



# MANNING DISTRICT EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION COMMITTEE INC

PO Box 237 TAREE NSW 2430

Mission Statement:

To co-operatively promote social justice through safety, equity and access for women, children and families, including all those at risk of violence and homelessness.

Address all correspondence to "The Secretary"

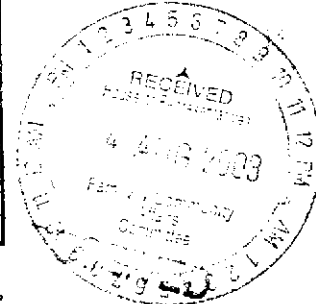
24 July, 2003

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 234

Date Received: 4-8-03

Secretary: .....



3 JUL 2003

Mrs Kay Hull MP  
National Party of Australia  
100 Yambil Street  
GRIFFITH NSW 2680

Mrs Hull MP

Please note this organisations objections to the ill advised joint custody proposals moved by John Howard.

This is simplistic approach to a complex issue as with all simplistic proposals to address complex issues this one is flawed for any reasons – in particular the following:

- It privileges the rights of parents over the rights for children by over-riding the paramountcy of the children's best interests' principle which is entrenched in the Family Law Act.
- It ignores the factors listed in the Family Law Act which must be considered by the Court in deciding parenting orders, such as children's wishes, capacity of the parent to provide for needs of the children, maintaining children in a settled environment and family violence.
- Current provisions of the Family Law Act already include mechanisms for shared residence being a child's right where it is in the child's best interest.
- Many men already participate actively in their children's lives after separation. In these families neither fathers nor mothers need the law to tell them to do this. Further, most mothers wish to share parenting duties and responsibilities cooperatively with fathers who were significantly involved with their children prior to separation.
- It reduces families abilities to make their own decisions about parenting arrangements depending on children's needs, parent capacities, geographical distance between them, parent's work patterns, finances and housing.

- It ignores the evidence from research that shared residence works for some families where there has been a history of cooperation; a history of shared care pre-separation and where parents voluntarily enter these arrangements irrespective of the law.
- The child support consequences will force single mothers, already amongst the most impoverished group in the community, to plummet further into poverty and consequently increase the number of children also living in poverty.

Yours sincerely



*pr* Leonie McGuire  
Manager  
Manning District Emergency Accommodation