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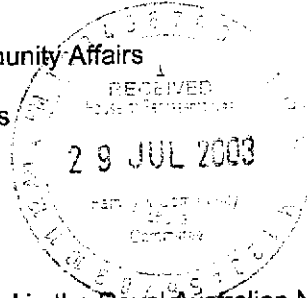
Secretary: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, 28 July 2003 9:48 PM

To: Committee, FCA (REPS)

Subject: Fw: SUBMISSION FOR CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENT INQUIRY.

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



I am 27 years of age, and currently employed in the Royal Australian Navy and based in Cairns, QLD. I have a 3 year old son, who currently resides with his mother (my Ex) on the Gold Coast. We have Consent Orders in place, which grants me access to him approximately 6 times a year. The duration of these times of contact is 7 days. This of course this is an insufficient amount of time for a prolonged relationship with my child, as more regular contact would be highly desired. But at the moment with my employment I am shore based, which means I have lost a substantial amount of income. As well my maintenance payments have not been altered, to reflect my change of income. This inturn means financially it makes it more difficult to pay for a flight down, hire a vehicle, accommodation and provide luxuries for my child, during the periods of contact. This is the reason why subsequently I will be discharging from the R.A.N. at the end of next year 2004 (this is when my 6 year contract expires). I then intend on pursuing employment and residence in the Brisbane/Gold Coast locality. For the sole purpose of being closer and having more contact with my only child.

When I finally arrive at this predicament, I will be pursuing to come to a shared residence agreement, within regards to my son, with the child's mother. Therefore coming from a separated Fathers perspective, I believe it to be in my sons and my best interests to be able to spend at least 50% of our time together. I Love my son more than anything and the time we spend together, I believe to be a privilege. My son looks up to me and mimics everything I say and do, he makes me very happy and proud. We have the absolute best time and we have very good interaction when we are together, it breaks my heart when it is time to return him, and I miss him like crazy when I am apart from him. I am tired of feeling like I am being punished because I am the Father and that the Mothers are the more desired Parent, in the Family Courts viewpoint for the development of early childhood. I have always prided myself as being a good parent, in all facets of raising a child I believe I equal the Mother. When my Son is in my Care I promote his contact via phone to his mother. I respect my Child, and realise the importance of both a Fathers Love and the Mothers Love. It is just a pity that more people should think about their children first, instead of thinking about themselves and the indifferences that they have with their Ex-Partners.

I have read other Submissions from concerned Parents and Single Parents. The subject of violence and other worse case scenarios come in to play (of course) in the Court Proceedings where determining Custody is the issue. I agree that no Child or person should ever be subjected to that kind of livelihood. Each case for determining Custody/Residence of children, is to be reviewed as an individual and unique case. As not all situations are the same. Each party applying for Custody of their child or children, should firstly undergo Psychological Evaluation from a reputable agent so the Court can make decisions on the findings, to ascertain the fitness of either party as a competent Parent.

I would like to officially state that shared custody/residence can and will work. That neither parties should pay maintenance and all costs for the rearing of children should be shared equally, if there is ambiguities between the parties in regards to this arrangement. Then a automated account system should be instigated, where as by both parties have to submit total costs and show their amount payed. This accounting system could be set by a separate division of Centerlink or Separate entity. This I believe will start to alleviate some of the 670million dollars of unpaid child support in this country alone.

Yours Faithfully,
[REDACTED]

29/07/2003