

# Separation Services Guide



Australian Government



Family Law  
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## Separation Services Guide

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### Introduction

This guide assists local families who are going through separation or have already separated. It includes information about support services and aims to assist families to navigate through the various pathways available. The material in this guide should not be substituted for actual advice. Families are encouraged to make contact with services best suited to their needs to receive information particular to their circumstances.

### Albury Wodonga Family Law Pathways Network

The Albury Wodonga Family Law Pathways Network (the 'Network') is funded by the Australian Government through the Attorney-General's Department. Upper Murray Family Care (UMFC) auspices the Network and employs a project officer in a facilitation role.

The Network is a means for organisations and individuals working within and alongside the family law system to come together and build better outcomes for families intersecting with the system. The primary aim of the Network is to build referral pathways and share information across a broad range of services. You can email us at [awflpn@umfc.com.au](mailto:awflpn@umfc.com.au) and find information and resources at [familylawpathways.com.au/services.php?code=31](http://familylawpathways.com.au/services.php?code=31)

## Counselling and support

The breakdown of a marriage or relationship can be a very stressful time. You may be deciding whether to leave a relationship or you may have separated. It may be helpful to talk to someone you trust or seek assistance from a professional counsellor to clarify your thoughts and sort out what you want to do. Counselling can help at any stage of the separation process. If you are concerned about your safety, please seek assistance from a family violence service (see Family Violence section on page 5).

The following services provide counselling and support to families and individuals (for private services, look under “Counselling” in the Yellow Pages).

Service	Website	Phone
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	<a href="http://awahs.com.au">awahs.com.au</a>	1800 421 640
Centacare Southwest NSW - Albury	<a href="http://centacareswnsw.org.au">centacareswnsw.org.au</a>	1300 619 379
Gateway Health	<a href="http://gatewayhealth.org.au">gatewayhealth.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6022 8888 Wangaratta: 03 5723 2000
Relationship Matters Wangaratta	<a href="http://relationshipmatters.com.au">relationshipmatters.com.au</a>	1300 543 396
Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing Albury-Wodonga	<a href="http://womenscentre.org.au">womenscentre.org.au</a>	02 6021 5773
Family Relationship Advice Line	<a href="http://familyrelationships.gov.au">familyrelationships.gov.au</a>	1800 050 321
Kids Helpline (24 hours)	<a href="http://kidshelpline.com.au">kidshelpline.com.au</a>	1800 551 800
Lifeline (24 hours)	<a href="http://lifeline.org.au">lifeline.org.au</a>	131 114
MensLine (24 hours)	<a href="http://mensline.org.au">mensline.org.au</a>	1300 789 978
Parent Line – NSW	<a href="http://parentline.org.au">parentline.org.au</a>	1300 130 052
Parentline – Vic	<a href="http://education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx">education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx</a>	132 289
Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE)	<a href="http://wire.org.au">wire.org.au</a>	1300 134 130

## Family Dispute Resolution (Mediation)

After separation you may need to make decisions in relation to children and property matters. If you are having difficulty discussing issues with your former partner, mediation may help.

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) or mediation is a process in which a trained and independent mediator assists separated people to discuss issues in relation to children, property and other matters. The mediator helps the parties to explore and negotiate their options in an effort to reach a mutual and lasting agreement. Mediation is often less expensive, time consuming and confrontational than going to Court.

Mediation is an established part of the family law system and it is now mandatory for most separated parents to attempt mediation before seeking court orders in relation to their children (subject to certain exceptions).

Only an accredited FDR practitioner can issue certificates under the Family Law Act. A section 60I Certificate is usually required before going to court. Mediation is offered locally through Family Relationship Services UMFC or through private mediators. There may be fees so you should ask about these.

For private practitioners, look under “Mediators” in the Yellow Pages or you can search for accredited private FDR practitioners on the Australian Government website (see below).

Service	Website	Phone
Family Relationship Services UMFC	<a href="http://umfc.com.au">umfc.com.au</a>	02 6057 5399
Family Relationships Online (Australian Government)	<a href="http://familyrelationships.gov.au">familyrelationships.gov.au</a> <a href="http://fdrr.ag.gov.au">fdrr.ag.gov.au</a>	1800 050 321

## Parenting after separation

Separation does not normally end your involvement and responsibility as a parent. Children need the continuing affection and support of both parents. This requires cooperation with your former partner, which may not be easy.

Services are available to assist parents to understand the impact of separation on themselves and their children. This support helps to build relationships between parents so that the focus is on the best interests of the children. Parents can access information about issues of child behaviour and ages and stages of child development. These can be delivered in a group setting or individually. See below for details of services that provide parenting programs.

The Children’s Contact Service UMFC provides a safe, neutral and child friendly environment for changeovers and supervised contact visits so that children are not exposed to ongoing parental conflict. See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Centacare Southwest NSW	<a href="http://centacareswnsw.org.au">centacareswnsw.org.au</a>	1300 619 379
Children’s Contact Service UMFC	<a href="http://umfc.com.au">umfc.com.au</a>	02 6057 5399
Gateway Health	<a href="http://gatewayhealth.org.au">gatewayhealth.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6022 8888 Wangaratta: 03 5723 2000
Parenting Orders Program and Post Separation Counselling UMFC	<a href="http://umfc.com.au">umfc.com.au</a>	02 6057 5399
Parent Line – NSW	<a href="http://parentline.org.au">parentline.org.au</a>	1300 130 052
Parentline – Vic	<a href="http://education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx">education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx</a>	132 289

## Legal advice

All separated parties should consider getting legal advice to help understand their rights, responsibilities and options. Even where court action is unlikely, legal advice can still play an important role in helping parties reach fair and lasting agreements.

Legal advice is provided by community and private lawyers. All parties should be able to obtain some preliminary legal assistance free or at minimal cost, with ongoing representation being dependent upon the nature of the case and the circumstances of the parties.

It is important to get early legal advice. Lawyers can assist you to negotiate your legal issues and to formalise any agreement reached. Legal advice can involve such matters as where children should live, how much time they spend with parents and others, whether one party is able to move or travel overseas with children, divorce, property settlements, spousal maintenance and child support.

There are legal services that offer free legal advice in person or over the phone. See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS)	<a href="http://hrcls.org.au">hrcls.org.au</a>	1800 918 377
Legal Aid NSW Riverina Murray – Albury	<a href="http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au">legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>	02 6020 7200
Legal Aid NSW Riverina Murray - Wagga Wagga	<a href="http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au">legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>	02 6921 6588
Victoria Legal Aid	<a href="http://legalaid.vic.gov.au">legalaid.vic.gov.au</a>	1300 792 387
Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT	<a href="http://alsnswact.org.au">alsnswact.org.au</a>	1800 733 233
LawAccess NSW	<a href="http://lawaccess.nsw.gov.au">lawaccess.nsw.gov.au</a>	1300 888 529
Women’s Legal Service NSW	<a href="http://wlsnsw.org.au">wlsnsw.org.au</a>	1800 801 501
Women’s Legal Service – Vic	<a href="http://womenslegal.org.au">womenslegal.org.au</a>	1800 133 302
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service	<a href="http://vals.org.au">vals.org.au</a>	1800 064 865

Private lawyers can provide legal advice for payment of their professional time. Local family lawyers are listed in the Yellow Pages under “Solicitors”. The websites of the Victorian and NSW Law Societies can refer you to a Family Law practitioner. Note that the Albury and District Law Society does not provide referrals but includes a list of all members.

Service	Website	Phone
Albury and District Law Society	<a href="http://albury.lawsociety.com.au">albury.lawsociety.com.au</a>	See website
Law Institute of Victoria	<a href="http://liv.asn.au/referral">liv.asn.au/referral</a>	03 9607 9550
The Law Society of NSW	<a href="http://lawsociety.com.au">lawsociety.com.au</a>	02 9926 0300

## Going to court

Sometimes people will need to go to court to resolve their legal issues. Going to court should always be a last resort but if it is necessary then obtaining legal advice is very important. Contact your local community legal centre or private solicitor to arrange an appointment (see the above listing of legal services). Courts also have websites that provide useful information. See below for more details.

Service	Website	Phone
Albury Local Court - NSW	<a href="http://localcourt.justice.nsw.gov.au">localcourt.justice.nsw.gov.au</a>	02 6023 8555
Albury Registry, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court of Australia	<a href="http://familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/contact-us/locations/nsw/albury">familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/contact-us/locations/nsw/albury</a>	1300 352 000
Wangaratta Magistrates’ Court - Vic	<a href="http://mcv.vic.gov.au/court/wangaratta-magistrates-court">mcv.vic.gov.au/court/wangaratta-magistrates-court</a>	03 5721 0900
Wodonga Magistrates’ Court - Vic	<a href="http://mcv.vic.gov.au/court/wodonga-magistrates-court">mcv.vic.gov.au/court/wodonga-magistrates-court</a>	02 6043 7000

## Family violence

Family violence includes violent behaviour that is repeated, controlling, threatening and coercive and that occurs between people who have had, or are having, an intimate relationship. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics used by men to exercise power and control over women and children and can be both criminal and non-criminal. Family violence includes physical assaults and a range of tactics including intimidation, direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, property damage, social isolation and any other behaviour that causes a person to live in fear.

Police should be contacted if there has been a recent incident of violence. If a person is in fear of violence then they can contact their nearest family violence service for support. If a person is in need of legal advice in relation to protective steps, such as intervention orders, they can contact a legal service (see Legal Advice section on pages 3-4). See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Albury Police	<a href="http://police.nsw.gov.au">police.nsw.gov.au</a>	02 6023 9299 or 000 (emergency)
Wangaratta Police (Family Violence Adviser)	<a href="http://police.vic.gov.au">police.vic.gov.au</a>	03 5723 0888 or 000 (emergency)
Wodonga Police (Family Violence Unit)	<a href="http://police.vic.gov.au">police.vic.gov.au</a>	02 6049 2600 or 000 (emergency)
Centre Against Violence (CAV) – Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services for Women and Children (Vic)	<a href="http://centreagainstviolence.org.au">centreagainstviolence.org.au</a>	03 5722 2203
Gateway Health – Men’s Programs and Family Violence Counselling for Women and Children	<a href="http://gatewayhealth.org.au">gatewayhealth.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6022 8888 Wangaratta: 03 5723 2000
Junction Support Services – Family Violence Support	<a href="http://junction.org.au">junction.org.au</a>	02 6043 7400
Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation	<a href="http://mungabareena.org.au">mungabareena.org.au</a>	02 6024 7599
Southern Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service	<a href="http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/community-partnerships/womens-domestic-violence-court-advocacy-program">legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/community-partnerships/womens-domestic-violence-court-advocacy-program</a>	02 6046 9480 1800 938 227
Women’s Centre for Health and Wellbeing Albury-Wodonga	<a href="http://womenscentre.org.au">womenscentre.org.au</a>	02 6021 5773
Yes Unlimited – Staying Home Leaving Violence Program and Women’s Refuge	<a href="http://yesunlimited.com.au">yesunlimited.com.au</a>	1800 885 355
1800RESPECT – Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling (24 hours)	<a href="http://1800respect.org.au">1800respect.org.au</a>	1800 737 732
Services Australia - Family Violence Counselling and Support	<a href="http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence">servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence</a>	132 850
Domestic Violence Line (NSW) – Crisis Counselling and Referral for Women (24 hours)	<a href="http://facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/helpline">facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/helpline</a>	1800 656 463
Family Violence Law Help	<a href="http://familyviolencelaw.gov.au">familyviolencelaw.gov.au</a>	NA
MensLine (24 hours)	<a href="http://mensline.org.au">mensline.org.au</a>	1300 789 978
Men’s Referral Service – Men’s Family Violence Counselling and Referral	<a href="http://ntv.org.au">ntv.org.au</a>	1300 766 491
Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre Vic (24 hours)	<a href="http://safesteps.org.au">safesteps.org.au</a>	1800 015 188

## Mental health

If you are concerned about your mental health or your child's mental health please make an appointment with a doctor or get in contact with one of the services below. To find doctors in your area look under "Doctors" in Yellow Pages.

Service	Website	Phone
Albury Community Mental Health Service	<a href="http://recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services">recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services</a>	02 6058 1750 1800 800 944 (24 hours crisis line)
Gateway Health	<a href="http://gatewayhealth.org.au">gatewayhealth.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6022 8888 Wangaratta: 03 5723 2000
Headspace	<a href="http://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/albury-wodonga">headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/albury-wodonga</a>	02 6055 9555
Mind Australia	<a href="http://mindaustralia.org.au">mindaustralia.org.au</a>	1300 286 463
North East Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (NECAMHS)	<a href="http://awh.org.au">awh.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6051 7900 Wangaratta: 03 5723 8900
Wangaratta Community Mental Health Service	<a href="http://recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services">recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services</a>	03 5722 5347 1300 783 347 (24 hours crisis line)
Wodonga Adult Mental Health Service	<a href="http://recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services">recovery.awh.org.au/recovery/recovery-a-our-services/adult-community-mental-health-services</a>	02 6051 7950 1300 881 104 (24 hours crisis line)
Beyond Blue (24 hours)	<a href="http://beyondblue.org.au">beyondblue.org.au</a>	1300 224 636
Lifeline (24 hours)	<a href="http://lifeline.org.au">lifeline.org.au</a>	131 114
Mental Health Line NSW (24 hours)	<a href="http://health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/Mental-Health-Line.aspx">health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/Mental-Health-Line.aspx</a>	1800 011 511
Suicide Call Back Service (24 hours)	<a href="http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au">suicidecallbackservice.org.au</a>	1300 659 467
SuicideLine Vic (24 hours)	<a href="http://sucideline.org.au">sucideline.org.au</a>	1300 651 251

## Children's welfare

Welfare concerns about children can include physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and other types of issues. If you have a belief that a child's welfare is in danger, then you can notify the child protection authority in your State. See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Child FIRST UMFC - Vic	<a href="http://umfc.com.au/services/child-and-family-services/child-first">umfc.com.au/services/child-and-family-services/child-first</a>	1800 705 211
Department of Communities and Justice NSW – Child Protection	<a href="http://facs.nsw.gov.au">facs.nsw.gov.au</a>	132 111
Department of Health and Human Service Vic – Child Protection (Eastern Division)	<a href="http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts">services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts</a>	1300 360 391 131 278 (after hours)



## Counselling and support for children

There are a range of services that can assist the children of parents who are separating or separated. These include counselling and other support services. Please see below for more details.

Service	Website	Phone
Gateway Health	<a href="http://gatewayhealth.org.au">gatewayhealth.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6022 8888 Wangaratta: 03 5723 2000
Headspace	<a href="http://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/albury-wodonga">headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/albury-wodonga</a>	02 6055 9555
Jigsaw program UMFC	<a href="http://umfc.com.au">umfc.com.au</a>	02 6057 5399
Junction Support Services	<a href="http://junction.org.au">junction.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6043 7400 Wangaratta: 03 5722 4129
Yes Unlimited – Adolescent Family Counselling	<a href="http://yesunlimited.com.au/our-services/therapeutic-services">yesunlimited.com.au/our-services/therapeutic-services</a>	1800 885 355
Kids Helpline (24 hours)	<a href="http://kidshelpline.com.au">kidshelpline.com.au</a>	1800 551 800
Legal Aid NSW Best for Kids	<a href="http://bestforkids.org.au">bestforkids.org.au</a>	NA
Youth Law	<a href="http://youthlaw.asn.au">youthlaw.asn.au</a>	03 9113 9500

## Child support (financial)

Every parent is responsible for financially supporting their children whether they live with them or not. The key components of the child support formula include both parents' income, the costs of raising children and the percentage of time each parent cares for the children. For more information about your specific circumstances please contact Services Australia – Child Support (see below). If you require advice you should contact the Child Support Legal Aid Service in your State or see 'Legal Advice' section on pages 3-4 for a list of legal services.

Service	Website	Phone
Services Australia - Child Support	<a href="http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/child-support">servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/child-support</a>	131 272
Child Support Legal Service Vic	<a href="http://legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/child-support/get-help">legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/child-support/get-help</a>	1300 792 387
Child Support Legal Service NSW	<a href="http://legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/family-law/child-support-advice">legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/family-law/child-support-advice</a>	1800 451 784

## Housing

Following separation many people find themselves without a place to stay until they can arrange their own housing. If you find yourself in need of housing there are organisations that can help. Crisis accommodation is provided for persons and families who are in need of urgent temporary accommodation. Most of these organisations can also refer you to other services that provide longer term accommodation. See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Beyond Housing	<a href="http://beyondhousing.org.au">beyondhousing.org.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6055 9000 Wangaratta: 03 5722 8000
Department of Communities and Justice NSW – Housing	<a href="http://facs.nsw.gov.au/housing">facs.nsw.gov.au/housing</a>	02 6041 9666
Department of Health and Human Services Vic – Housing	<a href="http://housing.vic.gov.au">housing.vic.gov.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6055 7777 Wangaratta: 03 5722 0555
Quamby House (Men’s Refuge)	<a href="http://vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/NSW/Housing/Quamby_House">vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/NSW/Housing/Quamby_House</a>	02 6021 7860
Yes Unlimited – Crisis Accommodation and Support	<a href="http://yesunlimited.com.au/our-services/accomodation-homelessness/">yesunlimited.com.au/our-services/accomodation-homelessness/</a>	1800 885 355

## Financial counselling and assistance

Many people experiencing separation find themselves in financial difficulty. There are support services that can assist you with financial matters. See below for service details.

Service	Website	Phone
Anglicare NSW Financial Counselling	<a href="http://anglicare.com.au">anglicare.com.au</a>	02 6075 9300
Centrelink - Families	<a href="http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/families">servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/families</a>	136 150
Women’s Centre for Health and Wellbeing Albury-Wodonga No Interest Loans Scheme	<a href="http://womenscentre.org.au">womenscentre.org.au</a>	02 6021 5773
Women’s Health Goulburn North East (Wangaratta) No Interest Loans Scheme	<a href="http://whealth.com.au">whealth.com.au</a>	03 5722 3009
St David’s Uniting Care Financial Counselling	<a href="http://unitingvictas.org.au/locations/ovens-murray-goulburn/">unitingvictas.org.au/locations/ovens-murray-goulburn/</a>	02 6021 7099
The Salvation Army Moneycare Albury	<a href="http://salvationarmy.org.au">salvationarmy.org.au</a>	02 6040 8948
UMFC Financial Counselling	<a href="http://umfc.com.au">umfc.com.au</a>	Wodonga: 02 6055 8000 Wangaratta: 03 5720 0000
National Debt Helpline	<a href="http://ndh.org.au">ndh.org.au</a>	1800 007 007

*Last updated March 2020. Contact [awflpn@umfc.com.au](mailto:awflpn@umfc.com.au) or visit [familylawpathways.com.au/services.php?code=31](http://familylawpathways.com.au/services.php?code=31) for more information.*



