



Committee calls for Child Support Program improvements

Making client communication clearer and making the child support formula more reflective of contemporary Australia were key to a series of recommendations handed down by the House of Representatives Social Policy Committee today.

The keenly anticipated report, 'From Conflict to Cooperation' stems from an inquiry which heard emotional testimony from child support clients around Australia. It highlights a number of key areas of reform including mediation, ensuring that the child support formula reflects contemporary Australia, improving communication between the program and its clients, family violence and the merits of guaranteed child support payments.

"Family separation can be difficult on all members of a family" Committee Chair, George Christensen said upon launching the report, "and the added burden of navigating a very complex child support system can lead to conflict between separating parents who have the best interests of their children at heart".

Mr Christensen highlighted one of the more innovative recommendations of the report, noting an "examination and potential trial of a limited financial guarantee, backed by the Australian government to benefit the most vulnerable child support clients". This, he believed would bring a sense of stability to those most at risk of not receiving appropriate financial support.

Key recommendations of the Committee's report were:

- additional funding and training to Family Relationship Centres to trial the provision of mediation services where disputes exist over child support objections or change of assessment processes;
- amending the Child Support Program to ensure the adequacy of calculated amounts and equity for both payers and payees with respect to the self-support amount, the cost of children table and indexation mechanisms, the use of gross income levels for payment calculations, and consideration of child support income management where substantiated allegations of payments not being adequately used on the needs of the child;
- improving agency communication and explanation of child support decisions; and
- the assessment, modelling and potential trial of a limited financial guarantee for some CSP clients.

A full copy of the Committee's report, or a short summary of findings and recommendations can be obtained from its website at [this link](#).

For media comment – please contact the Chair's office on (07) 4944 0662.

For inquiry information – please contact the Secretariat:

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