



October 14, 2003  
JG/LM

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
Submission No:	1588
Date Received:	14-10-03
Secretary:	.....

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

I seek leave to address the above Standing Committee under the terms of its Inquiry into Child Custody Arrangements in the Event of Family Separation on Wednesday 15 October 2003.

As the Federal Member for Gilmore for the last seven years, I and my staff have had a number of dealings with a wide range of local constituents and relevant agencies in the child custody and visitation rights fields.

Many issues have been raised over that time and positive changes have been negotiated through constant and respectful dialogue with all parties concerned.

Current regular issues include:

- Fathers claiming they are paying money to support children, however money is being spent on other things;
- Fathers claiming they are paying to support children and are not being given the access rights that have been ordered by the Family Law Court;
- Fathers having to pay huge amounts of money to take ex-partners to court for access to children and still not being able to see their children.

A long time in the past the rules seemed firmly in favour of the major earner, generally the male, and we needed to have the balance tipped in favour of the major caregiver, generally the female.

Nowadays it seems that we have gone too far and the rules need some retuning to bring more balance and fairness to matters. I would like to suggest that the Inquiry consider measures that back Family Court Orders and offer reasonable but firm discipline methods for people who snub them.

Joanna Gash MP (Mrs)  
Federal Member for Gilmore  
Government Whip

JOANNA GASH MP  
Federal Member  
for Gilmore

Electoral Office:  
24 Berry Street  
(PO Box 1009)  
Nowra NSW 2541

Telephone  
(02) 4423 1782

Facsimile  
(02) 4423 1785

Toll Free  
1800 635 697

Email  
joanna.gash@aph.gov.au

Website  
www.gilmore.mhr.gov.au

