

# “Court in the Act”

***The Youth Court; The Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989;  
And issues facing NZ Youth Justice practitioners***

*A newsletter co-ordinated by the Principal Youth Court Judge for the Youth Justice community. We welcome your contributions and feedback.*

<http://www.courts.govt.nz/youth/>

No. 16

## COURT ON THE NET!

***Youth Court Decisions  
on the Web – put this  
site in your  
“Favourites” now:***

**<http://www.justice.govt.nz/youth/decisions>**

***Research Times Slashed by  
Youth Court Website***

THE NEW Youth Court decisions database goes “live” on the net today, 3 June 2005, at 3pm.

The database includes summaries of around 300 reported and unreported Youth Court judgments that will be accessible free of charge.

Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft says that Youth Court judgments are currently scattered throughout a variety of law reports.

“Reported Youth Court cases are spread through family, criminal and even administrative law journals. This makes them difficult to find. Of particular concern is that many relevant or important Youth Court

cases are not reported at all. This database will improve access to these cases and, we hope, ensure consistency in the application of the law.”

The database will slash research times for youth justice practitioners such as Youth Aid officers within the Police, Youth Justice Co-ordinators from Child Youth and Family Services and lawyers who work as Youth Advocates.

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***The Youth Court database  
includes summaries of  
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The database includes case summaries from 1989, when the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 was passed, until the present day. Many summaries are from reported judgments by Brookers and LexisNexis NZ who have very kindly agreed to have summaries from their products included. The NZ Law Society were also generous in agreeing to have summaries from Linx included in the database. The majority of the case summaries were written by

the office of the Principal Youth Court Judge, particularly by Research Counsel Rhonda Thompson. We also acknowledge the help initially provided by Margaret Gifford, a solicitor from CYFS, who was seconded to this office for one month.

Rhonda Thompson is keen to point out that the database will continue to grow as more case summaries are added each week. She said: "There are more cases to be included but we hope people will contact us if they see an important case they know of or that they were involved with that is not included on the database."

Once practitioners have found the relevant case summary the next step is to find the full judgment. In the future we hope to provide links from the case summaries of more recent cases to full judgments. In the meantime, judgments summarised by LexisNexis NZ and Brookers are available in the relevant journal mentioned in the summary, for example in the New Zealand Family Law Reports (NZFLR) or the Criminal Reports of New Zealand (CRNZ). Linx summaries likewise direct the reader to the relevant library where the judgment may be found.

Where a case summary on the database has no mention of LexisNexis NZ, Brookers or Linx, it is written by the office of the Principal Youth Court Judge.

A copy of the summary held by our office can be obtained by contacting Judge Becroft's PA, Jo Petrie on 914 3446 or by emailing her on [Jo.Petrie@justice.govt.nz](mailto:Jo.Petrie@justice.govt.nz).

And if you know of a case that should be included on the database, please contact Rhonda on (04) 914 3452 or

email her on  
[Rhonda.Thompson@justice.govt.nz](mailto:Rhonda.Thompson@justice.govt.nz).

***Come On - Give it a Go!***

EVEN the technically challenged will find the Youth Court decisions database easy to use. Step by step instructions are listed below for your first visit to the site. Why not click on to the internet and have a quick look now – it might save you hours of frustrating research in the future!

### ***How to Use the Youth Court Decisions Database***

1. Go onto the internet.
2. Go to:  
<http://www.justice.govt.nz/youth>
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the homepage where you'll find a blue "entry point" box called "Decisions".
4. Alternatively, go to:  
<http://www.justice.govt.nz/youth/decisions> which will get you right into the decisions part of the website.
5. For a general run-down on the database click on "How to Use" under "Decisions". If you want to get straight on with searching click on either:
  - Key titles
  - Sections
  - Datedepending on which criteria you want to use for your search.

### **How to Search by Key title:**

The key titles are a comprehensive list of issues or areas of importance to youth justice. Case summaries are generally only arranged under a particular key title if they deal with it in some depth.

***If you know which key title you want***, for example “Delay” or “Nominated Person”:

- (a) Click on “key title” – either under Decisions on the homepage or on the blue bar on the top right hand side of the screen on every other page within the decisions database.
- (b) The key title screen begins with the alphabet on the right hand side of the screen - click on the letter of the alphabet relevant to the key title you require, eg “D” for “Delay”.
- (c) A screen with all the key titles beginning with “D” will appear – you may need to scroll down to find the list for some letters. Click on “Delay”.
- (d) A list of case names will appear relating to Delay. The case summaries are graded from 1 to 4, with 1 having the most significant precedent value and 4 the least.
- (e) Select the case name you require and a case summary will appear.

***If you don't know which key title you want:***

- (a) Click on “key title” – either under Decisions on the homepage or on the blue bar on the top right hand side of the screen on every other

page within the Decisions database.

- (b) This will bring up the key title page. Scroll down the key title page to view all the key titles arranged in columns.
- (c) Click on the key title you are interested in.
- (d) A list of case names will appear graded from 1 to 4, with 1 having the most significant precedent value and 4 the least.
- (e) Select the case name you require and a case summary will appear.

### **How to Search by CYPFA Section:**

- (a) Click on “CYPFA section” either under Decisions on the Youth Court homepage or on the blue bar on the top right hand side of the screen on every other page within the Decisions database.
- (b) The resulting screen has all the important sections relating to youth justice arranged on the right hand side. Select the section you are interested in.
- (c) A list of case names will appear under this section number graded from 1 to 4, case summaries under 1 are the most useful and those under 4 are the least useful.
- (d) Click on the case name you are interested in and the case summary will appear.

### **How to Search by Date:**

- (a) Click on “Date” either under Decisions on the Youth Court homepage or on the blue bar on

the top right hand side of the screen on every other page within the Decisions database.

- (b) The resulting screen has the years from 1989 to 2005 arranged in a grid. There is also an option for “undated” cases. Click on the year you require.
- (c) The months of that year will appear arranged across the top of the screen and under this the months are listed down the page with the case names underneath them. If you need to get to “December” quickly, you can click on the “December” at the top of the screen and it will jump down to the December under which the case names are listed.

### ***WIN! With Youth Court Cases***

IF you know of a useful Youth Court case that isn't on the database please let us know. Not only will you help us make the database comprehensive but there are prizes for the most interesting Youth Court cases received.

All entries to be received by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Send to [Rhonda.Thompson@justice.govt.nz](mailto:Rhonda.Thompson@justice.govt.nz) or post them to Rhonda Thompson, Research Counsel to Principal Youth Court Judge A J Becroft, Chief District Court Judges Chambers, PO Box 10-167, Wellington.