



DOING IT  
DIFFERENTLY !!

## Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice (ICP)

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# The Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice (ICP) model

- **Difference** – A non adversarial process with lawyers.
- **Like** – mediation but with a team of professionals, specially trained in collaboration; working together with the family to resolve matters in dispute when they separate.
- At RANSW the team consists of two lawyers, one impartial coach, one financial neutral, and a child consultant.
- The professional team has already established working relationships through a Practice Group - before the clients join the team.
- The coach and child consultant roles can be combined when appropriate (where the coach is also a Child Consultant).

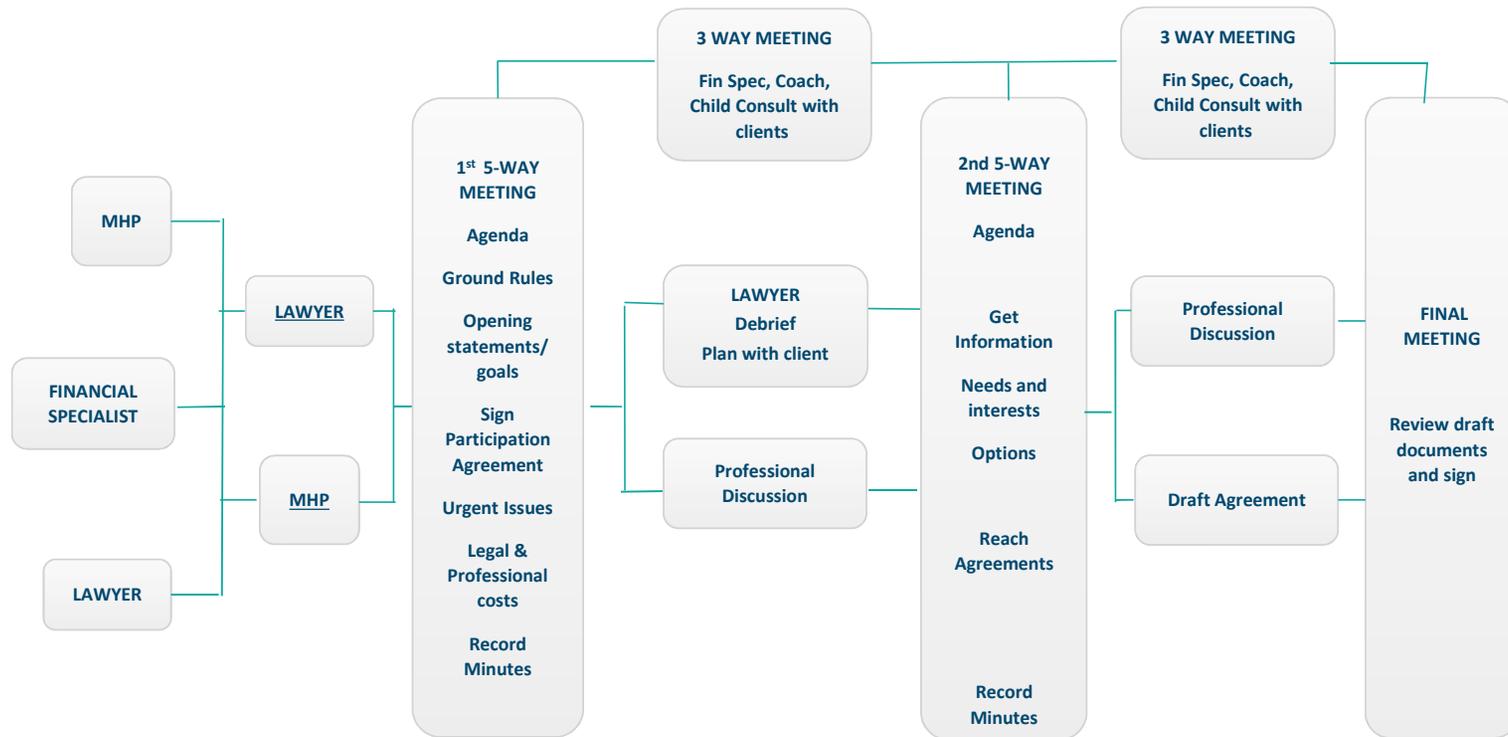
# Cornerstones of the ICP model

- All participants sign a 'Participation Agreement' which involves a shared commitment to resolve their issues without going to court.
- In this agreement the parties also agree that information can be shared amongst the professionals. This supports a fully transparent process.
- NB: If the parties do not reach agreement they will need to find new lawyers.
- Engagement with client as a team from the beginning is paramount.
- The Practice Group is central – the team builds on relationships formed at regular practice group meetings; developing understanding of and respect for each others' roles, skills, expectations before they work on any case together.

# Why interdisciplinary?

- This is a non adversarial process.
- The transparency ICP relieves client stress and suspicion in relation to secret tactics (which might be real or imagined) that they might believe that the other is employing to get the better of them.
- Both lawyers have full knowledge of the other party's story and perceptions and so can advise their clients more effectively in relation to what might be in the best interests of their children and the now separated family.
- The parties get to know each others lawyers, who work together with them to address the issues, rather than against each other to gain advantage. This builds trust and an agreed pool of facts to work with.
- This is an interest based rather than a positional based model.
- Different expertise from the different professionals is brought to bear on the issues (coaches, financial, legal).
- Each professional understands and respects what the others bring to the process. There is no space for clients to 'divide the team'.

# ICP Flow chart



# Why is Interdisciplinary valuable for Children?

- The research tells us that what harms children most is ongoing conflict between their parents, more than separation itself. As a non adversarial process involving lawyers and other professionals with additional collaborative training this provides a strong support for positive post separation parenting.
- ICP provides a unique context in which to include the value of Child Inclusive Practice presented earlier.
- What differentiates Child Inclusive Practice in mediation compared with ICP, is that in mediation legal advice is usually given outside the process. This means that each lawyer potentially provides their advice from the traditional positional perspective and having only heard one side of the story. As a result parents are likely to receive conflicting legal advice, which can add to their stress and result in less attentive parenting. Not great for children.
- ICP is generally a shorter, less costly process than traditional litigation. This helps minimise costs, conflict, and ongoing stress, which allows parents to parent more effectively.

# Why is Interdisciplinary valuable for Children?

- The context of ICP is unique because...
- Both lawyers hear both sides of the story and provide their advice in front of the other lawyer and their client in a non adversarial environment. This results in much greater understanding and much less stress on parents.
- Where there is stress, parents have a coach to assist them in managing the stress.
- Everyone is made aware of the feedback from the Child Consultant. This can then be taken into account by both parents and their lawyers.
- In the RANSW model, the coach is always a mediator or FDRP and so parenting plans can be drafted initially without the cost of lawyer involvement - thereby saving costs.

# Summary of the value of ICP for children

The value of ICP for children is;

- As a non adversarial process it supports building a strong, healthy parenting alliance.
- Real time legal advice is provided in an interest based approach and non adversarial environment.
- It helps minimise the stress on parents so that they can continue attentive parenting.
- It supports listening to the voice of the child/ren and helping parents make their agreements in light of what their children have said.



# Questions and comments

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