

Submission No: 1569

Date Received: 8-10-03

Secretary:

6th October 2003

Peter Dutton MP
Federal Member for Dickson
Via: Email

Dear Peter,

Thank-you for the response in relation to our Child Support issue, it gives us some hope that at least you read this insight on how Child Support effects us and I am sure many others.

All we ask is from those legislating Child Support that a careful / unbiased consideration is made when making what we consider to be life changing decisions for many Australians.

██████████ and my story obviously began when we both left our partners between 7 and 3 years ago. From this point on there have been many frustrating issues. ██████████ and I have married and have brought our own baby into this world, we have a great relationship and we look forward to the future, like any new couple would. But our distress with regard to the Child Support system puts a very large strain on an otherwise wonderful marriage.

What we want to know is why the Child Support system is deemed fair and just, because no matter which way we turn it feels like we can not win.

My situation - ██████████

1. In my eyes my yearly salary is good and I have worked hard to achieve this. And I am currently meant to pay \$950 per month in Child Support. On top of this, because of the successful completion of a project I was in charge of last year I received a \$20,000 bonus. As a result of tax, loss of our Family Tax Benefit and loss of our Child Care Rebate and an increase of Child Support from \$950 to \$1,250, we end up with next to nothing for my efforts. My company also provides me shares and any capital gain is also including in CSA calculations. Why cant CSA payments be calculated on your actual pay, not your hard earned bonuses.

2. My ex-wife has moved 1 hour north of [REDACTED] and married again and for the past 6 years I have been always been the one to pick up my daughter for visits and drop her back to her mother, because her mother will not contribute to this. CSA will only take this into consideration if it equates to 5% of your total Child Support calculable income. - For me that is over \$4,000. It doesn't add up to this, and besides I have a leased vehicle, so I am unable to use this to calculate the travel expenses. Because of my leased vehicle I have to pay FBT which is also used to equate the Child Support I have to pay.
3. Why do I have no say with what the Child Support amount payable is used for with regard to my daughter. She is often in second hand clothes, shoes that are too small for her and her hair is only cut when we take her to have it cut.
4. I love my daughter and she has a mother and a father, so why is it my responsibility to financial raise her fully?
5. Due to the fact that I have a new daughter to raise, my exempted income is now \$20,852. So why is my ex-wife's exempted amount \$33,717? We are both raising children full time.
6. I would love to have at least shared custody of my daughter, but because of my ex-wife moving to the Sunshine Coast, it is virtually impossible for this to occur as my daughter attends school now. But even then, I would be required to pay my ex-wife a substantial amount of Child Support even though we are caring for our daughter the same amount of time.

My Situation - [REDACTED]

1. When my first marriage broke down, I was working full time earning around \$36,000 per year. We decided on shared custody arrangement of our children. A few months after I moved out, my ex-husband decided to leave his job and go back to study. Because of this, I was required to pay him Child Support. Even though we had shared care of our children.
2. I am working part-time now, but looking to advance my career by finding a job which I enjoy, more than likely on a full-time basis. If I go back to work full-time and still providing shared care to my boys and I am required to pay child support. My question - Why should child support need to be paid when you have shared care of your children?
3. We are trying to provide a home for our rather large family, but it just feels like we are hitting a brick wall. It's ironic that with the rising housing prices now, we are unable to buy a larger home for our family, but we are paying out enough money for [REDACTED] ex-wife to pay off her home, car and now purchase an investment property. Why is this fair?

The above are most of our problems, but the worst for me [REDACTED] is that with every share, every pay rise, every bonus I receive, a portion will go to my ex-wife. WHY? This affects me greatly because I work hard to get this and my ex-wife doesn't have the right to get any of this, or deserves it.

I provide for my eldest daughter, my baby girl as well as my wife [REDACTED] and her two boys from her previous marriage and I receive no benefit or assistance for this. We are not asking for assistance, but there is no spare money for a new home or holidays for us and our new family. As I already mentioned, my ex-wife has married again and has bought a home and an investment property, but this is all in her new husband's name. Her assets and benefits are no sacrifice at all, like ours are.

The system needs to be changed [REDACTED], but the input needs to come from those affected. It also needs to be easier on those mothers and children who are being ripped off from their former partners.

I hope this has given you a small insight of what we go through. There has been much debate and something really needs to be changed for the good of all.

I would appreciate your views on how change can be brought about for this sort of legislation and could you please keep us up-to-date on any changes. Is the review into the Family Law Act going to look at Child Support arrangements?

Thank you for taking the time to read our dilemma.

On a lighter note we believe you are a great asset to our area and are doing a great job for our community - keep up the good work.

[REDACTED]