



HOUSE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 23 October 2003

Chair: Mrs Kay Hull, MP
Deputy: Mrs Julia Irwin, MP

Child custody inquiry: further public hearings Wyong, Coffs Harbour, Gunnedah – October 26 & 27

The House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee's inquiry into child custody arrangements will hold further public hearings next week in Wyong (Sunday 26 October), Coffs Harbour (Monday 27 October, morning) and Gunnedah (Monday 27 October, afternoon).

Details of each of these hearings appears below. **The hearings will each be followed by about an hour for community statements, each of about three minutes duration.** All those who would like to speak are invited to attend. Participants will be chosen on the day. The three minute time limit should be adhered to so the committee can hear from as many people as possible within the hour.

Please note that due to the nature of the inquiry the committee may need to move into an in camera (confidential) hearing for some witnesses and the program could be subject to change.

WYONG, Sunday 26 October: 10am – 2.30pm

Venue: Wyong Shire Council Function Room, Hely Street, Wyong, NSW

10am	Individual witness
10.30am	Individual witness
11am	Individual witness
11.30am	Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee (Robertson) – Ms Chris Smith
12.30pm	Sole Parents' Union (NSW) – Ms Kathleen Swinbourne
1pm	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (NSW) – Ms Pru Goward
1.30pm	Community statements (1 hour)

COFFS HARBOUR, Monday 27 October: 8.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, Block A, Level 1, Room 9/11, Hogbin Drive, Coffs Harbour, NSW

8.30am	Individual witness
9am	Individual witness
9.30am	Individual witness
10am	Kempsey Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme – Ms Marie Reason
10.30am	Warinna Women's and Children's Refuge Co-op – Ms Charlotte Young
11am	Dads in Distress – Mr Tony Miller, Mr Raymond Lenton
11.30am	Community statements (1 hour)

GUNNEDAH, Monday 27 October: 2.15pm – 5.45pm

Venue: Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club, 313 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah

2.15pm	Individual witness
2.45pm	Individual witness
3.15pm	Individual witness
3.45pm	Family Pathways / Family Mediation Services – Mr Paul Bennet
4.15pm	Muswellbrook Women's and Children's Refuge Ltd – Ms Jenny McGrath
4.45pm	Community statements (1 hour)

For media comment from the Chair, please contact:

Mrs Kay Hull, MP (Chair), via tel: (02) 6921 4600 or 0428 211 591

For further details on the inquiry, including terms of reference, background documentation and committee membership,

contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or visit the inquiry website at

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/

CHILD CUSTODY INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee is to investigate and make recommendations for action on the following matters:

- (a) given that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration:
 - (i) what other factors should be taken into account in deciding the respective time each parent should spend with their children post separation, in particular whether there should be a presumption that children will spend equal time with each parent and, if so, in what circumstances such a presumption could be rebutted; and
 - (ii) in what circumstances a court should order that children of separated parents have contact with other persons, including their grandparents.
- (b) whether the existing child support formula works fairly for both parents in relation to their care of, and contact with, their children.
- (c) with the Committee to report to the Parliament by 31 December 2003.

The Committee has been asked to have regard to the Government's recent response to the report of the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group. A link to this report is available on the inquiry website.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Chairman Mrs Kay Hull MP

Members	Hon Alan Cadman MP	Mr Chris Pearce MP
	Ms Trish Draper MP	Hon Roger Price MP
	Mr Peter Dutton MP	Mr Harry Quick MP
	Ms Jennie George MP	Mr Cameron Thompson MP
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