

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOUR INITIAL CONSULTATION

Being prepared for your initial consultation with your family lawyer and throughout the process will save you time and money.

Barton Family Lawyers has prepared a pre-consultation checklist for your benefit. The checklist consists of information and documents that you should bring with you to your first appointment to ensure you are prepared and to gain the most benefit possible.

It is highly recommended (but not essential) that you bring the following with you to your initial consultation (particularly in the case of divorce and financial matters):

- ✓ A list of any specific questions you have
- ✓ A copy of your marriage certificate
- ✓ Children's and former spouses names and dates of birth
- ✓ A list of all assets and their value including e.g. real estate, cars, jewellery, appliances
- ✓ A list of all debts including e.g. mortgages, credit cards, loans, tax liabilities
- ✓ A list of all superannuation of you and your former spouse e.g. accumulation accounts, defined benefit accounts, pension accounts, self managed superannuation funds
- ✓ Documentary evidence of the value of the above assets, liabilities and superannuation of you and your former spouse and also evidence as to your respective incomes, including: -
  - Bank Statements for all personal & joint bank accounts, incl mortgage accounts;
  - Market appraisals of your home and any other real estate;
  - payslips for 6 months for you and your spouse;
  - tax returns and notices of assessment for the previous three years;
  - current superannuation statement;
  - redbook valuations for all vehicles of you and your spouse;
  - valuations of any other assets
  - financial documents relating to any business/trust operated by you/your spouse or which either of you have an interest in including the trust deed, tax returns and financial statements for the past three years.
  - credit card/loan statements;
  - documentation proving the value of any other assets

- ✓ A list of the assets owned by you and your former spouse at the commencement of the relationship and evidence proving the value of those assets at the time (if available)
- ✓ If you suffer from any health issues, a list of those health issues and medical documentation in relation to those health issues and your current prescription medication/treatment
- ✓ Copies of any life insurance policies that you and your former spouse have;
- ✓ If you and your former spouse are divorced, a copy of the divorce certificate;
- ✓ A list of your financial contributions of significance other than by way of your and your former spouse's income, and documentary evidence of them, including e.g. inheritances, gifts from friends/family, lotto wins etc;
- ✓ A list of your non-financial contributions of significance e.g. renovations, child caring duties, family member support (e.g. if a person is sick/impaired) and yard work;
- ✓ The name of your former spouse's solicitor
- ✓ Any correspondence you have received from your former partner/their solicitor

If you do not have any or all of the above, do not put off obtaining legal advice from us.

Our experienced family lawyers will be able to properly advise you even if you do not have the documents, so long as you are able to provide a rough idea of the assets, liabilities and superannuation and a history of your respective financial and non-financial contributions during the relationship.

It is very important that you obtain legal advice as soon as possible after separation or if you are thinking about separating so that you are aware of your rights and entitlements and any time limitations.

This will enable you to make smart decisions following separation that will save you time and money.