



JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S FAMILY LAW SYSTEM

MEDIA RELEASE

The **attached** statement updating the Parliament on the work of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System, was delivered by the Chair, the Hon Kevin Andrews MP, to the House of Representatives on 15 June 2020 and by the Deputy Chair, Senator Pauline Hanson, to the Senate on 16 June 2020.

Media enquiries:

Cristy Elliott – cristy.elliott@aph.gov.au or (03) 9848 9900

For background information:

Secretariat to the Joint Select Committee into Australia's Family Law System –
familylaw.sen@aph.gov.au or 02 6277 3439.

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Statement on progress of the inquiry

This statement was delivered by the Chair in the House of Representatives on 15 June 2020 and by the Deputy Chair in the Senate on 16 June 2020.

I rise today to provide an update on the progress of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System. As with other committees, the way we have carried out our work has changed due to the restrictions in place over the past three months as a result of COVID-19. Despite these restrictions, the work of the committee has continued, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their contribution.

To date, the committee has received and is currently processing, over 1500 individual submissions and almost 200 organisational submissions to this inquiry. We continue to receive and consider submissions.

The committee has also held a number of hearings this year. We were fortunate to travel to several communities in Queensland and New South Wales in early March where we conducted public and in camera hearings. We also had a number of hearings scheduled in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

While we have been unable to travel since mid-March, the committee has continued to conduct in camera hearings to hear from individuals about their experiences of the family law system. We have also begun to hear from organisations in public hearings using the videoconferencing facilities available here in Canberra. Since COVID-19 restrictions came into place, we have conducted five in camera hearings, and one public hearing. We will continue to conduct hearings in this way for the foreseeable future.

There are a number of themes that have begun to emerge from the evidence. We have heard about the costs associated with the family law system, delays in the court system and the appropriateness of our legal framework. We look forward to further interrogating these and other themes as we continue our important work.

On behalf of the committee, I thank all of the submitters and witnesses to this inquiry, especially those children, parents and grandparents who have been through or are currently in the family law system.

Thank you for your courage in coming forward to share your story, and your suggestions on how we can work together to make the family law system fair for all parties who engage with it and who are affected by it.