

## **FACT SHEET: What is Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution**

Family Dispute Resolution is a process that encourages separated parents to meet to discuss and make decisions regarding parenting and living arrangements for their children. The family law system encourages parents to try and agree on arrangements for their children without having to go to court. Family dispute resolution is a practical, less stressful and inexpensive way for separated families to sort out these arrangements and create a written parenting agreement/plan as requested. Agreements made during family dispute resolution are not legally binding but can be made into a Parenting Plan with legal advice.

### **Issues addressed in Family Dispute Resolution**

Separating parents often face a range of issues that they need to be resolved for the benefit of their children and themselves. These issues may include living arrangements for the children, holiday arrangements, children's education, achieving effective communication as parents, child support, health care, and many other parenting issues.

These areas are commonly a source of dispute and can require a third party for resolution.

### **Expert Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner**

The role of the Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner is to help separated parents (and other parties) discuss issues, look at options and work out how best to reach an agreement. Further to this, the Practitioner encourages parents to think about the needs of their child/children and to make the decision together that are developmentally appropriate and in the best interests of their child/children.

### **Child Inclusive Family Dispute Resolution**

At times, with the agreement of both parents, the children are also invited to participate in the process through a child consultation. We have an experienced Child Consultant and can provide support to children and include their "voice" in the process when appropriate. Further information on child inclusive mediation and its suitability can be requested.

### **Confidentiality and Inadmissibility**

Family Dispute Resolution is a confidential and inadmissible process, with all participants, requested to keep all matters raised during the process strictly between themselves. Our Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner cannot disclose what is said or done by any of the parents without their consent.

### **Certificate 60I's**

Changes to the Family Law Act now require parents to obtain a certificate 60I from a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner before filing an application in court. To obtain this certificate, you must attend compulsory mediation (Family Dispute Resolution) and try and attempt to resolve any problems that you have about your child/children.