

# What does a family lawyer do for someone going through separation?

written by Tilly Ryan | 19 June 2023



If you are considering separation or have already separated, there are likely many questions swirling around in your head as you grapple with what lies ahead. In this article, we focus on what we believe is important for you to understand and consider as you move through this journey.

Below, you will find answers to the following frequently asked questions:

- What does a family lawyer do?
- How much can I do myself?
- How much does it cost?
- What if I live in the country?
- How do I choose a family lawyer?
- What is the initial consultation all about?
- How do I know that I can trust you?

## What does a family lawyer do?

At SR Family Law, we understand that making the decision to separate can be difficult, and the journey through separation can be an emotional and challenging one. That is why selecting the right family lawyer to assist you on this journey is so important.

Not all family law advice is equal. While there are legal practices that offer multiple services, our family lawyers are experts in the field of family law and as such only provide family law services.

Many people reach out to a family lawyer later in their separation journey, often due to a lack of understanding of what a family lawyer does or can do for them.

Family law relates specifically to the relationship breakdowns of couples (married or not). Family lawyers deal with the division of a couple's finances, the parenting arrangements for their children after separation and help clients obtain divorce orders (if they were married).

Family law also covers the drafting of financial agreements, which parties can put in place at the start of or during their relationship so the division of their assets and liabilities, in the event they one day separate, has already been dealt with.

There is a common misconception that family lawyers' draft wills and assist in estate disputes. We do not. However, if you need assistance in this area, we can refer you to one of the wills and estates lawyers we trust.

The main reasons we hear as to why people don't reach out to family lawyers early on in their separation journey include:

- fear that there will be a perception that they are 'lawyering up' and looking for a battle
- worry that if they see a lawyer early on, the costs will mount up too soon
- lack of understanding about how beneficial early advice can be.

We know that people who come to us early can gain a greater insight into how the family law system works. Understanding that, is the first step in taking control, and taking that step can and often does make the separation journey a far less intimidating and fearful process.

"Tilly made the separation process so easy for me, I came into my initial consultation full of lots of emotions, and I left

feeling back in control. That feeling continued through to the end, which was mutually agreeable, timely and cost-effective.”

- DP, Gold Coast Region

That is why the team at SR Family Law strive to be:

- helpful - we help people navigate the separation process, without Court where possible, but we also possess the requisite skills and experience if litigation is necessary
- flexible - you can tap into us for legal advice when you want it, and we will support and empower you to do what you can to manage your own separation journey if that's your preference
- transparent - you will have a clear understanding of costs from the outset and receive regular updates from our team along the way.

In answering the question 'What does a family lawyer do?' we recognise that broadly speaking, we offer expert family law advice and assistance, like most other family law firms do, however, we feel we do things a bit differently. While changes to the family law system have created processes aimed at limiting costly and protracted litigation, unfortunately we continue to see people led down this path. This is not what we at SR Family Law are about.

We know that it needn't be that way for you, if you are reading this and spending the time to learn about what to expect as you enter the separation journey then you understand this as well.

## How much can I do myself?

Most clients we work with come to us with a clear idea of how 'hands on' they want to be with their family law matter. If not, we take the time to explain what you might be able to do yourself, if staying in the drivers' seat or spending less on legal fees is important to you.

We will equip you with the information that you need to be an active participant in your family law matter, at a level that you are comfortable with. We do this because we understand this is your journey, not ours.

“Thank you Tilly for your clarity around the process, your empathy and support. It is reassuring at a difficult time.”

- CO, Brisbane Region

Some clients prefer to negotiate with the other party directly, deferring to us for advice along the way. Others prefer to hand the reins over to our team entirely. You might find yourself somewhere in between. And that's OK. We can do as much or as little as you like. Our primary goal is to help you navigate your family law journey - however that looks.

## How much does it cost?

Often, people are hesitant to engage a family lawyer as they're worried about costs. At SR Family Law, we offer a free, no obligation initial consultation which, for some of our clients, is all they need to be able to handle things themselves moving forward. For those that do need us, we provide a very clear breakdown of the likely costs moving forward, as well as options they may have available, such as litigation funding or payment plans.

Before you choose to go it alone, because you think you can't afford a lawyer, please reach out. Let's have the conversation. It won't cost you anything.

## What if I live in the country?

Given family law matters are so significant and life-affecting, equity of access to quality family law advice is something we are passionate about - not only financial accessibility, but geographical as well. While our first office space is based in Robina on the Gold Coast, just off the M1, we service clients far and wide. We travel to rural and regional areas of Queensland and northern New South Wales regularly to ensure all our clients, regardless of where they live, have access to the advice and support they need for their family law matters.

We feel very strongly about ensuring that those in regional and rural areas, who work from dawn until dusk and don't have the ability to travel long distances to meet with someone during office hours, have access to expert family law advice. Having one of our lawyers meet you at your property or, as we say, at your farmgate, at a time that suits you, is all part of our Farmgate Family Law® service.

If you wish to learn more about how far-reaching our service is, we invite you to take a look at our dedicated [Farmgate Family Law®](#) page.

# How do I choose a family lawyer?

It is important to remember that getting a family lawyer involved in your separation journey does not mean that you're destined to end up in court. It also does not mean that the journey ahead must be confrontational or costly.

When you first speak to any family lawyer, it is important that you share what it is you are looking for in a legal representative. Ask questions about their experience and about their approach to family law matters, to make sure you are aligned. It is important that you're on the same page.

We know we're not for everyone, and that's OK. If we're not a good fit, we're happy to refer clients to other family lawyers who might be. At the end of the day, we need to be working towards a common goal for the lawyer-client relationship to be a successful one.

We approach family law matters a little differently to some. Our aim is to get you through the process as quickly as possible, while keeping important relationships intact. We can, and do, go to Court if required, but it's always a last resort. We don't like the emotional or financial toll that litigation takes on our clients, so rest assured, we will do everything we can to resolve your matter before we recommend proceedings.

Consider our recommendations for how to choose a family lawyer, so that you retain a family lawyer that will best meet your needs and whose actions will align with your values and the approach you wish to take with your family law journey.

## What is the initial consultation all about?

The initial consultation is all about getting to know you and your family law matter, so we can provide advice about the range of outcomes, your options moving forward and what it all might cost. We also take the time to understand what you need from us, as that differs from client to client. Some prefer us to take charge, while others prefer us to hang back and provide what they need only when they need it.

At SR Family Law we currently offer a free one-hour initial consultation with one of our experienced family lawyers, valued at up to \$520. This provides us with an opportunity to gather the information we need, provide the advice you're after and figure out how we might be able to work together to achieve what you're looking to achieve moving forward. It also allows you to figure out whether we are a good fit.

During the initial consultation, we also identify who else you might benefit from connecting with at various stages of your family law journey. We have a large network of trusted professionals, from accountants and financial advisers, to counsellors, mortgage brokers, real estate agents and even hairdressers (because sometimes, a good cut and colour works wonders for the soul).

We're told that it's our 'holistic' approach to family law and to caring for our clients that sets us apart. To us, it's a no-brainer. If you're stressed about updating your will, or the process involved with selling a house, or removing yourself as a director of a company you know very little about, it can be difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. By connecting you with the people that will help ease these concerns, that light shines brighter.

"I've never felt more comfortable having to discuss what can be such uncomfortable topics. The girls were all so warm and welcoming, and they really helped me understand my matter. So happy I found them!"

- PW, South Burnett Region

## How do I know that I can trust you?

Clear and consistent communication in family law matters is key. We keep our clients updated and regularly check in to make sure we're still on the same page. Our values - integrity, empathy, reliability, and pragmatism - are more than just words on a website to us. We hold them very dear. You can count on us to do what we say we're going to do, when we say we're going to do it.

We also work as a team, so when you engage our firm, you get the benefit of our collective experience. We meet regularly to discuss and review our matters, to ensure all possible avenues are explored, and viewpoints obtained. This also means that if your lawyer is in Court or attending a mediation and you have a question that you need answered, there's a good chance another one of our team members will be able to assist you.

One final point that we believe is important to remember - this time in your life will pass. You will come out the other side, and we will do everything we can to empower and support you through the process in the meantime. Being able to draw a line in the sand and move forward with your life is something we help people like you achieve every day. It is why SR Family Law exists.

*Free initial consultation: Contact us to discuss your personal situation.*

*We hope you have found this information to be of use in giving you an understanding of our firm and the work we do specifically in relation to Family Law and matters related to Family Law. We know that every family law matter is unique, and your personal circumstances require you to receive personalised legal advice that considers your specific needs, objectives, and circumstances. We strongly encourage you to contact our office to talk to us about your personal circumstances and how this information specifically applies to your situation. We welcome you to get in touch with us to book a free initial consultation with our team.*

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*We are a boutique legal firm focused on family law. Our team has a depth of experience and expertise that cannot be matched by legal practices that work across numerous areas of law.*

*Wherever you are in the separation process, our team can assist you. Book your free initial consultation with one of our family lawyers today, phone during office hours on 07 56 466 466 or book online via our meeting calendar [here](#).*

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