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From: Shared Parenting Council of Australia [mailto:secretariat@spca.org.au]
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To: Hull, Kay (MP)
Subject: MEDIA RELEASE: Pru Goward's claim is wrong that fathers do not want to share the care of their children

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MEDIA RELEASE

27 October 2003

PRU GOWARD'S CLAIM IS WRONG THAT FATHERS DO NOT WANT TO SHARE THE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN

The Shared Parenting Council of Australia refutes the evidence given by Pru Goward at the Federal Parliament's Child Custody Inquiry yesterday that "joint custody was impractical and most men did not want it anyway".

"The evidence given by Ms Goward, in reference to the true wishes of men and fathers in Australia, is unsupported by any research and describes the complete opposite position of those fathers who put submissions forward to the current inquiry. Every father's group, church group and grandparent organisation has clearly and unequivocally said that they want to share the care of their children - regardless of the implications to future work patterns", Mr Geoffrey Greene, Federal Director of the Shared Parenting Council of Australia said today.

At the Federal Parliament's Family and Community Affairs Committee current inquiry into child custody and other matters, Ms Goward said, "she believed introducing a presumption that child-sharing arrangements should be 50-50 would "make no difference at all" to the outcome of custody disputes, because "in the end a guy who is working 60 hours a week does not want the kids".

"The question we put to Pru Goward is: How would you know that? All evidence clearly indicates the contrary, and our 30 affiliate members have confirmed that the single most important issue faced by the majority of fathers after separation, is how they can maintain their relationship with their children, in an equal and shared manner", Mr Greene said.

"Many family law 'experts' and feminist contributors to the current custody inquiry have universally opposed the introduction of shared parenting in family law matters, with spurious and weak arguments against its operation, yet when confronted with the appalling outcomes of the current system, they have failed to provide any guidance or solutions that will alleviate the waste, despair and destruction caused by the Family Court's handling of child custody matters in family breakdown situations", Mr Greene said.

"More astounding is the fact that the Family Law Section of the Law Society were unaware of the current 80/20 sole custody model practised by the Family Court, and that they do not believe this happened. Clearly these industry 'experts' are so out of touch with the real outcomes of Family Law in Australia, that the Committee would be wise to ignore their submissions", Mr Greene said.

For further information:

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