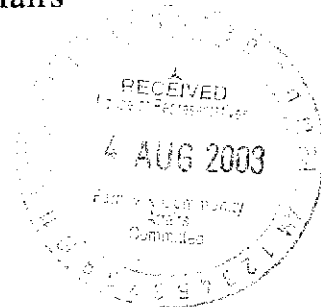


Submission No: 240

Date Received: 4-8-03

Secretary: .....

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs  
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry  
Department of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Submission prepared by

Mrs Lorraine Somerfield  
4/1 Diagonal Road  
GLENELG EAST SA 5045

D.O.B. 5/12/1936

Marital Status: Presently married for 45 ½ years.

Mother of 4 children and grandmother of 7 grandchildren

Occupation: Retired

## **INTRODUCTION**

I am making this submission to your committee as a grandparent who thinks that the current family law act is very outdated, and needs to be brought up to date to better the needs of the children in cases of family separation.

I believe it is the child's right to have as much access with its parents and grandparents as possible. If the children were to have this very important extended family access I think they would become much better adjusted young people and I cannot understand why the courts do not encourage this.

Having closely followed proceedings for my own sons family court case, I strongly believe the current system is gender bias against the father and believe it is wrong when a father wants shared custody and must continually fight the court system to try to achieve this. It does not serve the child's best interest to have their father "begging for more contact", thus not recognising the important role the father plays in a child's development.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **RESPONSE**

- (a)
  - (i) Criminal record that could effect the child  
Domestic Violence proven by criminal convictions  
The parents must show the ability to provide adequate care and safe and stable accommodation
  - (ii) I think that grandparents and extended family members should be able to have similar contact with the children of separated parents as they had when the parents were together as a family.  
This would enhance their social skills and give them a family environment they may not have.
- (b) Also I think the child support system should be reviewed, as it is not working fairly. It should be on a sliding scale to the level of contact. For instance with a 50/50 access there should be no payment. As the contact lessens the payment should be according to the time allotted.

## SUMMARY

I am pleading with this committee to recommend a 50/50 system to the family law act as I think it would benefit the children.

The committee must make recommendations to better reflect today's society. Whilst there is no magic wand, there is a better system than the current antiquated one, which only seems to meet the needs of lawyers.

There can be no doubt that it serves a child's best interests to spend a much time as possible with parents in most circumstances.

The family court should make every effort to encourage this.