



### 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 that 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.

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. If you choose, you can meet with a Family Caseworker first to discuss your options and your children's needs. Alternatively you can book yourself straight in with an FDR Practitioner if you already know you want to mediate.
- Step 2: You and your co-parent meet your FDR practitioner separately.
- Step 3: Attend the Working it out for the Kids workshop. You and your co-parent will attend separate workshops.
- 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:

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- 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.

### Post Separation Co-operative Parenting (Family Casework)

This confidential service can help you to develop your skills in dealing with difficult situations, improving the ways you communicate with your co-parent and increase your capacity to assist your children through the separation. It doesn't matter if your co-parent doesn't want to attend, there is still much you can do on your own. Family Caseworkers will work with you to identify your strengths and help you through the challenges of post separation parenting.

### Timeframes and Section 601 certificates in FDR

If you are initiating FDR, after your Intake and Assessment appointment your practitioner may send 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)

#### How much will it cost?

As a not-for-profit community organisation, Relationships Australia (SA) aims to provide an affordable service to all clients. Our FDR service is currently offered **free of charge** to all Riverland residents, however this subject to change and clients are encouraged to discuss this at the time of booking an appointment.

#### 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 directly on 8582 4122
- 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.

#### Service locations

Relationships Australia (SA) provides its family dispute resolution service at the following locations:

- Port Road, Hindmarsh
- Ridgehaven
- Marion
- Berri.

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### Contact us

Riverland Office  
9 Kay Avenue  
Berri SA 5343  
Phone: (08) 8582 4122

#### Ridgehaven

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

#### Salisbury

Shop 8a  
Salisbury Cinema Complex  
Cnr James and Gawler St  
Salisbury SA 5108  
Phone: (08) 8250 6600

#### Marion

Office Suite 500a  
Westfield Shopping Centre  
297 Diagonal Road  
Oaklands Park SA 5046  
Phone: (08) 8377 5400

#### Hindmarsh

192 Port Road  
Hindmarsh SA 5007  
Phone: (08) 8340 2022

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[www.rabooks.com.au](http://www.rabooks.com.au)

# Family Dispute Resolution (Mediation)

