

## Family Law and De Facto Law Enquiries

The law pertaining to personal relationships is complex and often further complicated by the individual circumstances of people's personal and financial arrangements. If your relationship has come to an end it's important to address what will happen now and what arrangements will be made concerning any children of the relationship, property and to generally inform yourself of your legal rights and obligations - especially if you cannot agree with your former spouse.

The solicitors who deal with relationships law at White Barnes make every effort to understand your needs and requirements at what is generally a very difficult and uncertain time. We endeavour to offer you cost effective legal services and advice to best suit your individual circumstances.

We offer a broad range of legal services in the area of relationships law including:

- *Divorce*
- *Children's matters (residence, contact maintenance and specific issues orders)*
- *Property disputes and settlements*
- *Co-habitation Agreements/pre-nuptial agreements*
- *Termination Agreements*
- *Defacto Property Adjustments*
- *Defacto Consent Agreements*

Recent Developments in Relationships Law:

One aspect of the law that developing rapidly is Defacto Relationships law which in NSW now covers same sex couples and close domestic relationships. The definition of what constitutes a Defacto Relationship in NSW is quite broad and many couples involved in relationships that even 5 years ago would not have been caught by the new provisions, can now seek assistance from the Court.

You should be aware that in the case of Defacto Relationships, an Application to distribute property or an agreement encompassing orders to be made by consent, must be made within 2 years following the conclusion of the relationship.

Further, all disputes concerning children should be brought within the jurisdiction of the Family Court of Australia or the Federal Magistrates Court – regardless of whether the parents are married or in a Defacto Relationship.

The Family Court of Australia is presently undertaking a complete review of its forms and rules in an effort to make the Court more relevant to today's society and simpler for parties to use. New Forms and rules came into force in early 2004.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under the Professional Standards Legislation.