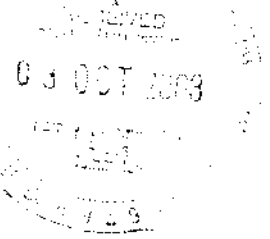


House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No:1566.....

Date Received:3-10-03.....

Secretary:



28th September 2003

The Hon Alan Cadman MP

Dear Mr. Cadman

I am writing in response to your article CHILD CUSTODY IN SPOTLIGHT. As a very concerned mother for her son and a grandparent I am hoping with your support and understanding that there will be many changes made to the existing Family Support and Center Link Policies as at the present time I feel they are very unfair towards the male parent who wants to support his child.

To the Standing Committee on Family Affairs Inquiry into Child Custody Arrangements in the Event of Family Separation.

(a)

- 1 Children of separated parents may not always be able to spend equal time with a parent due to:
 - Long distances travelled unless both parties have to share the journey. Lack of family support for the parent who lives a long distance from relatives and works to maintain the child. Cost to the parent who is travelling distances in excess of 800kilometers on a weekend to see the child as well as paying maintenance. Justice is needed on 50/50 shared custody.
 - At the present time the father has to pay maintenance to the mother even on his 50/50 custody and with this policy the father cannot support the child when in his care. Wouldn't it be sensible to pay maintenance to the mother on her shared time only?
- 2 Yes grand parents and cousins should be allowed access to the children if they wish particularly when the father and grandparent have had the children for several years. And then the mother decides she wants the child so she can receive all the benefits from Center Link, Family Support and the father whilst the father receives none of these benefits during the period he has the child because he works.
- (b) The existing child support formula is neither fair nor just in relation to the care of the child as there are no regulations on how the maintenance is to be spent particularly if there are other children from a previous marriage and their father is not paying maintenance. Some guide lines need to be enforced.
- (c) CHILD SUPPORT should be based on net income not gross or the mother to pay tax on her benefits received from the father .By the time the father pays tax, maintenance, superannuation and Medicare levy there is not sufficient left to support himself.
- GENERAL COMMENT
- There are truly many families that need government support but I do believe the policies and regulations in place encourage women who find their life style difficult to opt out of marriage as they know there is so much government help and that they do not have to go to work and support their children. With all the child care support offered to them perhaps there should be a limited time they stay at home as they can receive the same benefits whether they work or not and thus the tax payers money could be used in other areas such as more funding for the hospitals.