



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

New Inquiry: Proposed family law changes

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 27 June 2005

Chairman: Peter Slipper MP

MAJOR CHANGES TO THE FAMILY LAW SYSTEM

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee is to examine a draft Bill that makes significant changes to the *Family Law Act 1975*.

The Chairman of the Committee, Peter Slipper MP, today announced an inquiry into an exposure draft of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005.

"The draft Bill implements a number of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs in its 2003 report on child custody in family separation, *Every picture tells a story*," Mr Slipper said.

"The Bill is a key component of the Government's family law reform agenda and introduces major changes to the family law system," he said.

The draft Bill aims to support and promote shared parenting and to encourage people to reach agreement about the parenting of children after separation. It seeks to promote the benefits of both parents playing a role in the lives of their children. The draft Bill also recognises the need to protect children from family violence and abuse, and aims to ensure that the court process is easier to navigate and is less traumatic.

"The Committee has been asked to check the drafting of the Bill and determine whether it implements measures recommended in the *Every picture tells a story* report," Mr Slipper said.

"It will be a technical inquiry into the provisions of the draft Bill – we will not be looking at the merits of the policy behind the Bill or issues of that nature."

The Committee has been asked to report by 11 August. Members of the public will be able to make submissions in writing to the Committee until 15 July and attend public hearings which will be held mid July.

For interview:

Please contact the Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP on (02) 6277 4975 (Canberra) or in his electorate on (07) 5443 3555.

Or Mr Slipper's media adviser, Richard Bruinsma on 0417 486673.

For background information, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions when they become available, please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2358 or visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/

The 2003 Family and Community Affairs Committee report *Every picture tells a story* is available on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/report.htm