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Family Law
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ALBURY
WODONGA



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 Pathways Network is funded by the Australian Government through the Attorney General's Department. Membership is open to any organisation or individual that provides services to separating families. The Network is inclusive and belongs to its members. The Network is auspiced by Upper Murray Family Care, which appoints a project officer to facilitate the network.

The network aims to improve the collaboration and coordination between organisations operating in and alongside the family law system in order to help separating and separated families obtain appropriate services. You can email us at awflpn@umfc.com.au and find information and resources at www.familylawpathways.com.au/services.php?code=31.

Counselling and support

The break-up 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
Gateway Health Wodonga and Wangaratta	www.gatewayhealth.org.au	02 6022 8888 03 5723 2000
Centacare Albury	www.centacareswnsw.org.au	02 6051 0222
Women’s Centre Albury Wodonga	www.womenscentre.org.au	02 6041 1977
LifeWorks Wangaratta	www.lifeworks.com.au	03 5721 5700
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	www.awahs.com.au	02 6040 1200
Lifeline	www.lifeline.org.au	131 114
Men’s Line	www.menslineaus.org.au	1300 789 978
Kid’s Help Line	www.kidshelp.com.au	1800 551 800
Family Relationship Advice Line	www.familyrelationships.gov.au	1800 050 321
Parentline – Victoria	www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/parentline	132 289
Parentline – NSW	www.parentline.org.au	1300 1300 52
WIRE (Women’s Information and Referral Service)	www.wire.org.au	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 mediator 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.

See below for contact details. For private practitioners, look under “Mediators” in the Yellow Pages or you can search for registered private Family Dispute Resolution practitioners on the Australian Government website (see below).

Service	Website	Phone
Family Relationship Services UMFC	www.umfc.com.au	02 6057 5399
Family Relationships Online (Australian Government)	www.familyrelationships.gov.au www.fdr.ag.gov.au	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
Parenting Orders Program and Post Separation Counselling UMFC	www.umfc.com.au	02 6057 5399
Children’s Contact Service UMFC	www.umfc.com.au	02 6057 5399
Gateway Health Wodonga and Wangaratta	www.gatewayhealth.org.au	02 6022 8888
Parentline – Victoria	www.education.vic.gov.au	132 289
Parentline – NSW	www.parentline.org.au	1300 1300 52

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	www.hrcls.org.au	02 6057 5000 1800 918 377
Legal Aid NSW Riverina Murray – Albury	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au	02 6020 7200
Victoria Legal Aid	www.legalaid.vic.gov.au	1800 677 402
Legal Aid NSW Riverina Murray - Wagga Wagga	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au	02 6921 6588
Law Access NSW	www.lawaccess.nsw.org.au	1300 888 529
Women’s Legal Service Vic	www.womenslegal.org.au	1800 133 302
Women’s Legal Service NSW	www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au	1800 801 501
Aboriginal Legal Service Vic	www.vals.org.au/services/family-law	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	www.albury.lawsociety.com.au	See website
Law Institute Victoria	www.liv.asn.au	03 9607 9311
NSW Law Society	www.lawsociety.com.au	02 9926 0333

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 nearest legal service 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
Federal Circuit Court of Australia (Albury)	www.federalcircuitcourt.gov.au	1300 352 000
Family Court of Australia	www.familycourt.gov.au	1300 352 000
Wodonga Magistrates Court (Vic)	www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au/court/wodonga-magistrates-court	02 6043 7000
Wangaratta Magistrates Court (Vic)	www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au/court/wangaratta-magistrates-court	03 5721 0900
Local Court Albury (NSW)	www.nswcourts.com.au/courts/albury-local-court	02 6023 8555

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	www.police.nsw.gov.au	02 6023 9299 or 000
Wodonga Police (Family Violence Unit)	www.police.vic.gov.au	02 6049 2600 or 000
Wangaratta Police (24 hours) – Family Violence Adviser	www.police.vic.gov.au	03 5723 0888 Or 000
Centre Against Violence Family Violence Services & Sexual Assault Services for Women and Children (Vic)	www.centreagainstviolence.org.au	03 5722 2203 Free call: Family Violence: 1800 015 188 Sexual Assault: 1800 806 292
Women's Centre Albury Wodonga	www.womenscentre.org.au	02 6041 1977
Southern Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service	www.womenscentre.org.au	02 6021 3059
Junction Support Service – Women's and Children's Family Violence Support	www.junction.org.au	02 6043 7400
Yes Youth and Family Services (Albury/NSW Women's Refuge)	www.yesunlimited.com.au	02 6058 6200 Free call: 1800 885 355
Gateway Health (Women's & Children's FV Counselling and Men's Programs)	www.gatewayhealth.org.au	02 6022 8888
Domestic Violence Line Counselling Service (NSW)	www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence/domestic-violence-line	1800 656 463
Safe Steps 24/7 Family Violence response Victoria	www.safesteps.org.au	1800 015 188
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault National Help Line	www.1800respect.org.au	1800 737 732
Centrelink – family violence counselling and support	www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/social-work-services#a5	132 850

Child 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
Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (Eastern Division Child Protection) (business hours)	www.dhhs.vic.gov.au	1300 360 391
Child Protection Crisis Line (Vic) – after hours	www.dhhs.vic.gov.au	131 278
Child FIRST (Vic) UMFC	www.umfc.com.au/services/child-and-family-services/child-first	1800 705 211
Department of Family and Community Services NSW – Child Protection	www.facs.nsw.gov.au	132 111

Children's support services

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
Junction Support Services Inc.	www.junction.org.au	Wodonga: 02 6043 7400 Wangaratta: 03 5722 4129
Headspace	www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/albury-wodonga	02 6055 9555
Jigsaw program UMFC	www.umfc.com.au	02 6057 5399
YES Youth and Family Services - Adolescent Family Counselling Program	www.yesalbury.wordpress.com	02 6058 6200
Youth Law	www.youthlaw.asn.au	03 9611 2412
Kid's Help Line	www.kidshelp.com.au	1800 551 800
Legal Aid Best for Kids website	www.bestforkids.org.au	NA

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 the Department of Human Services - 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
Department of Human Services – Child Support	www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/child-support	131 272
Child Support Legal Service Vic	www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/child-support/get-help	1800 677 402
Child Support Legal Service NSW	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/family-law/child-support-advice	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	www.beyondhousing.org.au	Wodonga: 02 6055 9000 Wangaratta: 03 5722 8000
Yes Youth and Family Services (Albury/NSW Crisis Accommodation)	www.yesalbury.wordpress.com/the-hub	02 6058 6200 Free call: 1800 885 355
Quamby House (Men's Refuge)	www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/NSW/Housing/Quamby_House	02 6021 7860
NSW Department of Family and Community Services – Housing	www.housing.nsw.gov.au	02 6041 9666
Vic Department of Health and Human Services – Housing	www.housing.vic.gov.au	Wodonga: 02 6055 7777 Wangaratta: 03 5722 0555

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
Centrelink (Family Assistance Office)	www.centrelink.gov.au	136 150
UMFC Financial Counselling - Vic only	www.umfc.com.au	Wangaratta 03 5720 000 Wodonga : 02 6055 8000
St David's Uniting Care (financial counselling)	www.unitingcare.org.au	02 6021 7099
Uniting Care Wodonga	www.unitingcare.org.au	02 6024 2108
Salvation Army Centre Lavington	www.salvos.org.au	1300 371 288
Anglicare Victoria	www.anglicarevic.org.au	1800 809 722
Women's Health Goulburn North East (Wangaratta) No Interest Loans Scheme	www.whealth.com.au	03 5722 3009
Women's Centre Albury Wodonga No Interest Loans Scheme	www.womenscentre.org.au	02 6041 1977

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