



## **Child custody inquiry begins public hearings: *Knox (Melbourne), Thursday 28 August***

The House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee's inquiry into child custody arrangements will begin its program of public hearings this Thursday, 28 August.

The second public hearing will be held in **Knox (Melbourne)** on the afternoon of Thursday 28 August (the first is in Geelong that morning). The hearing will incorporate an hour for community statements.

The Knox hearing details are:

**Date:** Thursday 28 August 2003  
**Time:** 2.00pm – 5.00pm  
**Venue:** Hungarian Community Centre  
760 Boronia Road  
Wantirna VIC

<b>2.00 pm</b>	<b>Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc</b>
<b>2.20 pm</b>	<b>Australian Family Support Services Association</b>
<b>2.40 pm</b>	<b>Australians Against Child Abuse</b>
<b>3pm - 4pm</b>	<b>Three individuals</b>
<b>4pm – 5pm</b>	<b>Community statements (see below)</b>

Note: The hearing will be followed by about an hour for community statements, each of about 3 minutes duration. All who would like to speak are invited to attend. Participants will be chosen on the day. The 3 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.**

The forthcoming dates and locations for hearings are:

- Friday 29 August: 10.00am – 1.00pm, Launceston, Tasmania
- Monday 1 September: Wollongong, NSW, and Blacktown (western Sydney)

The Committee will then hold hearings in Queensland. Further detail on all these hearings will be issued closer to the events. Public hearings will be held in every State and Territory.

More than 1500 submissions have been received by the inquiry so far. This is a record for an inquiry by this Committee, and amongst the highest ever for a House of Representatives Committee.

**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 background documentation,**  
contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or visit the inquiry website at  
[www.apf.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/](http://www.apf.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  
                          Ms Trish Draper MP  
                          Mr Peter Dutton MP  
                          Ms Jennie George MP  
                          Mrs Julia Irwin MP

Mr Chris Pearce MP  
Hon Roger Price MP  
Mr Harry Quick MP  
Mr Cameron Thompson MP