

Submission No: 246  
Date Received: 4-8-03  
Secretary:

RE: Family Law Submission.

To  
Committee Secretary on Family and Community Affairs  
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry.  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA,  
ACT  
2600.

To Whom It May Concern:

I became aware of this enquiry after reading a letter to the Editor in our local newspaper. It's a shame that these submissions had not been advertised, I'm sure there would have been a "flood" of submissions. The problem we have here in Australia regarding family law courts is heartbreaking. It effects children, mainly the father being the cause of many suicides and grandparents who seem to have no rights whatsoever in family breakups but are often the ones who do the paying and seem always ready to help their grandchildren.

The family unit is suffering badly from the lack of fair laws in regards to marriage breakdown. Our experience which involved the family law court was a waste of both money and time. The law people are "milking" clients and urging them on by saying "we nearly have them now" in fact they will admit themselves that it is just a waste of time trying to get anywhere with the family law court as it is just too bigoted against fathers.

The people we had discussions with in regards to these custody matters seem to be only wanting to keep the fathers away from their children. There was a time with us when the mother had had a drug overdose. When I contacted the family court about the matter and asked about the father or ourselves taking care of the children I was told that they would get someone to look after them while the mother was in hospital.

I could fill pages regarding our fight to get to see our grandchildren and for our son to have fair access. It cost us many thousands of dollars. Money we had saved for our retirement. Court orders were made but the mother just wouldn't abide by them. A barrister said to me after a number of court appearances "What do you think they can do with the mother' she has no money so they won't fine her and they won't lock her up". Well "they" can certainly do something when the father gets behind with payments to the mother. Even after having a complete nervous breakdown over the whole ordeal of trying to see his boys.

I have approached two MP's in regards to Australia's biased family laws and they say that they are improving all the time and it is becoming fairer for fathers. I don't believe that is the case at all. They could never show any proof of this happening. We need laws that give both parents an equal opportunity to bring their children up. As it is the mothers only need to tell a few stories (usually lies) and they have full control. Could you please do something about this prejudiced situation.

Respectfully yours,

Graham Bell.