

Submission No.

103

Date Received:

17-7-03

Secretary:

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Secretary

I take this opportunity to write to you regarding the above inquiry following documentation received by me from Ms Kirsten Livermore MP.

My writings are not necessarily reflective of the organization with whom I am employed. They are merely my own thoughts and opinions and I do not insist upon them remaining confidential in part or in full.

I am a divorced, non-custodial parent and have been same since 1992. At the time my two children, a daughter aged 2 1/2 years and son aged 14 months, remained in the custody of their mother. I was permitted access in the form of every second weekend. When the children commenced school, access was also permitted for half of all school holidays.

In 1995 my children, their mother, and her new partner moved some 600kms away from the town in which we were all living. Weekend access was no longer possible because of the distance involved, yet I could still only see my children for half of the school holidays. They have moved again and are now 800kms away. This situation remains current.

I do not understand why, when separated or divorced parents live hundreds of kilometres apart, non-custodial parents are not automatically granted access for the duration of all school holidays. Costs involved in conveying children from one parent to the other are the same, regardless of the duration of the stay, and personally I feel "robbed" of time with my children. I feel that it is hardly fair, that as a non-custodial parent, I have my children with me for approximately 6 weeks out of a 52 week year.

I am pleased that finally the Government is inquiring into this most sensitive and emotive issue, and I thank you for presenting me with the opportunity to express my feelings.

Yours faithfully