentage basis and is intended to compensate for the risk of being paid nothing if the case is lost. In most individually recoverable claims, the saving in solicitor-client costs which would be made possible through a fee agreement would offset the higher party-party costs making grouped proceedings viable. For individually non-recoverable cases however, public funding may provide the only solution to the costs barriers. The Commission therefore recommends a special fund to finance grouped proceedings.

Evaluation of the proposal

Main effect: transfer of loss for which liability arises

26. The recommended procedure facilitates access to legal remedies and promotes efficiency in the determination of legal rights. However, changes in procedural rules could have effects which go beyond the correction of perceived ills. An analysis of the costs which might be incurred under the proposed procedure demonstrates that the main costs involved are those arising from the loss and damage, caused by the actions of the respondent and for which the respondent is legally liable. Those costs are now borne by the persons suffering loss and damage. Under the recommendations there would be more opportunity for them to be transferred to the person who is legally responsible for the loss.

Containing transaction costs

27. The transaction costs involved in this transfer prove, on examination, not to be excessive in relation to the amounts likely to be in issue. The Commission has concluded that it is reasonable for them to be incurred by those the law holds responsible for loss or injury in order to ensure, to a greater extent than is presently the case, that the costs of such loss and injury are not borne by the person suffering the loss, but by those who have the legal responsibility for it. There are express safeguards built in to the scheme to contain any additional costs and to ensure the cost effectiveness of the procedure.

- Respondents can apply for the action to be dismissed if it is frivolous, vexatious or an abuse of process. This possibility together with the effect of the costs scheme will significantly decrease the likelihood of blackmail suits.

³⁴ cl 33.

- The proceedings can be dismissed if the costs to the respondent of identifying group members and distributing any monetary relief to them is excessive having regard to the total of the amounts likely to be ordered to be paid the proceedings.
- The proceedings can be separated if the costs of conducting them together are greater than the costs of conducting them separately.
- The proceedings can be stayed if the principal applicant fails to include all group members in the application thus depriving the respondent of the benefits of a common binding decision in respect of all potential claimants.

Cost effective scheme

28. The result is a scheme which has the potential to allow individuals to obtain legal redress, where this can be done in a cost effective manner, and which promotes efficient use of Court resources.

Draft Bill

- **Draft Federal Court (Grouped Proceedings) Bill 1988**
- **Explanatory memorandum to draft Federal Court (Grouped Proceedings) Bill 1988**

FEDERAL COURT (GROUPED PROCEEDINGS) BILL 1988

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A BILL

FOR

An Act to provide for the grouping of proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia, and for related purposes

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen, and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows:

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the *Federal Court (Grouped Proceedings) Act 1988*.

Commencement

2. This Act commences on a day fixed by Proclamation.

External Territories

3. This Act extends to each external Territory including Norfolk Island.

Act to bind Crown

4. This Act binds the Crown in each of its capacities.

Interpretation

5. (1) In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

“excluded Act” means:

(a) the *Family Law Act 1975*;

(b) the *Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987*;

(c) the *Marriage Act 1961*;

(d) the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*; or

(e) the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978*;

or any of the applied provisions as defined by section 3 of the *Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970*;

"Federal Court Act" means the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976*;

"federal matter" means a matter:

(a) arising under an Act other than an excluded Act or under an instrument (including a rule, regulations and a by-law) made or in force under an Act other than an excluded Act;

(b) in which relief is sought against the Commonwealth; or

(c) of a kind mentioned in paragraph 75(v) of the Constitution;

"group member" means a person identified in subsection 7(1) as a group member but does not include a person who has the conduct of a proceeding;

"group member's proceeding" means a proceeding identified in subsection 7(1) as a group member's proceeding;

"principal applicant" means a person identified in subsection 7(1) as a principal applicant and includes a person who has the conduct of 2 or more group members' proceedings;

"principal proceeding" means a proceeding identified in subsection 7(1) as a principal proceeding;

"Rules" means the Federal Court Rules;

"Territory matter" means a matter in respect of which a court of a Territory other than the Northern Territory or Norfolk Island has jurisdiction apart from the *Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987* or a law of a State relating to cross-vesting of jurisdiction.

(2) Other expressions in this Act have the meanings they have under the Federal Court Act.

Operation of other laws etc.

6. (1) Except as otherwise provided by this Act, this Act does not affect:

(a) a right of a person to commence and maintain a proceeding;

(b) the powers of a court in relation to a proceeding, for example, its powers in relation to a proceeding in which no reasonable cause

of action is disclosed or that is oppressive, vexatious, frivolous or an abuse of the process of a court; or

(c) the operation of a law relating to:

- (i) vexatious litigants (however described);
- (ii) representative proceedings;
- (iii) joinder of parties; or
- (iv) consolidation of proceedings.

(2) This Act does not have effect to create a cause of action that would not have existed if this Act had not been enacted.

Commencement of grouped proceedings lawful

7. (1) It is lawful for a person (the principal applicant) who commences a proceeding in the Court against a respondent (the principal proceeding) also to commence, by the same application, other proceedings (group members' proceedings), each within the jurisdiction of the Court and each between another person (a group member) as applicant and the respondent.

(2) A group member shall not be taken to have breached an agreement or contravened a law or an order of a court (including a law of, or a court of, a State) merely because a proceeding has been commenced as mentioned in subsection (1), but this subsection does not affect any other right the respondent may have arising out of the agreement, law or order.

Consent of, or tutor, etc, for, group members not essential

8. (1) The consent of the group member is not necessary to commence a group member's proceeding unless the group member is:

- (a) the Commonwealth or a State;
- (b) a Minister of State or a Minister of a State or Territory;
- (c) a body corporate established for public purposes by a law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory (not being a company);
or
- (d) an officer of the Commonwealth, or of a State or Territory, in his or her capacity as such an officer.

(2) A tutor, guardian or next friend need not be appointed for a group member except for the purpose of the group member taking a step in, or conducting, the group member's proceeding.

Different relief may be claimed

9. A group member's proceeding need not be for the same relief as the relief sought in the principal proceeding or in another group member's proceeding.

Minimum of 7 group members needed

10. (1) If, at any stage, the Court finds that there are fewer than 7 group members' proceedings, it may, by order:

- (a) allow the proceedings to continue under this Act; or
 - (b) give the conduct of each group member's proceeding to the group member.
- (2) The order may be conditional.

Jurisdictional requirements

11. (1) The principal proceeding must be in respect of a federal matter or a Territory matter (whether or not it is also in respect of other matters), and the jurisdiction of the Court with respect to such proceedings extends to all federal matters, and Territory matters, not otherwise within the jurisdiction of the Court.

(2) The jurisdiction of the Court with respect to a group member's proceeding extends to all matters mentioned in section 75 or 76 of the Constitution, and all Territory matters, not otherwise within the jurisdiction of the Court.

(3) The jurisdiction conferred by subsections (1) and (2) does not extend to jurisdiction in respect of matters:

- (a) mentioned in paragraphs 38(a) to (d) (inclusive) of the *Judiciary Act 1903*; or
- (b) in which a writ of mandamus or prohibition, or an injunction is sought against an officer of the Commonwealth who is, or officers of the Commonwealth who are:
 - (i) a person or persons holding office under the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* or the *Coal Industry Act 1946*; or
 - (ii) a Judge or Judges of the Family Court of Australia.

(4) Subsections (1) and (2) do not affect the jurisdiction of any other court.

Links between principal proceeding and group members' proceedings

12. (1) An application as mentioned in subsection 7(1) may only be made if:

- (a) a question arises in the principal applicant's proceeding, so far as that proceeding is in respect of a federal matter or a Territory matter, that is common to that proceeding and to each group member's proceeding; and
- (b) the material facts giving rise to each claim for relief in each group member's proceeding are the same as, or similar or related to, the material facts giving rise to a claim for relief in the principal proceeding, so far as that proceeding is in respect of a federal matter or a Territory matter.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), material facts relating to different transactions or events shall not be taken to be dissimilar or unrelated for that reason alone.

Form etc, of originating process

13. An application made as mentioned in subsection 7(1), or a document filed in support of such an application, must:

- (a) describe or otherwise identify the group members, but it is not necessary to name, or specify the number of, the group members; and
- (b) specify the relief claimed in the principal proceeding and in each of the group members' proceedings.

Addition of further group members: incomplete groups

14. (1) If the Court, on application in the principal applicant's proceeding, finds that there are persons who are not group members but in respect of whom group members' proceedings could have been commenced as mentioned in subsection 7(1), the Court may stay all the proceedings for a specified time.

(2) If, at the end of that time, the principal applicant has not amended or sought leave to amend the application by which the proceedings were all commenced to commence further group members' proceedings between those persons and the respondent, then, if the Court finds that:

- (a) substantial inconvenience, expense or prejudice would be likely to be caused to the respondent or to the person who made the

application mentioned in subsection (1) unless the application by which the proceedings were all commenced were so amended; and

- (b) it would be unlikely that substantial expense or inconvenience would be caused to the principal applicant if that application were so amended,

the Court may, by order:

- (c) give the conduct of each group member's proceeding to that group member; or
- (d) appoint a group member, or a person in respect of whom a group member's proceeding could have been commenced as mentioned in subsection 7(1), to be the principal applicant in substitution for the principal applicant.

(3) An application under subsection (1) may be made by the respondent or by a person in respect of whom a group member's proceeding could have been commenced as mentioned in subsection 7(1).

(4) The Court may make any necessary consequential order, including an order as to notice or as to the effect of steps already taken by the principal applicant.

Addition of further group members: causes of action accruing after commencement

15. (1) The Court may, on application:

- (a) fix a day before judgment for the purposes of this section; and
- (b) by order, amend the application so as to commence further group members' proceedings on causes of action that accrued after the principal proceeding was commenced but before the day so fixed.

(2) Sections 8 to 13 (inclusive) apply in respect of those group members' proceedings as they apply to the other group members' proceedings.

(3) The Court may make any necessary consequential order, including an order as to notice or as to the effect of steps already taken by the principal applicant.

Proceedings to be conducted as 1 proceeding

16. (1) The principal applicant has the conduct of the group members' proceedings and, subject to the operation of subsection (5), a step taken by the principal applicant in a group member's proceeding binds the group member.

(2) The principal proceeding and all the group members' proceedings of which the principal applicant has the conduct:

- (a) shall be conducted as one proceeding; and
- (b) shall, for the purposes of the application of the Federal Court Act and the Rules, be treated as one proceeding.

(3) In a group member's proceeding, service on the principal applicant is effective service on the group member.

(4) Except as provided by this Act and the Rules, in a group member's proceeding:

- (a) the group member may not take a step without the leave of the Court; and
- (b) the respondent may not, without the leave of the Court, require the group member to do anything personally in relation to the proceeding.

(5) If, with the Court's leave, a group member takes a step in that group member's proceeding, the step has effect notwithstanding any step taken by the principal applicant.

(6) Subsections (1) to (5), inclusive, have effect subject to this Act, the Rules and an order of the Court made under this Act or the Rules.

Powers of Court where money claimed

17. (1) If:

- (a) the relief claimed in group members' proceedings is or includes payment of money (other than on account of costs); and
- (b) on application by the respondent, the Court finds that, if judgment were to be given in favour of each of those group members, it would be highly likely that the cost of identifying the group members, and distributing to them the amounts likely to be ordered to be paid to them, being costs that would be borne by the respondent, would be excessive, having regard to the total of the those amounts;

the Court may by order:

- (c) give the conduct of each group member's proceeding, so far as it relates to that relief, to the group member;

(d) stay any group member's proceeding so far as it relates to that relief; or

(e) dismiss the group members' proceedings.

(2) Such a dismissal is not, unless the Court otherwise orders when dismissing the proceedings, a defence in a proceeding between a group member and the respondent on the same, or substantially the same, cause of action.

Notice

18. (1) Unless the Court otherwise orders, notice, as approved by the Court, of the commencement of a principal proceeding and group members' proceedings and the ways in which group members may assume the conduct of their proceedings must be given to group members as soon as practicable after the first directions hearing.

(2) Unless the Court is satisfied that it is just to do so, an application for approval under section 28 of a settlement or for approval under section 33 of a fee agreement shall not be determined unless notice, as approved by the Court, has been given to group members.

(3) Unless the Court otherwise orders, notice, as approved by the Court, must be given to group members of the bringing into Court of money in answer to a cause of action in the group members' proceedings.

(4) Unless the Court otherwise orders, notice, as approved by the Court, shall be given to group members of an application by the respondent to dismiss a group member's proceeding on the ground of want of prosecution.

(5) The Court may, at any other stage, order that notice, as approved by the Court, be given to a group member.

(6) In each case, the Court shall, by order, specify:

(a) who is to give the notice; and

(b) the way in which notice is to be given;

and the order may include provision:

(c) directing a party to provide information relevant to giving the notice; and

(d) as to the costs of notice.

(7) The order may provide that notice be given by press advertisement or by radio or television broadcast, but the Court shall not order that

notice be given personally to each group member unless it is satisfied that it is reasonably practicable, and not unduly expensive, to do so.

(8) A notice that concerns a matter for which the Court's leave or approval is required must specify the period within which a group member or other person may apply to the Court, or take some other step, in relation to the matter.

(9) A notice that includes or concerns conditions must specify the conditions and the period, if any, for compliance.

(10) The failure of a group member to receive or respond to a notice does not affect a step taken, an order made or a judgment given in a proceeding, but the Court may, on application by the group member, make any proper order.

Group members may 'opt out'

19. (1) A group member may, by giving notice in accordance with the Rules, assume the conduct of the group member's proceeding.

(2) The group member may, by the same notice, discontinue the group member's proceeding.

(3) If the Court specifies a day for the purposes of this section, the notice may not be given after that day without the Court's leave.

Group member may be given conduct of proceedings

20. If the Court, at any stage, finds that the costs that would be incurred if the proceedings were to continue to be conducted under this Act are likely to exceed the costs that would be incurred if the proceedings were to be conducted as separate proceedings, the Court may by order, give the conduct of 2 or more of the group members' proceedings to 1 or more of those group members.

Group member may be given conduct of proceedings on particular questions

21. The Court may, at any stage, by order, give to a group member the conduct of the group member's proceeding so far as it relates to a particular question arising in the proceeding, if such an order is necessary for the question to be properly determined.

Group member may become additional principal applicant

22. The Court may, at any stage, by order, give the conduct of 2 or more group members' proceedings, so far as they relate to a particular

question, to 1 of those group members if it is convenient and appropriate to do so.

Group member may replace principal applicant

23. (1) The Court may, at any stage, by order, give the conduct of 2 or more group members' proceedings to 1 of those group members in substitution for the principal applicant if the principal applicant:

- (a) is not conducting those proceedings; or
- (b) is unable to conduct those proceedings;

in the interests of the group members.

(2) A person whose proceeding has been concluded may not be given or continue to have the conduct of group members' proceedings.

Provisions applicable to the operation of section 19 to 23 (inclusive)

24. (1) Where the principal applicant ceases to have the conduct of a group member's proceeding, the Court may make any necessary consequential order.

(2) An order under section 21, 22 or 23 may be made on application by a group member, without leave, by the principal applicant or of the Court's own motion.

Legal representation

25. A principal applicant may not, without the Court's leave, conduct a group member's proceeding otherwise than by a solicitor or barrister who is not a group member.

Discovered documents

26. A document or thing in respect of which discovery has been given in a principal proceeding or a group member's proceeding shall, unless the Court otherwise orders, be taken to have been discovered in all the proceedings.

Certain claims by respondents against group members

27. Where the respondent in a group member's proceeding commences a proceeding in the Court against the group member, the Court may order that any relief awarded to the group member in the group member's proceeding be stayed until the other proceeding is determined.

Discontinuance, settlement etc, of group members' proceedings

28. (1) A principal applicant may not, without the Court's leave:

- (a) discontinue a group member's proceeding; or
- (b) accept money brought into Court in answer to a cause of action in a group member's proceeding.

(2) The Court's approval is required for the compromise or settlement, by the principal applicant, of a matter in dispute in a group member's proceeding.

(3) The matters that the Court shall take into account for the purposes of subsection (1) or (2) include:

- (a) the nature and the likely cost and duration of the proceedings if approval or leave were not given;
- (b) the amount offered and the likelihood of success in the proceeding;
- (c) whether the discontinuance, compromise, settlement or acceptance of money is in the interests of the group member having regard to the views, if they are made known to the Court, of the group member; and
- (d) whether satisfactory arrangements have been made for the distribution of money to be paid to the group members.

(4) In giving approval or leave, the Court may make such orders as are just with respect to the distribution of money paid under the settlement or paid into Court.

(5) A group member may, without leave but in accordance with the Rules:

- (a) accept money brought into Court in answer to a cause of action in the group member's proceeding; or
- (b) settle the group member's proceeding.

Form of judgment

29. An order or judgment in proceedings to which this Act applies must describe or identify the group members affected.

Aggregate assessment of monetary relief

30. (1) This section applies to proceedings to which this Act applies and in which the relief claimed is or includes payment of money (other than on account of costs).

(2) The Court may, in respect of 2 or more of those proceedings, order the respondent to pay an aggregate amount without specifying the amount payable in respect of each proceeding.

(3) The Court must be satisfied that the aggregate amount is a reasonably accurate assessment of the total of the money payable as relief in those proceedings.

(4) The order, so far as it relates to each of the proceedings, shall be taken to be an order made in that proceeding.

(5) The order must include provision for the distribution to the group members entitled of the money ordered to be paid, which may, among other things, cover:

- (a) the constitution and administration of a fund for the payment of the money ordered to be paid;
- (b) entitlements to interest earned from the money in such a fund; and
- (c) payment by instalments, either to a fund so constituted or to group members.

(6) The order must also:

- (a) require notice to be given to group members as specified in the order; and
- (b) specify a day, not earlier than 6 months after the day on which the order is made, before which the group members are to take a step, as specified in the order, to identify themselves.

(7) The Court may, if it is just to do so, allow a group member to take the step after that day.

(8) On application by the respondent after that day, the Court shall make such orders as are just for the payment from a fund constituted as mentioned in subsection (5) to the respondent of so much of the money in the fund as will not be required to be paid to the group members.

Costs

31. (1) Subject to this Act, the Court may not order a group member to pay the costs of the respondent in the group member's proceeding (except to the extent that the group member has the conduct of the proceeding) but such an order may be made against the principal applicant.

(2) In a group member's proceeding, an order for security for costs may not be made against the principal applicant on the ground that the proceeding is for the benefit of the group member and not for the benefit of the principal applicant.

Abolition of maintenance

32. (1) Conduct, not being conduct that constitutes champerty, in relation to a principal proceeding or a group member's proceeding is not unlawful merely because it constitutes maintenance.

(2) A contract is not void, voidable or unenforceable merely because it relates to conduct referred to in subsection (1).

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to anything done before the commencement of this Act.

Fee agreements

33. (1) The Court may, at any stage of proceedings to which this Act applies, on application, approve an agreement concerning the remuneration to be paid to a legal practitioner in relation to the proceedings.

(2) The Court shall not approve an agreement that provides for the amount of the remuneration to be ascertained by reference to the amount recovered, or ordered to be paid, in the proceedings.

(3) If the Court approves the agreement:

- (a) the agreement is not void, voidable or unenforceable merely because it relates to conduct that constitutes maintenance or champerty;
- (b) conduct authorised or otherwise provided for in the agreement in relation to those proceedings is not unlawful merely because it constitutes maintenance or champerty; and
- (c) unless the Court, on application by a group member, otherwise orders, the amount payable under the agreement must be paid as provided for in the agreement.

[Provisions concerning the establishment of a special fund to provide financial assistance in relation to grouped proceedings may be included at this point]

Appeals by principal applicant or group members

34. (1) Section 7 extends to appeals from judgments of the Court in proceedings commenced as mentioned in subsection 7(1).

(2) A group member may institute an appeal from a judgment of the Court in that group member's proceeding, or as principal applicant, after the time limited for the institution of appeals, without the Court's leave, but only if the appeal is instituted within 30 days after the time limited for appeals has ended.

(3) In the application of this Act in an appeal mentioned in this section:

- (a) section 18 does not apply so as to require that notice be given, but only so as to permit the Court to order that notice be given; and
- (b) section 19 does not apply but a group member may discontinue without leave.

Appeals by respondent

35. (1) The respondent may appeal or cross-appeal against the principal applicant and one or more group members, or against 1 or more group members, in the same proceeding and in such an appeal:

- (a) the appeal or cross-appeal must describe or otherwise identify the group members, but it is not necessary to name, or specify the number of, the group members;
- (b) section 18 and the Rules shall not apply so as to require that notice be given, but only so as to permit the Court to order that notice be given; and
- (c) section 19 does not apply.

(2) Section 16 applies in relation to an appeal or cross-appeal against the principal applicant and 1 or more group members.

(3) If the appeal or cross-appeal is against more than 1 group member but not against the principal applicant, the Court must, by order, appoint a group member to be principal applicant and section 16 applies accordingly.

(4) The Court may make any proper order for the application, modified as mentioned in the order, of the other provisions of this Act in such an appeal.

Appeals to the High Court

36. (1) The provisions of this Act apply to appeals to the High Court as they apply to appeals to the Full Court of the Federal Court.

(2) This section does not affect the operation of section 33 of the Federal Court Act.

Rules of Court

37. The power of the Judges of the Court, or of a majority of them, to make Rules of Court extends to making Rules of Court, not inconsistent with this Act, for or in relation to proceedings to which this Act applies.

**Explanatory Memorandum
to draft Federal Court
(Grouped Proceedings) Bill 1988**

OUTLINE

1. This Bill provides for the grouping of proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia. It implements the recommendations in a report from the Australian Law Reform Commission titled 'Grouped Proceedings in the Federal Court' published in 1988 (ALRC 46).

NOTES ON CLAUSES

Clauses 1 and 2 — Short title and commencement

2. These clauses are formal clauses providing for the citation and the commencement of the Bill. The Bill will come into operation on a day to be fixed by Proclamation.

Clause 3 — External Territories

3. Unless an Act specifically so provides, it will not have effect in Australia's external Territories (for example, Norfolk Island). *Clause 3* extends the operation of the Bill to all external Territories, including Norfolk Island. It is necessary to extend the Bill to all the external Territories because many Commonwealth laws, which could be invoked in proceedings to which the Bill applies, extend to the external Territories.

Clause 4 — Act to bind Crown

4. An Act is presumed not to bind the Crown unless there is a specific provision in the Act to that effect. *Clause 4* is such a provision, ensuring that the Crown in all its capacities is bound by the Bill when it is a litigant in proceedings to which the Bill applies.

Clause 5 — Interpretation

5. This clause defines a number of expressions used generally throughout the Bill:

- *excluded Act*: this definition limits the kinds of claims that can be used to base grouping of proceedings (see the definition of 'federal matter' below and clause 11). It covers the following Acts:
 - the Family Law Act 1975
 - the Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987
 - the Marriage Act 1961
 - the Norfolk Island Act 1979

36/ *Explanatory memorandum*

- the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978
- any of the applied provisions as defined by section 3 of the Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970.

The Marriage Act 1961 and the Family Law Act 1975 are excluded because of their nature they would not generally found proceedings that could be grouped. The applied provisions as defined by section 3 of the Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970 are the provisions of laws of the States that have effect in Commonwealth places. Claims under these provisions are not able to base grouped proceedings because they are essentially State law: it is only for constitutional reasons that the laws are 'federalised'. Claims under the Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987 are purely jurisdictional and therefore cannot form the basis of grouped proceedings. The cross-vesting scheme will, however, apply in relation to grouped proceedings as it does to individual proceedings. Claims under the Norfolk Island Act 1979 and the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 include all matters arising under the laws of these Territories and do not form the basis of grouped proceedings because, in accordance with current constitutional practice, these Territories are treated as States.

- *Federal Court Act*: this definition is self explanatory.
- *federal matter*: this definition is relevant to clause 11 which requires the principal proceeding to be in respect of a 'federal matter' or a 'Territory matter', and clause 8, which extends the jurisdiction of the Court to include all federal and Territory matters not otherwise within its jurisdiction. 'Federal matter' means any matter
 - arising under a law of the Commonwealth (other than an excluded Act — see definition above)
 - in which relief is sought against the Commonwealth or
 - of a kind mentioned in 75(v) of the Constitution (for a list of the matters see notes to subclause 11(2)).
- *group member*: a group member is a person whose proceeding is commenced as mentioned in subclause 7(1), or is being conducted, by a principal applicant. A person ceases to be included within the definition when the principal applicant ceases to have conduct of his or her proceeding, for example, when the group member 'opts out' and assumes the conduct of his or her own proceeding (see clause 19).
- *group member's proceeding*: a group member's proceeding is one commenced as mentioned in subclause 7(1), or which is being conducted, by the principal applicant.
- *principal applicant*: the principal applicant is the person who commences proceedings as mentioned in subclause 7(1). A principal applicant includes a person who replaces the original principal applicant or a person who has been given the conduct of 2 or more group members' proceedings.

- *principal proceeding*: a principal proceeding is the principal applicant's proceeding.
- *Rules*: this definition is self explanatory.
- *Territory matter*: by subclause 11(1), the principal proceeding must be in respect of either a federal matter or a Territory matter. Territory matter is defined as any matter within the jurisdiction of a Territory court, other than a court of the Northern Territory or Norfolk Island (these Territories have been accorded self-government). It excludes jurisdiction that such Territory courts have simply by virtue of the cross-vesting scheme.

6. *Subclause 5(2)* provides that other expressions in this Act have the meanings they have under the Federal Court Act.

Clause 6 — Operation of other laws etc.

7. The Bill creates a new procedure for commencing and conducting proceedings in the Federal Court. It does not change existing laws that apply to proceedings in the Federal Court unless those changes are provided by the Bill. *Subclause 6(1)* makes it clear that the Bill does not affect

- rights to commence and maintain proceedings
- the powers of a court in relation to a proceeding.

Special mention is made of laws relating to vexatious litigants, representative proceedings, joinder of parties and consolidation of proceedings, all of which are explicitly preserved.

8. *Subclause 6(2)* makes it clear that the Bill creates a new procedure by which existing causes of action can be conducted. It does not create a new cause of action.

Clause 7 — Commencement of grouped proceedings lawful

9. *Subclause 7(1)* makes it lawful for a person who commences a proceeding against a respondent to also commence other proceedings for group members against the same respondent by the same application. Each group member's proceeding must be within the jurisdiction of the Court as extended by clause 11.

10. *Subclause 7(2)* applies where the commencement of a group member's proceeding would constitute a breach of an agreement or a contravention of a law or of an order of a court. This is necessary because a group member's proceeding can be commenced without his or her consent (see clause 8). In such a case the group member is not to be taken to have breached the agreement or contravened the law or court order, but the respondent's rights (for example, the right to have the proceeding struck out as inconsistent with the agreement etc) are expressly preserved.

Clause 8 — Consent of, or tutor, etc, for, group members not essential

11. *Clause 8* makes it clear that it is not necessary to obtain the consent of a group member before commencing a group member's proceeding unless the group member is

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- a Commonwealth or a State
- a Minister of State or a Minister of a State or Territory
- a body corporate established for public purposes by a law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory (not being a company) or
- an officer of the Commonwealth, or a State or Territory in his or her capacity as such an officer.

12. *Subclause 8(2)* deals with persons under a disability, that is, those who are infants or mentally disabled. Ordinarily, these people must sue by a tutor. Subclause 8(2) enables group members' proceedings to be brought for group members under a disability without their consent but requires that a tutor be appointed if the group member wishes to take a step in or conduct his or her own proceeding.

Clause 9 — Different relief may be claimed

13. *Clause 9* makes it clear that there is no need for the relief claimed in the principal applicant's and group member's proceedings to be the same nor do all group members need to claim the same relief. For example, the principal applicant may claim an injunction and damages while some group members claim an injunction only and others seek a declaration.

Clause 10 — Minimum of 7 group members needed

14. *Clause 10* ensures that the goals of efficiency are achieved by providing that, if the Court finds that there are fewer than 7 group members' proceedings, the Court must decide whether to allow the proceedings to continue or to separate the proceedings and give their conduct to each group member concerned. The order may be conditional.

Clause 11 — Jurisdictional requirements

15. *Subclause 11(1)* does two things. First, it imposes the requirement that the principal proceeding be in respect of a federal matter or a Territory matter (as defined in clause 5). Secondly, it extends the jurisdiction of the Federal Court in respect of the principal proceeding to all federal and Territory matters so defined.

16. *Subclause 11(2)* extends the jurisdiction of the Court with respect to group members' proceedings to all matters mentioned in 75 and 76 of the Constitution and all Territory matters not otherwise within the jurisdiction of the Court. The matters mentioned in s 75 and 76 of the Constitution which are not part of the present jurisdiction of the Federal Court include matters

- arising under a treaty (s 75(i))
- affecting consuls or other representatives of other countries (s 75(ii))
- in which the Commonwealth or a person suing or being sued on behalf of the Commonwealth is a party (s 75(iii))
- between States, or between residents of different States, or between a State and a resident of another State (s 75(iv))

- matters relating to the same subject-matter claimed under the laws of different States (s 76(iv)).

This provision, when taken with the cross-vesting scheme, gives the Federal Court comprehensive jurisdiction (subject to the exceptions outlined in subclause 11(3)).

17. *Subclause 11(3)* provides that certain specific jurisdiction is not conferred on the Federal Court by either subclause 11(1) or 11(2). The excluded jurisdiction is in respect of matters:

- under the Judiciary Act 1903 paragraphs 38(a) to (d) inclusive
- in which certain specified relief is sought against Judges of the Family Court or Commissioners of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

These matters are in the exclusive jurisdiction of the High Court. The Judiciary Act 1903 section 38 provides:

38. Subject to section 44, the jurisdiction of the High Court shall be exclusive of the jurisdiction of the several Courts of the States in the following matters:

- (a) matters arising directly under any treaty;
- (b) suits between States, or between persons suing or being sued on behalf of different States, or between a State and a person suing or being sued on behalf of another State;
- (c) suits by the Commonwealth, or any person suing on behalf of the Commonwealth, against a State, or any person being sued on behalf of a State;
- (d) suits by a State, or any person suing on behalf of a State, against the Commonwealth or any person being sued on behalf of the Commonwealth;
- (e) matters in which a writ of mandamus or prohibition is sought against an officer of the Commonwealth or a federal court.

Clause 12 — Links between principal proceeding and group members' proceedings

18. *Clause 12* requires that there be sufficient links between the principal proceeding and each group member's proceeding to ensure that, in most cases, they can be conducted together efficiently.

19. *Subclause 12(1)* requires two kinds of link to be shown. First, there must be at least one question which is the same (or common) in the principal proceeding and in each group member's proceeding. Secondly, the material facts giving rise to each claim for relief as pleaded in the statement of claim or other originating process in respect of each group member's proceeding must be the same as, or similar or related to, the material facts giving rise to a claim for relief in the principal proceeding.

20. In each case the link to the principal proceeding must be to the 'federal or Territory matter' aspect of the principal proceeding, that is, the link must be with the principal proceeding so far as it is in respect of a federal matter or a Territory matter.

21. *Subclause 12(2)* makes it clear that the interpretation of similarly worded tests in the existing rules for joinder of proceedings is not to apply: material facts can be 'similar or related' even though they relate to different transactions or events.

Clause 13 — Form etc, of originating process

22. *Clause 13* sets out the requirements for an application or other document filed in support of an application.

23. *Paragraph 13(a)* requires that the group members be described or otherwise identified but it is not necessary to name them or specify how many there are. Consistently with the Federal Court Rules O 4 r 3(1) *paragraph 13(b)* provides that the application must specify the relief claimed in the principal proceeding and in each of the group members' proceedings.

Clause 14 — Addition of further group members: incomplete groups

24. If an application commencing grouped proceedings does not include as group members all persons with related claims, that is, if the group is not as extensive as it could be, the respondent or those excluded may be prejudiced. The purpose of *clause 14* is to allow the Court to deal with situations where persons who could have been included as group members in the originating process are omitted. A potential group member or the respondent can, under *subclause 14(3)* apply in the principal proceeding for all the proceedings to be stayed for a specified time under *subclause 14(1)* to give the principal applicant the opportunity to amend the application or to seek leave to amend the application (if leave is required at that stage in accordance with the Federal Court Rules) to commence proceedings for further group members. If the principal applicant does not avail himself or herself of that opportunity, *subclause 14(2)* allows the Court

- to replace the principal applicant with an existing or potential group member or
- to separate the proceedings so that each member has the conduct of his or her own proceeding.

25. *Paragraphs 14(2)(a) and (b)* require the Court, before it exercises these powers, to find both that

- the respondent or the potential group member would suffer prejudice or inconvenience if the application were not so amended and
- the principal applicant would be unlikely to be caused expense or inconvenience if the application were so amended.

Group members' proceedings commenced in this way will have commenced on the date of that amendment.

26. *Subclause 14(4)* allows the Court to make consequential orders, for example, orders as to notice or the effect of steps already taken by the principal applicant.

**Clause 15 — Addition of further group members:
causes of action accruing after commencement**

27. For reasons similar to those applying to *clause 14*, *clause 15* allows an application to be amended to include in the description of group members people whose causes of action had not accrued when the proceedings were commenced but which accrued

before a date fixed by the Court. The object is to include as many potential group members as possible to facilitate the aims of access and judicial economy. Under *subclause 15(1)*, the principal applicant, the respondent or a group member may apply for a date to be fixed. Group members' proceedings for people whose causes of action accrued after the principal proceeding was commenced but before the date so fixed will be commenced on the date of the amendment. All the requirements for grouped proceedings set out in clauses 8 to 13 (inclusive) apply to the group members' proceedings so commenced: *subclause 15(2)*.

28. *Subclause 15(4)* allows the Court to make consequential orders, for example, orders as to notice or the effect of steps already taken by the principal applicant.

Clause 16 — Proceedings to be conducted as one proceeding

29. The object of *clause 16* is to ensure that the proceedings of the principal applicant and all group members are conducted as one proceeding so that there is no duplication in relation to pleadings, legal representation or procedural steps taken in the proceedings.

30. *Subclause 16(1)* gives the conduct of group members' proceedings to the principal applicant: the group members still remain parties to their own proceeding.

31. *Subclause 16(2)* requires the grouped proceedings to be conducted as one proceeding. Accordingly, as mentioned in *subclause 16(1)*, whatever the principal applicant does in his or her proceeding will be taken to have been done in each of the group members' proceedings. *Subclause 16(3)* makes it clear that service of a document on the principal applicant will be effective service on a group member. *Paragraph 16(2)(b)* makes it clear that the Federal Court Act and the Federal Court Rules are to be read, so far as they apply in the case of grouped proceedings, as if the grouped proceedings were a single proceeding. *Paragraph 16(4)(b)* prevents a respondent from requiring a group member to do anything personally in relation to the proceedings without the leave of the Court. These provisions are all designed to ensure that procedural steps are not duplicated.

32. However, if it is appropriate for a group member to take a step in his or her proceeding, the group member may seek leave to do so (*paragraph 16(4)(a)*) and the step has effect notwithstanding any step taken by the principal applicant (*subclauses 16(1), (5)*). The group member need not assume full conduct of his or her proceeding to take such a step. The provision preserves flexibility, subject to Court control.

Clause 17 — Powers of Court where money claimed

33. *Clause 17* allows the respondent to apply to prevent the continuation of grouped proceedings if the costs to the respondent of identifying group members and distributing to them any monetary relief would be excessive having regard to the amount of any monetary relief which would be payable.

34. *Subclause 17(1)* provides that if the amount which would be recovered by group members after deduction of these costs would be so small as to not justify the proceedings, the Court has three alternatives:

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- separate the proceedings so each group member has the conduct of his or her own proceeding
- stay a group member's proceeding so far as it relates to monetary relief or
- dismiss the group member's proceeding.

35. *Subclause 17(2)* provides that such a dismissal is not a bar to the group member taking proceedings against the respondent on the same or substantially the same cause of action.

Clause 18 — Notice

36. The object of *clause 18* is to set out the rules for giving notice, in the most efficient and effective way, to group members of the commencement of their proceeding and of any other event during the course of the proceedings which may affect their rights.

37. *Subclause 18(1)* requires group members to be given notice of the commencement of their proceedings. The notice must include information about the ways in which a group member can assume the conduct of his or her proceeding (chiefly, how to 'opt out' — see *clause 19*). This notice must be approved by the Court and must be given as soon as practicable after the first directions hearing.

38. *Subclause 18(2)* ensures that the Court does not determine an application for approval of a settlement (see *subclause 28(2)*) or an application for approval of a fee agreement (see *subclause 33(1)*) unless notice has been given to group members. This is to ensure that the views of group members can be made known to the Court. The Court has a discretion to waive this requirement if it is just to do so, for example, if the settlement figure is so low that it would not be approved in any event or where all group members are already aware of the application through other means.

39. Similarly, *subclause 18(3)* requires notice to be given if money is brought into Court in answer to a cause of action in a group member's proceeding so that the group member's views can be taken into account in determining whether such money should be accepted. The Court's approval of acceptance is required by paragraph 28(1)(b). Again, the Court has a discretion to waive this requirement.

40. *Subclause 18(4)* requires notice to be given when an application is made by a respondent to dismiss group members' proceedings on the ground of want of prosecution. This may happen when the Court 'unbundles' the group members' proceedings under, for example, *clause 17* or *20* and the group members do nothing about continuing the proceedings. This requirement is designed to protect group members' interests but will not be unduly costly for the respondent. Again, the Court has a discretion to waive this requirement.

41. *Subclause 18(5)* gives the Court a discretion to order that notice be given to group members at any other time when it is appropriate to do so. Circumstances where notice may be appropriate include where:

- the principal applicant needs to be replaced (see *clause 23*)

- an aggregate assessment of monetary relief has been made and each group member must come forward to claim (see clause 30)
- a further principal applicant is needed to represent a subgroup (see clause 22).

42. Whenever notice is to be given, *subclause 18(6)* requires the Court to specify who is to give the notice and the way in which notice is to be given. The Court can also direct a party to provide information relevant to the giving of notice (such as the names of group members) and can make an order as to who should bear the costs of notice.

43. *Subclause 18(7)* directs that notice be given by the most cost-effective means, and specifically allows it to be given by press advertisement or by radio or television broadcast. Because of its high cost, *subclause 18(7)* provides that personal notice need not be given unless the Court is satisfied that it is reasonably practicable, and not unduly expensive, to do so.

44. *Subclauses 18(8) and (9)* cover the case where a notice concerns a matter for which the Court's leave or approval is required, for example, a determination of an application to approve a settlement or application for leave to accept money brought into Court. The notice must specify the period of time within which a group member may apply to the Court or take some other step in relation to the matter. For example, the group member may be given a certain time to make his or her views on an application for approval of a settlement known to the Court. Under these subclauses, this sort of information must be contained in the notice.

45. *Subclause 18(10)* protects group members who have not received or responded to a notice by providing that the Court can make any proper order in relation to them – for example, the Court could give leave for a group member who had not identified himself or herself within the period prescribed under paragraph 30(6)(b) to make a claim out of time. Failure to receive or respond to notice will not, however, invalidate anything done in the grouped proceedings.

Clause 19 — Group members may 'opt out'

46. *Clause 19* allows group members to disassociate himself or herself from the grouped proceedings by assuming the conduct of his or her proceeding personally or discontinuing his or her proceeding altogether.

47. *Subclause 19(1)* allows a group member to 'opt out' by giving notice in accordance with the Rules that he or she intends to assume conduct of his or her own proceeding. The subclause thereupon confers on the group member the conduct of his or her proceeding to the exclusion of the principal applicant: the group member's proceeding becomes an ordinary proceeding in the Federal Court.

48. *Subclause 19(2)* allows the group member to discontinue his or her proceeding by the same notice, without further formality.

49. *Subclause 19(3)* allows the Court to specify a day after which a group member will not be able to 'opt out' without the Court's leave.

Clause 20 — Group members may be given conduct of proceedings

50. Grouped proceedings comprise a number of proceedings being conducted together. If it is found that the total costs of conducting them separately is less than the cost of conducting them together, *clause 20* provides for the Court to 'unbundle' the proceedings and allow them to be conducted individually by the principal applicant and each group member.

Clause 21 — Group member may be given conduct of proceedings on particular questions

51. Not every question in each group member's proceeding and the principal proceeding need be the same. Where questions arise which could be answered differently in relation to each group member, *clause 21* provides for the Court to give the conduct of the relevant group member's proceeding, so far as they each relate to those questions, to those group members if it is necessary for the question to be properly determined. Examples of such 'individual questions' include

- whether a misrepresentation induced a particular group member to enter a contract
- the quantum of damages to which each group member is entitled after determination of liability.

Clause 22 — Group member may become additional principal applicant

52. *Clause 22* allows a further principal applicant or applicants to be appointed in order to conduct some but not all group members' proceedings so far as they relate to issues common to those group members. For example, in a principal proceeding claiming damages for a breach of the Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth) s 52, some group members may have relied on a representation made by the respondent in relation to a product while others may claim only that the product was not of merchantable quality. A further principal applicant may need to be appointed to represent those group members who do not have claims under the Trade Practices Act 1974.

Clause 23 — Group member may replace principal applicant

53. *Clause 23* provides for two situations in which a principal applicant may be replaced.

54. *Subclause 23(1)* provides for replacement where the principal applicant is not conducting group members' proceedings, or is unable to conduct them, in the interests of the group members. Group members' interests are protected by allowing them to apply to replace the principal on either of these grounds.

55. *Subclause 23(2)* provides that a principal applicant must be replaced when his or her proceeding has been concluded, for example, by settlement or discontinuance.

**Clause 24 — Provisions applicable to the operation
of section 19–23 (inclusive)**

56. *Subclause 24(1)* gives the Court power to make any consequential order when the principal applicant ceases to have the conduct of a group member's proceeding. Such orders may include orders as to notice, amendment to the pleadings or staying proceedings.

57. *Subclause 24(2)* specifies that an application under clause 21, 22 or 23 may be made

- by a group member without leave (leave is normally required under paragraph 16(4)(a))
- by the principal applicant or
- of the Court's own motion.

It enables the Court to take an active role in the management of grouped proceedings and also ensures that group members have an opportunity to protect their interests.

Clause 25 — Legal representation

58. Except in the case of corporations, a person can at present conduct a proceeding in the Federal Court without legal representation. *Clause 25* makes it compulsory for the principal applicant to be legally represented when he or she is conducting group member's proceedings. The legal practitioner may not be a group member.

Clause 26 — Discovered documents

59. *Clause 26* overcomes an existing rule that documents or things discovered in a proceeding can be used only for the purposes of that proceeding. It specifically allows any discovered document or thing (such as a tape recording or a computer program) to be used in all the proceedings being conducted by the principal applicant, to avoid duplication of discovery.

Clause 27 — Certain claims by respondents against group members

60. Where the respondent cross claims against a group member or commences proceedings against a group member in another court, this clause allows the Federal Court to stay the enforcement of relief obtained in the group member's proceeding brought under this Bill until the cross claim or other proceeding has been determined.

61. A respondent must cross claim against named group members. There is no provision for a cross claim to be brought against unidentified group members.

**Clause 28 — Discontinuance, settlement etc, of group member's
proceedings**

62. *Subclause 28(1)* provides that, to protect the interests of group members, the principal applicant must obtain the Court's leave before discontinuing a group member's proceeding or accepting money brought into Court in answer to a cause of action

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in a group member's proceeding. For the same reason, *subclause 28(2)* requires that any settlement by the principal applicant of a group member's claim must be approved by the Court.

63. *Subclause 28(3)* lists matters the Court should take into account in determining whether the leave or approval should be given.

64. *Subclause 28(4)* allows the Court, in giving leave or approval, to make orders to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the distribution of money to be paid to group members.

65. *Subclause 28(5)* abrogates the rule (see paragraph 16(4)(a)) that a group member cannot take a step in his or her proceeding without first obtaining the Court's leave by allowing a group member to accept money brought into Court or to settle that proceeding without the Court's leave.

Clause 29 — Form of judgment

66. *Clause 29* requires the Court, when giving judgment, to describe or identify the group members affected. It is not necessary for the Court to name the group members.

Clause 30 — Aggregate assessment of monetary relief

67. *Clauses 30* applies to grouped proceedings where monetary relief (except for costs alone) is claimed. It allows the Court to make a global award covering all the group members described or identified in the award, rather than making individual awards of monetary relief in each group member's proceeding.

68. *Subclauses 30(1) and (2)* allow the Court to make such a global award. Under *subclause 30(3)*, the Court must be satisfied that the aggregate amount is a reasonably accurate assessment of the total of the money payable as relief in the group members' proceedings covered by the award.

69. *Subclause 30(4)* deems an aggregate award to be an order made in each group member's proceeding to the extent that it relates to that proceeding. This is necessary to ensure that the order operates as an order in each proceeding to which it is to apply.

70. *Subclause 30(5)* directs the Court to make provision for the distribution of any aggregate award of money to the group members. In providing for this distribution, the Court may need to make provision for the constitution and administration of a fund out of which claims can be paid, for entitlements to interest earned from the money in such a fund and for payment by instalments either to the fund or to group members.

71. *Subclause 30(6)* requires notice to be given to group members of an aggregate assessment and also requires the Court to specify a day, at least six months after the day on which the aggregate assessment is made, before which the group members must take any step specified in the order to identify themselves. This clause is intended to enable group members to register their interest in the proceedings but does not mean that group members have to prove their claim by that date. *Subclause 18(10)* allows the Court to make appropriate orders if a particular group member did not receive notice.

72. *Subclause 30(8)* allows the respondent to apply to the Court for the return of so much of the aggregate award as will not be required to be paid to group members. The purpose of this subclause is to ensure that respondents are not penalised by the making of an aggregate assessment of damages in the ordinary case and that compensation is paid only to persons directly entitled to it.

Clause 31 — Costs

73. *Subclause 31(1)* relieves group members from any liability to pay the costs of another party and imposes that liability on the principal applicant. The ordinary liability for costs will apply, however, to the extent that a group member is conducting his or her own proceeding.

74. *Subclause 31(2)* prevents the operation of the rule that security for costs may be ordered if a person is conducting proceedings not for his or her own benefit but for the benefit of another person. It ensures that an order for security for costs cannot be made on that ground alone.

Clause 32 — Abolition of maintenance

75. Maintenance is the making of contributions to support (maintain) litigation. At common law it is an actionable wrong and is also a crime. So far as proceedings in courts exercising federal jurisdiction, and in Territory courts, are concerned, *subclause 32(1)* abolishes the doctrine of maintenance. The rule that renders unlawful champerty (that is, assisting a person to bring legal proceedings on an agreement to share in the proceeds) is not affected by this clause (but champertous agreements are permitted in limited circumstances under clause 33).

76. *Subclause 32(2)* overcomes the rule that contracts for maintenance are illegal.

77. *Subclause 32(3)* provides that the protection afforded by this clause is prospective only: it does not affect acts done before the commencement of the Bill.

Clause 33 — Fee agreements

78. Under the present law, a litigant cannot agree with his or her solicitor that higher than normal fees will be paid if the case is successful and that no fee will be payable if the case is lost. *Subclause 33(1)* allows the Court to approve such an agreement.

79. Under *subclause 33(2)*, the Court cannot approve an agreement if the amount of fees to be paid is to be calculated by reference to the amount recovered or ordered to be paid in the proceedings. In other words, percentage contingency fee agreements cannot be approved by the Court.

80. *Subclause 33(3)* provides that an approved fee agreement is not unlawful because, under the present law, it would constitute maintenance or champerty. Provision is made by *paragraph 33(3)(c)* for a group member to apply for the fee agreement to be varied; otherwise the fee must be paid as provided for in the agreement.

Clause 34 — Appeals by principal applicant or group members

81. *Subclause 34(1)* makes it clear that appeals from judgments in proceedings conducted as grouped proceedings can be brought as grouped proceedings.

82. *Subclause 34(2)* allows an extension of the 30 day period allowed for appeals in cases where the principal applicant has not appealed in that time. This is designed to allow a group member who had been relying on the principal applicant to appeal to lodge an appeal without penalty.

83. *Subclause 34(3)* modifies the provisions as to notice in relation to appeals by providing that notice be discretionary in all cases. In addition a group member cannot 'opt out' of an appeal brought as grouped proceedings in order to conduct his or her own appeal against the respondent, although he or she can discontinue the appeal without leave.

Clause 35 — Appeals by respondent

84. *Subclause 35(1)* allows a respondent to appeal against one or more group members without having to name them. By *subclause 35(2)*, the appeals are to be conducted as one proceeding (that is, clause 16 applies). Although no provision is made for defendant class actions in the Bill, the respondent may, under this subclause, appeal against a judgment in grouped proceedings in relation to all the group members affected. As with appeals by the principal applicant or group members brought as grouped proceedings, notice is discretionary only. *Paragraph 35(1)(c)* prevents a group member from opting out of an appeal in which he or she is the respondent.

85. *Subclause 35(3)* requires the Court to appoint a group member as a new principal applicant if the appeal is not against the principal applicant in the original grouped proceedings.

86. *Subclause 35(4)* allows the Court to give directions modifying the application of the other provisions of the Bill in the case of grouped appeals by the respondent.

Clause 36 — Appeals to the High Court

87. *Subclause 36(1)* allows appeals to the High Court to be brought as grouped proceedings. The restrictions on appeals to the High Court from decisions of the Federal Court (specifically, the requirement that special leave be obtained), are preserved by *subclause 36(2)*.

Clause 37 — Rules of Court

88. *Clause 37* extends the power of the Judges of the Federal Court to make Rules of Court to cover proceedings brought as grouped proceedings.