

Dear Sirs,

As a father and Australian Citizen as of February 16, 2011 I would like to put forth the following submission in regards to the current Family Law reform.

The Family Law Legislation amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011 has been drafted on the basis that the proposed amendments will reduce child homicides. The reverse is actually the case. Statistics show that the 2006 Family Law Reforms helped save the lives of many children. The threatened rollback is likely to increase child homicides to pre-2006 levels which negates the purpose of the proposed Family Law Reforms.

Warwick Marsh, founder of Dads4Kids said, "Over the last few years a well orchestrated campaign has been mounted to make the claim that children are more at risk from violent fathers and that there has been an increase in child homicides at the hands of biological fathers.

The horrific death of Darcey Freeman at the hands of her father on the Westgate Bridge gave added impetus to that claim. This prompted a number of parliamentarians to consider that perhaps the shared parental responsibility changes in 2006 had taken a step too far.

Unfortunately those parliamentarians and the general public were unaware of another tragedy on the Westgate Bridge that occurred less than twelve months prior to Darcey's death. Mother, Gabriella Garcia, caused the horrific death of her 22 month old son Oliver by jumping off the Westgate Bridge with her son strapped to her chest, having made the claim she was afraid the Family Court might give custody of her son to the father. The tragic irony is that the father had made no applications to the court and had no intention of seeking custody. However this tragedy did not make headlines and the only recriminations were to criticise the authorities for not "jump proofing" the bridge. Sadly, both of these cases had involvement with the Family Law Court.

Bettina Arndt was right when she said, "No gender has a monopoly on vice." Both mothers and fathers are responsible for terrible tragedies involving their children. Whilst many have suffered grief because of these tragedies involving the death of innocent children, this is not cause for ill-considered and hasty change to a family law reform process that has actually reduced child homicides."

Warwick Marsh continued, "It is often presumed that fathers are the main offenders in child homicide cases. However this is not the case. According to Men's Health Australia, the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) showed in its 2006-2007 annual report there were eleven homicides involving a mother and eleven homicides involving a male family member. However, when the 'male family member' category was broken down, five perpetrators were biological fathers and five were de-facto partners of the mother who lived with the child.

A study in the Medical Journal of Australia found similar results. They stated that fatal

child abuse was the most common cause of death and the offender was most commonly the child's mother or her de-facto partner.

It might be noted that child homicide has reduced by almost 50% since the introduction of the much fairer 2006 reforms according to NSW figures. The NSW Child Death Team Annual Reports stated:

- In 2005, twelve children aged between 0-17 died by fatal assault
- In 2007, nine children aged between 0-17 died by fatal assault. 2007 had the lowest child mortality rate observed over 1996-2007. This is the year directly after the reforms were instigated.
- In 2009, seven children aged between 0-17 died in six incidents.

These results indicate the 2006 reforms reduced the lethal danger to children. It is our belief that child homicides could well go back to their pre 2006 levels with the new proposed reforms. This would be an appalling outcome for our children."

Dads4Kids is calling for the people of Australia to flood the Senate Inquiry with single sentence submissions, rejecting the proposed bill, by Friday 29 April 2011. Those submissions should cite the lifesaving reduction in child homicides that has occurred since the onset of the 2006 shared parenting law reform.

A couple of weeks ago I sent the following email to Tony Abbott and Bob Brown: It has come to the attention of many fathers in this country that your party is on the feminist bandwagon supporting the erosion of parental rights for fathers in this country. Although I support many environmental issues brought up and defended by the Green Parties around the globe, I have even been a member of Greenpeace, I have to say in family matters, the current Family Law Policies your party is defending are nothing short of as shameful and disastrous as the policies which brought about the Lost Generations debacle. You and your colleagues are creating a whole new Lost Generation and you forget that if you are a father of boys or come to have grandchildren who marry, if they get divorced and it gets messy, your own family members/descendants will one day be victims of the unjust, ignorant policies you and your parliamentary colleagues are espousing. As a new voter in this country, I will never support a party out to destroy secular family values.

Dr Gayre Christie has sent you an email explaining why you are extremely misguided in the defense of the points made out in the current Family law Reforms your party is a signatory to changing, I remind you of Dr Gayre Christie's words.

"I am overwhelmingly dismayed by the fact that the ONLY research mentioned in this report is that being conducted into Family Violence by The Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The focus in your party's report may be well intentioned but it appears to well intentioned in complete ignorance of the plethora of studies carried out worldwide in the recent past into the incidence and nature of family violence.

First, the myth that males are preponderantly the perpetrators of such violence is just false! For example, a number of studies in Scotland, Canada and Europe all find that in the age group 15-25 (the majority of those in custody cases) men and women are equally likely to be the perpetrators. Further, that the myth about males being more violent in the ways in which they abuse is just wrong. (This is just one example of recent research' I

can point you in the direction of dozens of reputable and peer reviewed studies, conducted by both men and women which challenge and overturn the mythology, the urban myths and the cynical misreporting, of which The Institute of Family Studies is itself guilty)

Second Mothers are MORE likely to kill their offspring – that is, murder them than are biological fathers. Most Australian statistics on child murder (until recently) has simply lumped all men who harm children together (if they are in a relationship with the mother of the children) as male relatives, which has the effect of burying the true facts about the rate at which fathers kill their children. This is simply dishonest.

Media bias in reporting child murders are completely in favour of sensationalising the relatively rare instances in which a father murders his child or children and almost completely ignore, minimise or excuse the instances where the mother is the perpetrator. This simply feeds the stereotype at large in society and that seems to be hugely congenial to the politicians too! Heaven forbid that any politician of any persuasion should fall foul of the Women's Lobby. As in war, so too in domestic violence, the truth is the first casualty.

As for shared care, the rollback agenda is driven by the women's lobby and male acolytes! It feeds the mythology and feasts on it! Again, ignore the research to the utter peril of children – those for whom the righteous campaigners for change to the current presumption of shared responsibility pretend to be representing. First, there is NO evidence that on a range of measures shared responsibility is not working – only hysterical scaremongering about men that does nothing for children's rights. Second, there is no evidence that children who have regular contact with their fathers are not better off. For over half a century, father absence has been recognised as the single most damaging event in any child's life! The evidence is huge – it is undeniable! Unwanted teenage pregnancy, promiscuous sex, drug and alcohol abuse, early involvement with the justice system, poorer education and poorer job prospects coupled with poorer income are all associated with lack of father contact. So too is a higher rate of domestic violence amongst males and females deprived of access to their fathers. Not, as is conveniently alleged, because that is what they witnessed as children – rather because of poor parenting and poor discipline for boys and girls alike raised in single parent (usually the mother) families.

Bob, I beg that you do not support this sea of ignorance and prejudice. Read the research before opening your mouth. The children of Australia deserve to have a father. You KNOW what the alternative is. And Bob, you also know the value of having a father in your own life. Be FAIR!

If you would like me to point you in the direction of the sea of modern research into father absence and child abuse, let me. It would give me the greatest pleasure to do this service for the children of Australia.”

Beyond her comments, I would like to add that even though it is not perfect, the current family law reform as placed and changed by the Howard government, brought a more balanced view to the playing minefield of divorced parents who make up around half of the parenting universe in this country. While the current family law addresses domestic violence in general, the fact is that when considering divorced parents, considering that current statistics state that 35% of marriages end up in divorce and few of these divorces come about due to family violence, it implies automatically that you open up 35% plus

the next 20% of the children whose parents remarry and again come to separate, of this country's children to manipulation by the Family Law Courts via mothers who may decide it's easier and cheaper to get separated by just alledging DV, rather than any other more onerous or compelling reason for separation. This up from one third of 1.48% of the population who are the effective countrywide universe of reported unspecified DVO cases. The implications are nothing short of disastrous in the long term for society in general.

And women in court don't even have to prove anything. What you defend is that a woman can just call the police, allege DV of some sort, get a DVO restraining order on the husband/partner and Bob's your uncle, he's out of the house, never mind if or when he gets to see the kids if ever, it's totally up to the woman's whim of what she decides to allege. Sirs, this is atrocious at best. It goes against any notion of human rights, against parental rights and please explain to the country how this is in the children's best interests.

Domestic violence incidents countrywide, in a population of 25 million are only 1.48% of the whole population and this covers all forms of DV, including man to woman DV which make up one third. The feminist lobbies you are so willfully sucking up to, state on in every 3 women countrywide suffer DV. They make it sound like all men and women in this country are at war. IT COULDN'T BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH SIRs, numbers simply don't stack up.

All of this has come about since the folly of a single man throwing his child off the Melbourne, never mind that one year before another young parent, a mother of all things, jumped off the same bridge with her child in her arms and even her name has been all but forgotten, even that of her child. Why? Her child was as hapless a victim as Darcy Freeman...

Dear Sirs, before you go ahead and make the children of genuine DVO numbers rise to numbers never seen before, before you rob over one third of the country's children of mainly loving fathers, please remember that your own families may become victims of your own folly, of your own misguided politicking for the sake of politicking.

because I am the male in court, I am already  
guilty probably of just being a man in the wrong country.

I came to this country believing in fair go, I am beginning to believe I was conned, that men in this country after they have children should at some stage begin to consider a sex change operation because after that, they are at the mercy of women's lib, the Greens and everyone else out there eager to jump onto knee jerk policies to gain some sort of misguided fame. English people are famed for their saying "Children shall be seen, not

heard”, I have come to Australia to witness that in this country you have gone one step further and are contemplating a third step past that, like children “dogs are also to be seen and not heard” and get to wear electric collars to teach them just that, and now with the Communist/feminist taliban alike legislation you are about to pass in the Family Law Reform the third step will be “Fathers will not be seen, let alone heard in their childrens lives”.

I presume the fact, for example, that the NSW Family Law Reform Commission is made up by 36 women versus 13 men has absolutely no bearing on the proposals which are an outright abuse of basic human rights against all males in this country and fathers in particular. How many of the people named in the Family Law Reform Commissions that are trying to get this misguided atrocious abuse of human rights into place in family Law are actually MARRIED, LIVING IN HEALTHY MARRIAGES, GOOD PARENTS and are unbiased towards men living in normal families? It would be interesting to know, because as

I have to say in light of this about your legal system that if it isn't a joke, in moral and ethical terms it's at least mindboggling, and in Family Law terms, the CSA drives 20 fathers/men whom Julia Gillard fondly refers to as Deadbeat Dads to suicide every month, probably the most shameful and indighting statistic in this country, over 600 000 fathers are known statistically to have left the country with the economic impact their social exclusion bring to families and the country in general. These men have left the country mainly because of being hounded into bankruptcy by the Child Support Agency. I face the same problem...

I have to say I will not join the ranks of the suicidals, but I may very soon join the ranks of the 600 00, not because I can't pay my daughter's alimony, but gentlemen, because I refuse to live in and contribute towards a society where the politicians allow a handful of

men hating feminists hijack Family Law and criminalize every man in the country and get fathers to be treated like criminals the moment a woman decides she has had enough of the father and wants to move on. This is what these new reforms are advocating. Shame on those of you who espouse such a shameful, undignified set of legislation. Shame on those of you senators who may be fathers or mothers of boys who are not looking after your own children who will one day be as open to this human rights abuse as every other male in the country.

I came to this country believing it is a great land where families can be raised in freedom and are looked after by a just system, I have seen in a short time that it is absolutely not so. The moment you walk towards divorce, a man's number is up, we have no rights, any street dog caught by the RSPCA and taken to the pound has better perspectives than separated fathers in this country...

Kind regards  
Alberto Carvalho