

Sonia's experience has seen her service the needs of the Hunter Valley in various areas, particularly in the areas of family conflict (including property, residence and contact disputes) and workplace disputes (including grievance, anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety issues, contract law and negligence).

With Sonia's wealth of experience in mediation services you can feel confident you are in capable hands to explore the issues with your disputing party with a view to brainstorming your own solutions in a professional and safe atmosphere which may enable you to escape the delay, emotional heartache and legal cost of drawn out legal proceedings

Sonia offers disputing parties a free one-hour pre-mediation conference to enable the parties to determine whether mediation is a suitable process for the resolution of their dispute.

"Mediation has an 85% success rate."

- Scott Pettersen, LEADR

If you are in dispute with someone (whether it be with your spouse or Defacto partner, your neighbour, your children, your work colleagues, your business partners, your employer or your employees) contact Sonia on phone: 4926 1944 for your free pre-mediation conference now before you spend any more of your valuable time, energy and money in fighting the battle!



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**DO YOU SEE THE YOUNG LADY
OR THE OLD WOMAN?**



At the heart of all disputes is a different perspective.

Mediation is an alternative process for the resolution of dispute.



About us

Established in 1916, McDonald Johnson Lawyers is a respected Newcastle Law Firm with advanced expertise and skills in a range of specialist areas law.

Located in the heart of the central business district of Newcastle, McDonald Johnson Lawyers has successfully fostered and built strong connections and relationships with other Hunter professionals, Government Departments and the business community.

McDonald Johnson recognises that the technological age and the consequent information explosion has had a large impact upon our legal system.

A changing world requires changing responses in terms of methods of dispute resolution.

Traditionally, our method of dispute resolution has been through our Courts.

We are happy to provide a new and innovative alternative to this traditional method of dispute resolution by offering a mediation service.

Why Mediation?

Mediation is innovative in its approach to dispute resolution and can be a process used not only for disputes which lead to legal litigation but also for interpersonal disputes.

Mediation is an informal process which is at the opposite end of the spectrum to formal

courtroom litigation. Mediation can be used at any stage during the development of the dispute. It is a process which is owned by the parties to the dispute. The mediator encourages the parties to become responsible for their own futures by taking their issues into their own hands and brain storming solutions. Put simply, mediation is a process which is aimed at increasing people's choices.

As an easy illustration let us examine the situation of Dick and Dora arguing over who owns an orange.

Dick and Dora might go through the legal process and invest well spent time and money on their lawyer to present their case to the Court with a view to persuading the Judge that the orange belongs to them. At the end of the day one party wins and is granted proprietorship of the orange and the other party loses and gets no part of the orange and may be even ordered to pay the winner's costs.

Often matters that are proceeding towards the Court, settle on the Courtroom steps by way of the solicitors negotiating a compromise. This is called position bargaining where Dick and Dora might settle for a half an orange each or Dick might settle for a quarter and give three quarters to Dora.

In mediation, however, the issues at the heart of a problem can be heard in their emotional context and the core problems isolated within this framework. As a result it may be that, in our example, Dick requires the skin of the orange to bake a cake and Dora actually wants the inner part of the orange to make

juice. The solution is obvious and neither party needs to compromise.

Mediation is not a process which is aimed at compromise. It is a process which is aimed at facilitating frank, honest discussion between parties to properly explore the issues in the dispute. It is a process which is designed to increase the choices available to people with a view to creating mutually acceptable solutions.

Why Sonia?

We are pleased to introduce **Sonia Anderson**, one of our partners, as a fully Accredited Mediator with LEADR (Leading Edge Alternative Dispute Resolvers).



Sonia has also completed several other mediation courses since 2002.

She has been involved in a number of mediations and is keen to assist parties who are in dispute to expand their options and choices for their mutual satisfaction.

Sonia was admitted as a solicitor to the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1984 and as a solicitor to the High Court of Australia in 1985. She has 19 years experience in dispute resolution through the justice system and was accredited by the Law Society of New South Wales as a specialist in 1996.