

## **Bell Legal Group Separation checklist**

### **Generally**

- Get legal advice early on from a lawyer who practices in Family Law
- Review your Will, Powers of Attorney and Binding Nominations
- List in detail all assets and liabilities whether owned solely by either party, jointly or even by a third party (e.g. company)
- Work through your new budget.
- Set up a new email address.
- Set up a PO Box for mail.
- Safeguard important documents such as:
  - Birth certificates, marriage certificate, education certificates, passports (including children's passports), statements from banks, superannuation companies, insurers, car registration, tax returns, business papers
  - Take copies – you could even store scanned copies online
  - Keep the originals of your documents in a safe place where they cannot be accessed by your former partner
- Change all of your passwords for e.g. computers, tablets, phones and online accounts.
- Backup your phone messages and emails.
- If you are moving out, contact the utility companies (e.g. electricity, gas, telephone) to remove your name from the account.
- If you are renting advise the letting agent about the new circumstances and look to get any updated lease in your sole name (if you wish to stay)
- If you receive or could receive any government benefits contact the agency concerned about the separation (e.g. Centrelink)
- If there are children of the relationship:
  - Try to reach arrangements for post-separation parenting if the relationship with your ex is still amicable. These could form the basis for a Parenting Plan or consent orders (talk to your solicitor about these)
  - Find out about your Child Support obligations or entitlements by contacting the Department of Human Services. You can access information on their website here:

**<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/parents-guide-child-support>**

- Tell any school(s) about the separation, how the children are coping and any changes in day to day arrangements or contact information

### **Bank Accounts, Credit Cards, Mortgage and other loans**

- Tell the bank(s) about the change of circumstances. Agree payment plans for the short term if needed.
- Change your PIN numbers and Internet banking passwords
- Open up a new account in your sole name (if you don't already have one). Ensure payments of salary, pensions etc go to this new account.
- Consider closing joint accounts – including drawdown or redraw facilities – or at least make sure any debits need the authority of both account holders.

### **Social media**

- Avoid using social media such as Facebook if you can.
- But if you must stay online, then we suggest you don't post anything negative about your ex-partner – as later on this may be used as evidence in their case against you.

### **Safety**

- If you have experienced domestic violence or are worried that you may be then contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) for advice.
- If you are in danger contact the police on 000

### ***IMPORTANT NOTE***

This checklist is for general information only and is not legal advice nor should it be taken to be. To obtain legal advice specific to your circumstances please contact Alex Wynn, Senior Associate – Family Law, Bell Legal Group on **07 5597 3366** or by email to **[awynn@belllegal.com.au](mailto:awynn@belllegal.com.au)**