



A service for separating couples to attend with their lawyers, for support to resolve parenting, property or financial matters.

What is family dispute resolution?

Family dispute resolution (FDR) is a type of mediation that helps people who are separating to resolve their family law disputes. Disputes may include conflict about parenting and the care of children, child support, financial arrangements and how to divide property.

We focus on safety, the best interests of children, and making sure that both people can take part. Where FDR is not appropriate for your situation, we will provide you with referrals to other services.

What is lawyer-inclusive FDR?

Lawyer-inclusive FDR can support people who are separating, have legal representation and want their lawyers to attend FDR sessions with them.

Read more about the process on page 2.

Who provides FDR?

FDR is delivered by our highly experienced FDR practitioners, also known as mediators. They are accredited by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department and are qualified to work with couples and families going through separation.

FDR practitioners are unbiased and impartial. They guide discussions and manage the FDR process. They don't make decisions for you. You and the other person involved in the dispute decide what agreements are made.

How is this service delivered?

Depending on the circumstances, sessions may be:

- online via video-conferencing
- in person at our Kew Centre.

Services for all

We are committed to providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all community members.

We welcome and respect people of all backgrounds and identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually and gender diverse (LGBTIQA+) community members; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and people with disability.

Our focus on safety

Your safety and wellbeing is important to us. If you're impacted by family violence or are concerned about your or your children's safety, please tell us straight away.

What's the process?

1. Individual intake assessment

You and the other person involved in the dispute will attend separate intake assessment appointments with an FDR practitioner. This will help your practitioner to understand your circumstances and whether lawyer-inclusive FDR is appropriate for your situation. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

This assessment appointment usually happens without your lawyer present. However, if you'd like your lawyer with you, please talk to us when you book your appointment.

2. Family dispute resolution session

If the FDR practitioner feels that lawyer-inclusive FDR is appropriate for your situation, you will be invited to attend a family dispute resolution session with the other person involved, and your lawyers.

Sessions can last up to 4 and a half hours (including a break), with your practitioner managing the process by helping you and your lawyers to:

- **communicate** clearly and respectfully
- **make a plan** for the meeting
- **identify** the issues you want to resolve
- **discuss** different ways to resolve those issues
- **record** any agreements that you and the other person make
- **focus on children's best interests**, where children are involved
- **organise another session/s** if this is needed and everyone agrees.

3. Certificates for parenting matters

If you're attending FDR to resolve parenting issues and FDR is unsuccessful or not appropriate, the FDR practitioner may provide a section 60I certificate.

Under Australian family law, separating parents must attempt FDR and obtain a certificate from an FDR practitioner before they can file an application with the court for parenting matters.

There are some exemptions, such as cases involving family violence or child abuse, or if the matter is urgent.

Visit fcfcoa.gov.au/fl/pubs/comp-fdr to learn more.

How much does it cost?

Individual intake assessment

Fees are calculated on a sliding scale based on your income. We will discuss fees with you when you contact us.

Family dispute resolution session

\$400 per person, per session.

Cancellation fees

Fees apply when appointments are cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice.

Legal fees

You are responsible for any fees that your lawyer charges for attending or preparing for appointments.

Getting started

New clients can contact our Kew Centre to book an intake assessment.

- **Call (03) 9261 8700**
- **Email lifdrkew@rav.org.au**

Please note: Copies of all Court Orders and Intervention Orders (IVOs) must be provided before your first appointment.

If you are already attending FDR at Relationships Australia Victoria, please ask your FDR practitioner about Lawyer-Inclusive Family Dispute Resolution.

About us

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) has over 75 years' experience providing family and relationship support services across Melbourne and Victoria.

We have been delivering FDR for 40 years, having pioneered the service in Australia in 1984. RAV is now one of the largest providers of FDR in Victoria.

Our diverse range of other services includes counselling; family violence services; mental health services; relationship education, specialised services, prevention and early intervention programs; and professional training.



We acknowledge First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways of Australia and support their right to self-determination and culturally safe services.