



## MONEY & RELATIONSHIPS

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These days, there are fewer families in which the sole breadwinner also looks after all the finances without any involvement of their partner. As individuals and as a society, both parties in a relationship have a say in a couple's financial situation and an understanding of what is going on.

While pre-nuptial agreements don't sound very romantic they do make sense, particularly where one partner has considerably more assets than the other before marriage, or is likely to accumulate assets faster due to higher earning capacity. Such agreements have had a formal legal standing in Australia since 2000 but it is important both partners seek legal advice, as these agreements can be set aside by the courts if they are found to be unjust or unreasonable.

However, even more important than a legal agreement is a full and open understanding of your joint financial affairs, and mutual agreement of how income will be shared and expenses paid.

Whether you are already living together or planning to, some of the important points to discuss openly include:

- If you are planning a wedding – how will the costs be split?
- If one partner is expecting an inheritance, or some other lump sum, discuss how it will be used and whether it will be kept in one name or shared.
- Plan a budget for income and expenditure that you can both agree on.
- Be sure to cover the costs of children from previous relationships.
- Will you have joint bank accounts and credit cards and how will bills be paid?

Like most issues that arise in relationships, the best way to avoid future problems is to have an honest and open discussion on financial matters early in your relationship.

Helping you build yours.

