

Andersons Solicitors on FiveAA What you need to know when navigating a separation

Listen to the interview:

https://www.andersons.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/fiveaa_andersons-family-law-full-interview-2026-02-19-14-17-25.mp3

Our lawyers Ryan Thomas and Stefanie Wheare joined Stacey Lee on FiveAA for a wide-ranging conversation about family law, separation and what people really need to know when a relationship breaks down.

The discussion covered everything from property settlements and parenting arrangements to inheritance, informal agreements and why getting early legal advice makes all the difference.

Ryan and Stefanie received many calls following the chat and we have captured the key topics

discussed here.

Family law covers more than you might think

Stefanie explained that the Family Law team at Andersons helps clients through almost every aspect of separation – the divorce process, division of assets and liabilities (real estate, businesses, cars, superannuation, cryptocurrency and debts), parenting arrangements, spousal maintenance and child support.

It is not just parents the team can help, either. Grandparents concerned about time with their grandchildren, particularly where a separation has disrupted those relationships, can also seek advice.

When should you see a family lawyer?

The short answer: the sooner, the better. People come to Andersons at all stages, from before they have even separated through to years after the fact. Those who wait the longest tend to face the most complexity – new assets, new debts, new partners and sometimes new children.

As a general rule, once you have separated or made the decision to, that is the time to get tailored advice so you know your rights and are not disadvantaged down the track.

Amicable does not mean you can skip the lawyer

Many couples who separate amicably assume they do not need legal help. Ryan acknowledged that working things out together is a great starting point, but recommended getting advice at two key moments: at the beginning, so you know what is fair, and once you have reached an agreement, so it can be made legally binding.

Without that step, even a signed agreement written at the kitchen table is what is known as an “informal agreement” – meaning either party can change their mind at any time.

Inheritance is not automatically protected

Ryan explained that family law looks at all assets and liabilities at the time of settlement – including any inheritance received, even after separation. If you have not formalised your agreement, your former partner could still have a claim.

For those worried about passing down their estate, Andersons' Wills and Estates team can work alongside the Family Law team to develop strategies that protect the intended beneficiaries.

Navigating arrangements for children

Both Ryan and Stefanie have young children themselves and understand the pressure that comes with making decisions about kids during a separation. Their approach is to guide clients toward a resolution wherever possible – through negotiation, mediation or creative solutions drawn from experience.

They can also give honest advice about how a court is likely to rule, which often helps parties reach agreement without going to trial.

What to expect from a first appointment

Andersons offers 90-minute initial appointments designed to give clients a full picture. The team works through the client's relationship, finances and children, provides tailored advice and sets out a clear roadmap of next steps.

The most common feedback after that first session? "I'm so glad I did this" and "I don't know why it took me so long." Taking that first step can feel daunting, but it often brings real relief.

Get in touch

If you or someone you know is going through a separation or thinking about one, now is the time to get professional advice.

Contact Andersons Solicitors, complete our enquiry form and we will respond to you as soon as possible.

The information in this article is general in nature and was accurate at the time of publication. Laws and circumstances can change. For advice specific to your situation, please seek professional legal advice.