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## **Collaborative Law**

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Collaborative law is one of the processes you can use to reach agreement. Other options include mediation, negotiation, arbitration and litigation.

Each party is represented by a lawyer trained in collaborative law. The aim of collaborative law is to help you reach agreement with dignity and respect. Most of the work is done in four-way meetings which means the process is more open than the usual negotiation process. You have more control over the process and the outcome than you do if the case is dealt with in the court system. Meetings are held with a mutual problem-solving atmosphere.

Before starting the collaborative law process both parties and their lawyers sign an agreement. The parties agree to fully disclose all details of their financial position. They also agree that if, as rarely happens, the collaborative law process is unsuccessful, they will each obtain new lawyers. This encourages open negotiations where parties are not afraid to consider all options.

Collaborative law recognises that only a tiny fraction of cases filed in the courts reach a final hearing. Most cases settle before that time.

By using the collaborative law process, parties are helped, not just to reach agreement, but also to improve their ability to listen to each other and negotiate post-separation issues.

Jacky Campbell, Wendy Kayler-Thomson and Belle Lane of Forte Family Lawyers are all trained collaborative lawyers. If you are interested in the process we can provide you with more information.