



Rafton
FAMILY LAWYERS

Winter '10 Newsletter



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A message from Rafton Family Lawyers

Hello again and welcome to the latest edition of the Rafton Family Lawyers newsletter. In this edition, we are pleased to announce the opening of two new Rafton branches and we introduce our new Office Manager who joined the team in late 2009 and has already proven to be worth her weight in gold!

We also re-cap on what was another successful Children's Law Conference and remind clients and associates of the various approaches we can apply when resolving a family law dispute.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our offices soon!

Regards,
Kate Rafton

New Branch Offices

Parramatta

The team here at Rafton Family Lawyers is excited to announce the opening of our long awaited Parramatta branch office.

This branch will service our clients in that region and provide a convenient point of access for our solicitors when they are attending the Courts in Parramatta (for both Family Law and Children's Court work).

The new office is conveniently located right next door to the Parramatta Family Court and directly across the road from the Children's Court where we attend in our DOHS matters. The address is:

**Shop 3 & 4 Jessie Street Centre
2-12 Macquarie Street
Parramatta**

(enter via 1 George Street, right next door to the restaurant Brunetti's which has just opened)

If you would like an appointment at our Parramatta office please contact us. We will be officially opening in June but the office is fully operational now.

Fairfield

We are also pleased to announce the opening of another office in Fairfield which will service the growing number of clients we have in South Western Sydney who are currently travelling over to Richmond or Penrith to meet with us.

The Fairfield office will be headed by our experienced family law and care and protection solicitor, Rene Forshaw. Rene has worked with Kate Rafton for over seven years and is very experienced in all aspects of family law. She is also of Assyrian background so she understands the issues and can help with any language barriers facing some of our Assyrian clients in that area. Rene will also be working out of the Family Courts at Parramatta and the Campbelltown Court in respect to the DOHS matters.

The new Fairfield branch office is located above the Crescent Hotel just a short walk from the train station and from the shopping centre off Smart Street. The address is:

**81 The Crescent
Fairfield**
(entry off Smart Street)

Please contact our office on 1300 4FAMILY if you would like to make an appointment at our Fairfield office.

2010 Children's Law Conference - A Huge Success!

We are pleased to advise that our annual Children's Law conference was held on Saturday 8th May, 2010.

The conference is proudly sponsored by Rafton Family Lawyers and provides much needed information and education to lawyers in this area about the field of Care and Protection. It is the largest conference of its type in New South Wales and we had over 120 delegates in attendance at this year's event.

Our special guest speaker was Dr Howard Bath, the current Commissioner for Children in

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Welcome to the team

There is a new office manager at Rafton Family Lawyers!

Jo Scott has over 36 years' legal experience and started with our firm in November 2009. Prior to joining Raftons Jo headed the family law section of a medium sized firm at Penrith and has worked in various legal positions during the course of her career. Jo is Kate's direct secretary and the first point of enquiry for clients and contacts. She has been an invaluable asset to the firm since joining and we are very pleased to have Jo on board. We particularly welcome her skills and her wealth of experience, especially in the management and flow of work within the office and in dealing with clients directly to ensure their matter runs smoothly.



Children's Law Conference 2010

[Family Law Handbook](#)
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the Northern Territory, who was appointed after the enquiry into the protection of Aboriginal children from sexual abuse was ordered by the Howard Government in 2008. The enquiry and paper released was also known as the "Children are Sacred Report". Dr Bath provided an interesting and insightful overview of the issues he has faced for our opening speech.

We then proceeded to cover topics from a range of areas including Care and Protection Law practice, drug and alcohol issues, sexual abuse issues, care plans and Aboriginal children in care.

Plans are already under way for next year's Conference which will be held again in winter at the lovely Sebel Resort and Spa located in the Hawkesbury Valley so any suggestions for topics or guest speakers are welcome!

For more information on next year's conference, please contact our staff on tel: 02 4578 5611.

The Importance of Mediation in Family Law

Rafton Family Lawyers is a very strong advocate for the use of mediation in family law disputes. At any initial consultation with our solicitors regarding family law issues we will always encourage our clients to consider this option and try to arrange and attend a mediation if it is considered appropriate in each circumstance.

We currently have a range of private mediators we refer clients to who can hold mediations within about 14 days for those wanting a quick turn around. Alternatively, the Government funds free mediation services via their Family Relationship Centre offices which are located at Penrith, Blacktown, Fairfield and Parramatta. Attending a Family Relationship Centre for mediation is free for clients who do not wish to fund the mediation themselves.

If you would like more information on mediation in family law, please do not hesitate to contact one of our solicitors.

Working Together to Resolve Family Law Disputes

Rafton Family Lawyers is a member of the Western Sydney Collaborative Family Lawyers Practice Group. This practice group was formed in 2007 by a group of local lawyers in the Western Sydney region who have expertise and training in the collaborative law process.

Collaboration involves each of the parties and their respective solicitors working together to reach an amicable settlement in a timely and cost effective manner, avoiding the need for costly litigation. In fact, the collaborative law process is specifically designed to eliminate litigation and involves parties entering into an agreement that they will not instruct their current solicitors to proceed to court if there is no resolution via the collaborative process.

Collaborative lawyers work together with clients to reach an amicable resolution that focuses on the needs of the parties, their children and their respective financial positions.

We have had considerable success with this approach and a number of our clients have reached amicable agreements without the need for litigation. If you are considering separation or divorce we invite you to contact our office for further information or to make an appointment to discuss this process in more detail. You can also log onto the Collaborative Family Lawyers website at www.sydneycollaborativefamilylawyers.com.au for details.



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