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New Report Shows \$20 Benefit for Families and the Family Law System for Every \$1 Spent on Family Dispute Resolution

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) has launched a new report highlighting the findings of a Cost-Benefit Analysis of Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) services for parenting matters. The report, commissioned by RAV and conducted by Inform Economics, underscores the significant financial and social value of FDR as an alternative to court proceedings.

Key findings include a remarkable benefit-cost ratio of 20.8, with families saving an average of \$41,800 per case by avoiding court-related expenses. Additionally, the family law system saves \$4,400 per case, and the diversionary nature of FDR enables courts to prioritise complex cases. Beyond financial savings, FDR improves family outcomes by reducing conflict and enhancing communication between separated parents, leading to better wellbeing for parents and children.

Sandra Opoku, RAV's Senior Manager Evaluation and Social Impact, said that the findings confirm the far-reaching benefits of FDR for families, communities and the justice system.

'Having pioneered this service 40 years ago, we see every day how FDR improves outcomes for families. This report quantifies that impact, showing an extraordinary return of \$20 for every \$1 invested in FDR,' Ms Opoku said.

'Significantly, the biggest benefits are for families. FDR provides timely, accessible and affordable support, enabling parents to reach agreements on the care of their children and parenting matters, and move forward post-separation.'

Importantly, the study did not exclude clients affected by family violence, demonstrating that the benefits of FDR can extend to families experiencing family violence, where it is deemed safe for them to participate.

The report's findings support the recommendations of the recent Family Relationships Services Program Review, commissioned by the Attorney-General, The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, which advocates for a 35% increase in funding to meet growing demand and complex needs of clients. The analysis also supports [prior RAV research](#) showing that FDR can be effective even for clients who are expecting to progress to court, with almost two-thirds of clients reaching an agreement on at least one issue, and the majority experiencing less acrimony after using the service.

RAV is now exploring the benefits of FDR for property family law disputes, and the applicability of mandated FDR in such matters—a key area of interest for the social services and family law sectors.

A summary of the report is available on RAV's website at rav.org.au/news/FDR-CBA-Summary-241121/, with the full report to follow soon.

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