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Australian-first family law firm launched

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A Canberra lawyer has founded what she describes as Australia's first online family law firm dedicated to formalising separating couples' agreements in a way that is simple, fast and affordable.

 (<mailto:?subject=Australian-first family law firm launched&body=https://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/sme-law/21304-australian-first-family-law-firm-launched>)
Family lawyer Siobhan Mullins has just unveiled Separate Together, an online law firm that works with couples to formalise agreements reached after separation.

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According to a statement from the firm, technology has enabled Separate Together to service separating Australians in regional and capital city areas right across Australia via its online platform, and from the comfort and convenience of one's own home.

Ms Mullins said the idea around Separate Together came after she discovered that 70 per cent of litigated family law matters were resolved before trial with couples reaching an agreement.

She thought there had to be a better way to separate without "unnecessary court intervention" and "expensive lawyers".

"We're about simplifying the separation process with easy to understand step-by-step instructions about the process and providing easy accessibility to quality family law legal services at affordable prices," said Ms Mullins.

Ms Mullins said Separate Together works by providing individuals with independent legal advice about their entitlements under the relevant laws.

"We also prepare the necessary draft documents on their behalf to formalise the agreements once reached with their partner," she added.

"In the alternative, we work with separating couples to prepare the draft agreement documents, with the scope of our retainer being limited to that work alone.

"Such documents include Consent Orders (Financial & Parenting), Parenting Plans, Binding Child Support Agreements, Divorce Applications and Binding Financial Agreements in relation to spouse maintenance after separation."

Ms Mullins said Separate Together is different from the "run-of-the-mill traditional family law firms" in three key areas.

"Firstly, Separate Together does not go to court. We are dedicated settlement lawyers, specialising in agreements only. We do not represent clients in court proceedings. No other such firm exists in Australia, let alone operates online," she said.

"Secondly, our services are affordable. In operating as an online firm, the overheads are not as high as a traditional physical law firm. [I have] therefore made the decision to pass those savings onto separating Australians, who have the option of engaging us on a fixed price or competitive low hourly rates.

"Lastly, unlike other traditional family lawyers, we will act for a separating couple. The scope of our retainer in those circumstances is limited to the preparation of draft agreement documents and is on the basis of jointly agreed instructions."

Ultimately, Ms Mullins said Separate Together's approach is unique as it focuses on reaching an end agreement that both parties can benefit from.

"Our approach is for separating couples to work together. Discussing the separation with all parties is key to reaching an outcome," she said.

"It's not our style to escalate tensions or encourage conflict.

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“Separation shouldn’t be complex, time-consuming and expensive. Separating individuals and couples can choose to work with Separate Together to make the separation process one that is simple, fast and affordable.”

Separate Together has recently been named as a finalist in the Design Award category in Lawyers Weekly’s Legal Website Awards, in partnership with Zaliet.

The awards aim to recognise the firm which has the best digital footprint across five core categories: the Design Award, User Experience Award, Use of Technology Award, Content/Copywriting Award and Photography Award.

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Voting will close on 23 June 2017.

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