



HOUSE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 31 October 2003

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

Child custody inquiry: next public hearing Monday 3 November, Canberra

'The costs of raising children'

The House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee's inquiry into child custody arrangements will hold its next public hearing in **Canberra** this **Monday, 3 November**.

The hearing will be with Professor Ann Harding, the Director of the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra, and Ms Marilyn McHugh, from the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW.

Professor Harding and Ms McHugh will speak about their research on the costs of raising children.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Monday 3 November: 11am – 12.30pm

Venue: House of Representatives Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra

11am Professor Ann Harding, the Director of the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), University of Canberra
Ms Marilyn McHugh, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW

Background

NATSEM and SPRC have both conducted research into the costs of raising children:

- Percival, R., Harding, A. *AMP-NATSEM Income and Wealth Report* Issue 3 October 2002
This report calculates the cost of raising children in Australia, and includes a summary of the different methods that can be used to make this calculation and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- McHugh, M. *The Costs of Children: Budget Standards Estimates and the Child Support Scheme*, SPRC Discussion Paper No 103 July 1999
This report uses the budget standards methodology to calculate the cost of children, and compares outcomes under this approach with payments calculated under the child support scheme. It should be noted that the paper was written before the reforms to child support legislation passed in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

For media comment from the Chair, please contact:

Mrs Kay Hull, MP (Chair), via tel: (02) 6277 4723 or (02) 6921 4600 or 0428 211 591

For further details on the inquiry, 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.