

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Supplementary
Submission No: 1253

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary:

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

7TH August, 2003

Dear Committee Members,

Please find attached a submission sent on the 6th August 2003. Upon re-reading our submission we envisage that the members of the committee may not appreciate the range of organisations that are represented in the Family Law Foundation. We considered that it would be useful for members of the committee to be aware of the great scope of organisations involved.

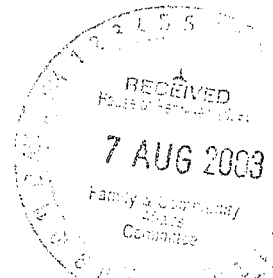
The Family Law Foundation commenced in 2002, following concerns about the myths and misunderstanding in the community about Family law matters. Subsequently, the heads of the three major family law mediation providers invited potentially interested organisations to attend a meeting to discuss their concerns. Almost everyone invited attended. The list of organisations who attended this meeting is attached.

At this initial meeting, the Chief Justice of Western Australian the Honourable David Malcolm accepted an invitation to open proceedings by addressing the gathering. The outcome of the meeting was a unanimous mandate from those represented, to form the Family Law Foundation. Also attached, is a copy of the Foundation's 'Aims and Philosophy'.

The Commonwealth Attorney General's Department has advised that it views the Foundation as being a model for similar organisations in other parts of Australia to improved community understanding on family law issues. The Attorney General provided us with an \$10, 000 seed grant to assist the Foundation in carrying out its objectives.

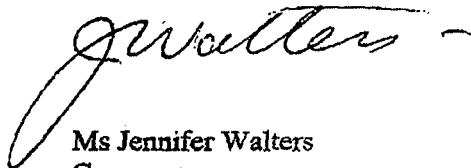
The Inaugural Steering Committee consists of the following :

- Relationships Australia
- Centrecare
- Anglicare
- Community Legal Centre(s)
- The Law Society of WA
- Legal Aid Western Australia -
- WACOSS
- Dads @ Lifeline



- Association of Lawyers for Children
- Women's Refuge Group
- Unions WA

Yours faithfully,



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FAMILY LAW FOUNDATION

**Initial Meeting, Thursday 26 September 4.30pm,
Alexander Library Theatre**

ATTENDANCE LIST

Chief Justice David Malcolm	Supreme Court WA
Ian Carter	Anglicare
Jennie Hannan	Anglicare
Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Karri Hillier	Centrecare
Joe Goerke	Centrecare
Gordon Melsom	Relationships Australia
Margaret Halsmith	Relationships Australia
Chief Justice Holden	Family Court of WA
Stephen Thackray	Family Court of WA
John Mallon	Family Court of WA
Linda Richardson	Womens Policy Office
Joan Malpass	Womens Policy Office
Sue Bowers	CPSU
Bernadette Bloxham	CPSU
Michael Thorne	Social Policy Section, DCD
Stephen Kaye	Social Policy Section, DCD
Glenda Scott	Child Support Agency
Jacinta Dunn	Child Support Agency
Jenny Walters	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre
Karen Merrin	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre
Helen Stamp	Gosnells Community Legal Centre
Suzanne Holgate	Gosnells Community Legal Centre
Paul Kerin	Family Court Counselling
Tracey Gillett	Family Court Counselling
Chris Slattery	Legal Aid
Jasmine Shawcross	Legal Aid
Michael Hovane	Legal Aid
Joy Taylor	Legal Aid
Lynne Williams	Domestic Violence Children's Counselling Service

Kedy Krystall	Pat Giles Centre
Noel Giblett	Lifeline (Lone Fathers)
Rob Bell Julie Roberts	Dept. of Community Development Dept. of Community Development
Jennifer Gardner	School of Social Work, Curtin University
Pauline Phillips	Family Violence Coordinating Committee
Jo Buontempo	Sussex Street Community Law Service
Leanne Barron	WACOSS
Steve Heath	The Magistrate's Court
Dave Robinson	Unions WA
Ria Cusmano	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Penelope Gifes Jane Crisford	Women's Lawyers Assoc WLA & WA Bar Assoc
Michael Cole	Law Society
Lea Anderson	Women's Law Centre
Miles Kunzli	Human Rights WA
Linda Wennstron	CLAC Fremantle
Chief Magistrate Heath	Magistry
Ian Ozanne	Perth's Men's Group
Moirra Rayner	Equal Opportunities Commission
Clare Thompson	President, Law Society
Lanie Chopping	Gay & Lesbian Counselling Service
Angie Hartwig	Women's Refuge Group
Lisa Young Di Sedgewick	Murdoch University Law School Murdoch University Law School
Brett Degold Maggie Woodhead	Family Court Forum Family Court Forum
Genevieve Errey	Domestic Violence Prevention Unit

THE FAMILY LAW FOUNDATION

PHILOSOPHY

The need for balance in community discussion of family law issues and a focus on the rights of the child.

AIMS

- ❖ To ensure community access to accurate information about the wide range of solutions available to resolve difficulties arising from the breakdown of family relationships.
- ❖ To assist in the development of a long-term community education campaign regarding the family law system and, promote discussion about the principles that underpin the family law system.
- ❖ To ensure that the protection and wellbeing of children informs all discussions.
- ❖ To ensure that the impact of family and domestic violence is recognised and considered in discussions.
- ❖ To promote a safe environment for individuals and institutions involved in the family law system.
- ❖ To promote informed debate about family law issues.

STRATEGIES

- Collect and disseminate to parliamentarians, media and others, such research data, articles and judgements as will;
 - ensure an appreciation of the extent to which most relationship issues are now resolved by mediation/conciliation/counselling/lawyer facilitated negotiation, and the extent to which the court system is reserved for the most complex and difficult cases;
 - address misunderstandings prevalent in the community about family law issues.
- Encourage media to publish material that promotes the peaceful and co-operative resolution of relationship issues;
- Encourage media to avoid publication of material that condones violence, whether against members of the family or those who seek to protect their interests;
- Stimulate discussion about the impact of the family law system and the behaviour of parents and guardians in the context of the system and the consequences of such behaviour;
- Lobby to give effect to the aims of the Foundation.