

Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction **Information for Parents Returning to the ACT**

A number of sources of assistance are available to parents returning to Australia with children.

Legal advice

When you return to Australia you may need legal advice in relation to arrangements for your child. You should contact a legal practitioner, the Legal Aid Commission or a community legal centre. A list of community legal centres can be found at <http://www.naclc.org.au> or you can contact the Legal Aid Commission on +61 2 6243 3417.

Financial support

If you need financial assistance you should contact Centrelink on +61 3 6222 3455 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday. Emergency grants of financial assistance may be available from Centrelink. If you wish to seek child support from your former spouse or partner you should contact the Child Support Agency on +61 131 272.

Accommodation

If you need emergency accommodation, the St Vincent De Paul Society (+61 2 6282 2722) or the Salvation Army (+61 2 6273 2211) may be able to help.

Enforcement of Undertakings

Your former spouse or partner may have undertaken to provide you with accommodation and financial support on your return to Australia with your child. If this undertaking is not honoured by your former spouse or partner, you may wish to seek legal advice from a legal practitioner, Legal Aid, community legal centre, or the Family Court or the Child Support Agency as appropriate.

Domestic Violence

If you decide to return to Australia with your child and you are concerned about your personal safety upon your return, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service Inc (+61 2 6280 0900) can provide you with information about obtaining a Domestic Violence order as soon as you return to Australia. You should also disclose your concerns about Family Violence to other professionals such as Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners, Lawyers and the Courts.

Airfares

If you are unable to pay airfares for your child to return to Australia, we will ask your former spouse or partner in Australia seeking the return of the child to pay the airfares. If your former spouse or partner is unable to pay, the Commonwealth Government will meet the cost of a single economy airfare for your child to return to Australia.

If you are accompanying your child on their return, assistance may be provided for your airfare. However, you will need to sign a repatriation agreement promising to repay the cost of their repatriation to the Commonwealth Government. For more information contact the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department for advice on +61 2 6141 4770.

International Social Service

ISS provides a professional casework and advocacy service to individuals and families who are experiencing problems as a result of being separated across two or more countries. ISS can be contacted on 1300 657 843 or +61 3 9614 8755 during business hours, or you can access their website at <http://www.iss.org.au>.

Family Relationships Advice Line / Family Relationships Online

The Family Relationship Advice Line is a national telephone service established to assist families affected by relationship or separation issues. The Advice Line provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It can also refer callers to local services that can provide assistance. The Family Relationship Advice Line (1800 050 321) is available from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday, and 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday (local time), except national public holidays.

Family Relationships Online provides information about family relationships and separation, and helps people find services across Australia. It also allows families to find out about a range of services that can assist them to manage relationship issues, including agreeing on appropriate arrangements for children after parents separate. You can access the website at <http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au>.