

Timeframes and section 6OI certificates in FDR

If you are initiating FDR, your practitioner will write a letter of invitation to the other party to invite them to attend an intake and assessment interview. If the other party has not responded within two weeks to that letter, another letter can be requested. If there is no response from them after one week from the second contact, you can request a certificate stating that FDR did not occur because the other party did not attend. (Regarding parenting issues only)

If the other party calls to book an appointment, they will be offered the first three available appointments and unless there are exceptional circumstances, must take one of these times. It is important not to cause an unreasonable delay to the process and if a party declines available appointments or cancels appointments without a valid reason, the initiating party may request a did not attend certificate at this point. (Regarding parenting issues only)

If the other party attends an intake and assessment interview and it is considered appropriate to proceed to FDR, there is an expectation that FDR will be attempted within one month after their intake and assessment appointment subject to the practitioner's availability. Basically an initiating party can expect to attempt FDR within three months of their first contact subject to the availability of appointments. If there is an unreasonable delay to attempt FDR if it is considered appropriate to proceed and there are no exceptional circumstances, a certificate will be issued if requested (regarding parenting issues only).

Will my situation be kept confidential?

All information provided and discussed between FDR practitioners and clients is confidential. Confidentiality will only be waived when matters of a serious or criminal nature arise.

Individual requirements

Relationships Australia (SA) is committed to providing quality services to all people and understands that sometimes there are barriers that may prevent people from accessing community services. If you have any difficulty in accessing our services please speak to us about how we can help.

We value your comments

Relationships Australia (SA) is very proud of the excellent service it provides to the community. Client feedback is an important part of maintaining our service delivery standards. If you have any feedback about any of our services or staff, you can provide this by:

- Phoning us
- Completing and sending back the Feedback Form found in Relationships Australia (SA)'s 'Client rights, feedback and complaints' brochure
- Sending us a letter outlining your feedback.

Relationships Australia (SA) locations

City (Adelaide)

161 Frome Street
Adelaide SA 5000
T: (08) 8223 4566
F: (08) 8232 2898

West (Hindmarsh)

49a Orsmund Street
Hindmarsh SA 5007
T: (08) 8245 8100
F: (08) 8346 7333

Outer West (Port Adelaide)

8 Butler Street
Adelaide SA 5015
T: (08) 8340 2022
F: (08) 8241 5236

South (Marion)

Suite 500a
Westfield Shopping Centre
297 Diagonal Road
Oaklands Park SA 5046
T: (08) 8377 5400
F: (08) 8377 5411

North (Salisbury)

Shop 8a
Salisbury Cinema Complex
Cnr James and Gawler Streets
Salisbury SA 5108
T: (08) 8250 6600
F: (08) 8285 4494

North (Elizabeth)

13 Elizabeth Way
Elizabeth SA 5112
T: 08 8255 3323
F: 08 8255 7753

North East (Ridgehaven)

Unit 2, 1273 North East Road
Ridgehaven SA 5097
T: (08) 8396 4237
F: (08) 8396 4238

Riverland (Berri)

9 Kay Avenue
Berri SA 5343
T: (08) 8582 4122
F: (08) 8582 4152

Relationships Australia (SA) provides a wide range of other services that assist individuals, families and communities.

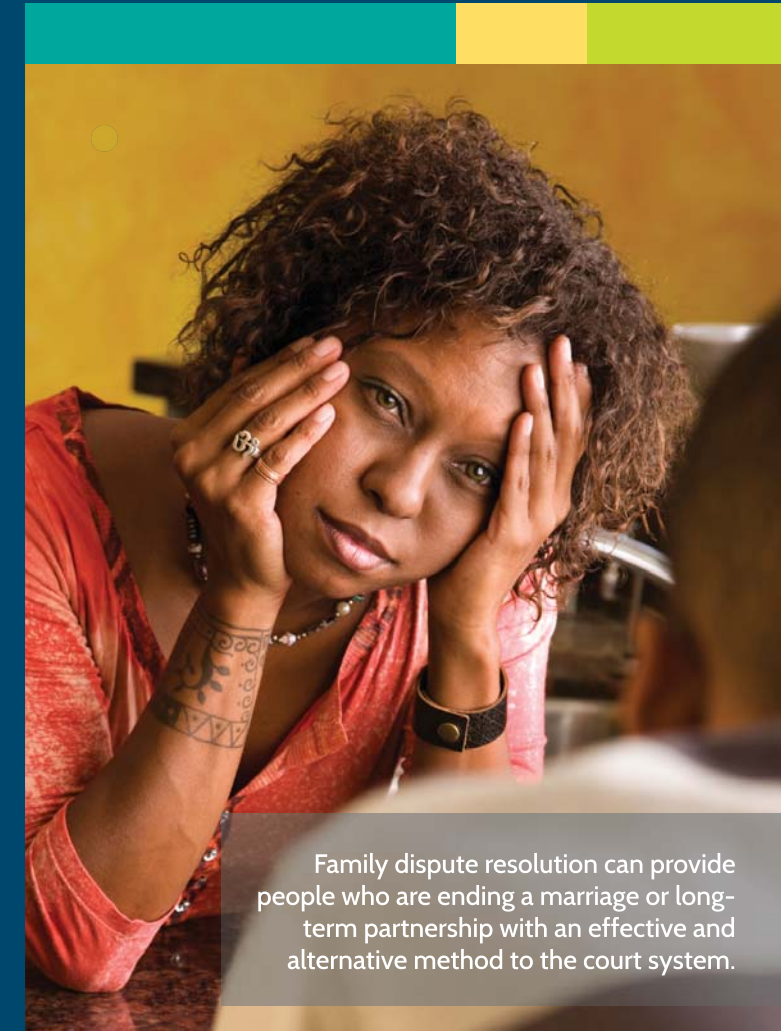
Some services are also available from outreach locations.

www.rasa.org.au

Family Dispute Resolution is provided by Relationships Australia (SA) and funded by the Australian Government.

December 2013

Family Dispute Resolution (Mediation)



Family dispute resolution can provide people who are ending a marriage or long-term partnership with an effective and alternative method to the court system.

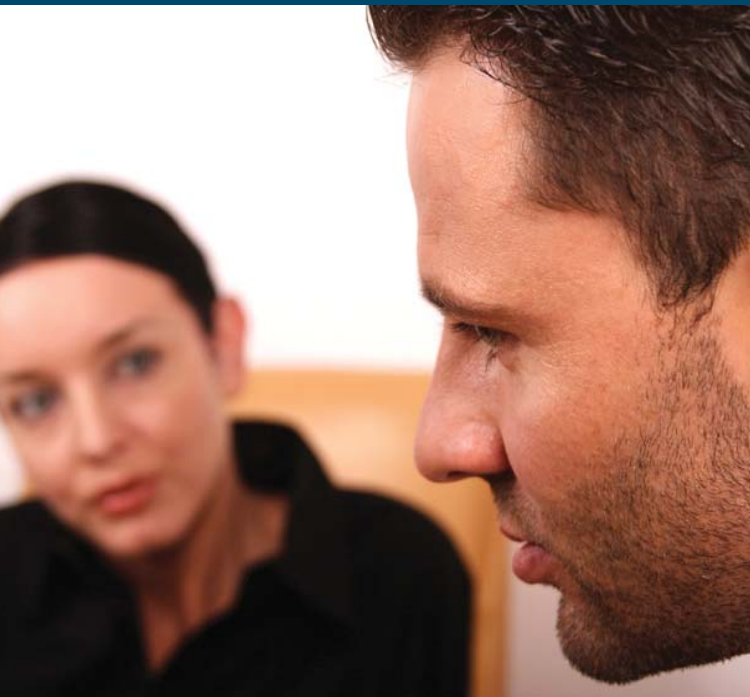
What is family dispute resolution (mediation)?

Family dispute resolution (FDR), also known as mediation, can provide people who are ending a marriage or long-term partnership with an effective and alternative method to the court system.

In fact, research among separated and divorced Australians show that more people were satisfied with the FDR experience than with the legal, Family Court or 'do it yourself' way of finalising a separation or divorce.

FDR can help people reach agreement on a range of financial and property matters, and on issues relating to children or shared parenting. Guided by a skilled practitioner, the process encourages people to discuss problems and develop solutions that make sense in their own context.

FDR can also allow people who are separating to achieve a sense of emotional closure. It offers a path to a more satisfying future, allowing individuals to pursue separate lives, while continuing as parents. Parenting plans can also be developed and reviewed, when needed, through FDR.



What are the benefits of using FDR?

FDR takes place in an environment of cooperation. The benefits of this service will differ for each person, but some of the main advantages are:

- Solutions which both people have helped to create
- Cost-effective process
- Resolution that is faster than through the legal system
- Sessions that can take place at mutually convenient times
- Service which is private and confidential.
- How do we ensure the best for our children?

As well as helping adults, there are a number of ways we can offer support to you as a parent and to your children. We have information you can read, we can talk to you about your children, or we can talk with your children if that would be helpful for them and for you.

Children's views can be involved in FDR through using a child consultant. Ask your practitioner to explain this process or for information to be sent to you.

Is FDR suitable for me?

The process can lead to valuable solutions for people who are separating, including those in married, de-facto and same sex relationships. If you are deciding, or have decided to separate, this difficult period can be made less stressful through family dispute resolution.

For people who use English as a second language, we can arrange a professional interpreter to be present. A fee may apply.

If you are coming from an abusive or violent relationship, we will meet with you and discuss whether FDR is the most suitable way for you to reach agreement about your separation. It is not

necessary for the process to take place with both parties in the same room.

For more information on this, please contact your local Relationships Australia (SA) office.

What about my lawyer?

While FDR practitioners do not provide legal advice, the process can be more successful when clients are aware of their legal rights and responsibilities.

FDR practitioners focus on helping you reach your own agreements; they do not take sides, represent either party, or provide financial or legal advice.

What happens in FDR?

Our FDR service is conducted by a team of highly trained professionals who possess a range of qualifications including: law, counselling, psychology, social work and family therapy. All practitioners have completed specialist training and supervised practice.

FDR sessions generally run for two hours with most clients requiring four to five sessions spread over a number of weeks or months. While the process is tailored to the requirements of each couple, the following steps describe the typical mediation process:

- Step 1: Contact your local Relationships Australia (SA) office to make an appointment.
- Step 2: Meet your FDR practitioner(s) separately. Before attending a mediation session with your ex partner, it is compulsory to attend a free Child Focussed Information Session if you are wanting to discuss parenting issues. You will attend a different session from your ex partner. These sessions are offered at different sites around Adelaide for your convenience.
- Step 3: Identify and work through issues that need attention.

Step 4: Discuss options that could be best applied to solve the identified issues.

Step 5: Talk through the issues until a workable solution and agreement is found.

Step 6: Summarise agreements verbally or in writing.

Further options may also be considered:

Step 7: Take the written summary to a Solicitor for independent legal advice and drafting into Court orders.

Step 8: Decide whether to register the agreement with the Family Court or Federal Magistrates' Court.

Decision making for one

This is a confidential service that consists of a step-by-step analysis of a current conflict or situation. Taking into account the perspectives that belong to you, and also to others involved, a facilitator will help you to develop strategies and skills to handle situations more positively.

How much will it cost?

As a non-profit community organisation, Relationships Australia (SA) aims to provide an affordable service to all clients. Our FDR service is partially-funded by the Australian Government, however some fees do still apply. Reduced fees are available for concession card holders. Special arrangements may be negotiated for people on low incomes or with special requirements. Please contact us for more information.

