



I relate. Collaborative Family Law

INFORMATION PACK

What is Collaborative Family Law?

I relate. Collaborative Family Law offers you a simpler way to separate. We empower individuals to make their own decisions that will have a positive impact on their families and children over the long term. We take a non- adversarial approach and are settlement focused, to get the best legal outcome for you and your family in relation to parenting, property and financial agreements.

Currently, there is no clear pathway in Australia's legal system for separated couples and families to make property or parenting arrangements. I relate. Collaborative Family Law offers an affordable, respectful, timely, collaborative, family solution that delivers 'separation done well'.

With us, you won't need to wait 3 years to be heard by a Judge or spend up to \$100,000 (or more) in legal fees. We offer you a unique service which is focused on achieving a fast resolution, supporting your family wellbeing and preserving your asset pool along the way.

Unlike traditional law firms we provide ongoing, wraparound support such as counselling, parenting programs and case management to assist with the implementation of your parenting agreement.

With over 95 years of experience in family relationship services, we can offer support that is tailored to your personal needs during this stressful time.





Is this service for me?

We support couples who are going through a separation and want a smooth and respectful way to resolve financial, property and parenting matters, without the conflict.

This approach is for couples who:

- Are wanting to separate and are ready to come to an agreement
- Have an asset pool in excess of \$500,000 (if you are below this threshold you may wish to contact Legal Aid for advice)
- Are willing to cooperate with a non-adversarial approach (if you are in extreme conflict this is not the right option for you)
- Are seeking a win-win outcome for both parties
- Want a result that prioritises children's needs (if any children are involved)
- Want to resolve their matters in a timely manner and without significant costs
- In order to keep our fees affordable, we deliver our services online using modern technology that is user friendly

How can this service support me?

Our experienced legal team at I relate. Collaborative Family Law will help you through the separation process from start to finish, resolving all parenting, property and financial issues arising from your marriage or de facto relationship. Our non- adversarial approach is achieved outside of the Court and provides legally binding outcomes for both parties.

Where necessary we will engage other experts including child consultants and financial advisors to provide a holistic service for your family, based on your individual needs and interests. Our aim is to create better, social, financial and emotional outcomes for all families.

We offer a holistic service

The collaborative process includes direct involvement from experienced family law solicitors along with other appropriate professionals working towards the same goal in the same room. We provide access to Interrelate's services including; counselling, case management, parenting programs and children's contact centre, to provide full wrap around care for you and your family.

What is the collaborative process?

1 INTAKE / ASSESSMENT

- Allocation of case to a coach
- Family law DOORs safety assessment to be completed and follow referral pathway if high risk

2 COACH

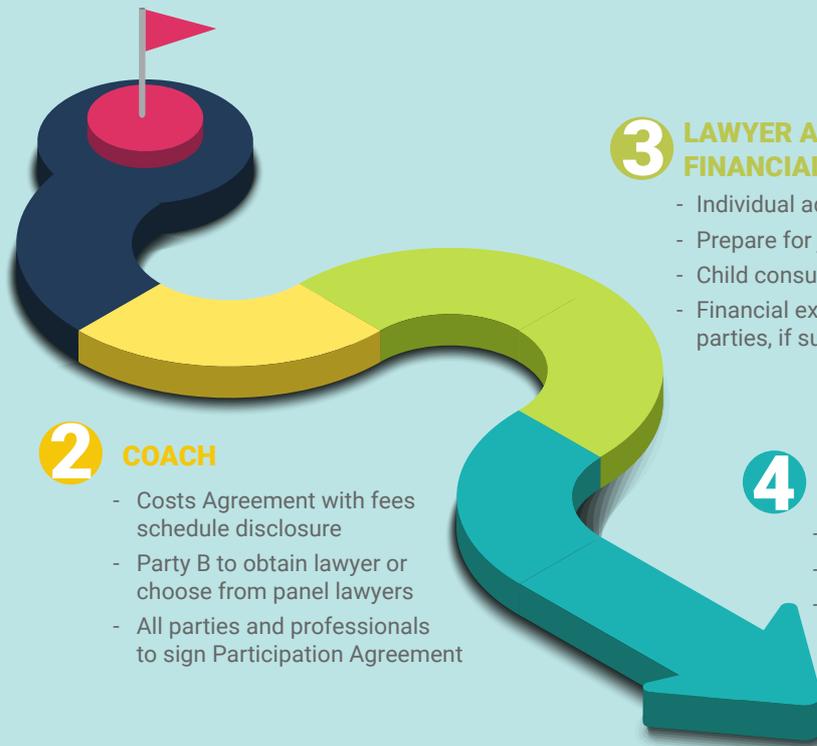
- Costs Agreement with fees schedule disclosure
- Party B to obtain lawyer or choose from panel lawyers
- All parties and professionals to sign Participation Agreement

3 LAWYER AND CHILD / FINANCIAL EXPERT

- Individual advice
- Prepare for joint sessions
- Child consultation, if suitable
- Financial expert to prepare advice for parties, if suitable

4 JOINT SESSIONS

- Reach agreement
- Draft / finalise agreement
- Lodge with court / agency





Benefits to you

I relate. Collaborative Family Law prioritises the well-being of family relationships, whilst being settlement focused.

Benefits of this approach include:

- Finalising your matter in a timely and respectful manner.
- Low cost options and affordable packaging to save you money on legal representation for you and your ex partner.
- Legally binding agreements for both parties.
- No threats of going to Court.
- Learning to communicate respectfully with your ex partner.
- The opportunity to discuss and agree upon how you will co-parent and continue to support your children's best interests.
- Working together as a team rather than working against each other.

A cost effective solution

While many family law matters can cost up to \$100,000 (or more) in legal fees with traditional law firms, the average cost with us might range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Your actual fees will be determined by the complexity of your case and number of documents you need (which means your fees could exceed this average). By using the collaborative approach with us, you are able to keep more of your hard-earned financial assets with our range of affordable packages.

Contact our legal team to book in your initial consultation so that we can discuss your needs. You can send us an email enquiry at info@irelatefamilylaw.org.au or [click here](#) to use the enquiry form.

[Enquiry Form](#)



**Meet
Stephanie**
Principal Solicitor

Our Principal Solicitor, Stephanie Lee is an Accredited Specialist in Family Law with over 18 years of experience successfully advising and representing private clients from Australia and overseas on the full range of family law issues. Stephanie is a Collaborative Professional who has been specifically trained to assist parties in reaching a family law agreement out of Court. Stephanie works collaboratively with other family lawyers and professionals from other disciplines such as financial advisors and family therapists to ensure a comprehensive approach to achieving the best outcome for the family.

Family Law Myth Busting

MYTH #1

Do all family law disputes need to go to court?

No. Parties can come to their own agreement about parenting or property without the involvement of any third party or a Court.

At I relate. Collaborative Family Law we can help legally document that agreement without the need for the parties to go to Court. We can also provide legal advice to a party during negotiations to help them come to their own agreement.

If parties cannot come to their own agreement, there are several alternative dispute resolution processes such as our existing family dispute resolution service or the collaborative process to help parties reach an agreement.

Alternatively, parties can choose to participate in an Arbitration process which provides a binding decision by an independent arbitrator without the need for the parties to go to Court.

MYTH #2

Is property always divided in half between the parties?

No. Section 79 of the Family Law Act (for married couples) or section 90SM (for de facto couples) set out the considerations which a Court must take into account, including the “contributions” of each party to the “property” of the marriage or de facto relationship. “Contributions” can include financial or non-financial contributions, parenting and homemaker contributions.

Further, in determining any property dispute, a Court must consider any relevant factors defined in section 75(2) (for married couples) or section 90SF(3) (for de facto couples) such as age, health, dependents and difference in future income earning capacity.

Each case is determined based on its own circumstances. There is no simple answer and not all property disputes end with each party taking half.



MYTH #3

Is it true that family law favours the mother?

No. Section 60CA of the Family Law Act clearly states that a Court must regard the best interests of a child in deciding whether to make a parenting order.

There is nothing in the legislation which stipulates that the father or either parent cannot be a primary caregiver.

The Court considers the numerous factors set out in section 60CC of the Family Law Act such as:

- Wishes of the child
- Relationship of the child with each parent
- Relationship of the child with other significant third parties
- Capacity of each parent
- Impact of any changes to the child and any issues of family violence

Family Law Myth Busting

MYTH #4 Does 'property' only include assets that are in either our individual or joint names?

No. The term "property" used in family law refers to all items of assets (personal property and real property), superannuation interests, pension interests and any financial resources in which a party has an interest.

All such items are to be included as "property" irrespective of how that item of property is owned.

For example, a party is a beneficiary in a family trust operated by their parents, this is an interest which must be disclosed. Or a party is a shareholder in a company owned by their parents, this is also an interest, which must be disclosed and potentially requires an independent valuation.

MYTH #5 Can we sign our own consent orders or private binding financial agreement using a template?

In Australia, only qualified lawyers or qualified entities are permitted to provide legal advice. The Family Law Act clearly states that each party must receive independent legal advice before signing any Binding financial agreement.

These documents are drafted to suit the individual circumstances and to accurately record the separated couple's agreement. If not prepared properly, the 'cheap template' can lead to more expensive disputes in Court later in the future.

All Consent orders submitted to the Court will be reviewed by a Registrar for approval. The Registrar will then issue a formal demand or seek further evidence if they are not satisfied that the legislative considerations have been met or if procedural notice has not been given.

This will cause further delay for parties to finalise their agreement, or it may upset the agreement entirely. It is therefore far more efficient for the parties to receive legal advice and have their solicitors prepare the document properly.

If an organisation or individual is found guilty of advertising or making false representations to the public as offering legal services, that person or organisation could be fined or given a term of imprisonment.

Clients should be wary of websites that offer "non-lawyer" services to separating couples or selling cheap templates of consent orders or binding financial agreements without legal advice from a solicitor.



Useful resources

Other Interrelate services and programs



Building Connections

A program to help separated parents have strong, healthy relationships with their children.

[Find out more](#)



Parents not Partners

A program to help separated parents who are in conflict over their children.

[Find out more](#)



Children's Contact Services

A service that supports children to connect and build positive relationships with family members who they do not live with or are not connecting with outside our service.

[Find out more](#)

More information

Legal Aid NSW

[Find out more](#)

How to apply for a divorce

[Find out more](#)

A parent's guide to child support

[Find out more](#)

Collaborative Professionals podcast, AACP

[Find out more](#)

The Good Divorce podcast, ABC

[Find out more](#)

Get in contact with our legal team

[02 8881 1544](tel:0288811544) [interrelate.org.au/legal](https://www.interrelate.org.au/legal)

[Enquiry Form](#)

Suite 431, Level 4, 14-16 Lexington Drive Bella Vista NSW 2153
PO Box 6307 Baulkham Hills, NSW 1755

