

## ***Best interests of the child: Challenges for courts and psychologists***

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In this paper I first review the history of *best interests* of the child and examine the incorporation of this concept into Australian domestic law. and professional guidelines of *best interests* of the child. Six issues which need to be addressed in assessing what constitutes the *best interests* of the child are identified: (a) the criteria on which judgements of a child's *best interest* are made, (b) the weight to be given to each criterion, (c) how these criteria are assessed, (d) the identification of what options are available and how well these options meets each of the criteria, (e) the likely outcome or consequences for the child of each option, and (f) the weight or value placed by the assessor on each possible outcome . I then critically evaluate how well these issues have been addressed in recent Australian court decisions and the adequacy of developmental theories and psychological tests in addressing these issues.