

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: **1387**

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Secretary: .....

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family & Community Affairs  
Child Custody Arrangement Inquiry  
Dept. of The House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

Anthony Roberts  
31 Magnolia ST  
Margate 4019 QLD

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write this letter in the hope that I will receive an acknowledgement this letter has been read and noted by the Committee. I understand this letter was sent late however I received information regarding possible input to this Committee at late notice.

I am a 35 yr old single father of one beautiful 6 yr old boy, whom I love dearly. My concerns as a single father are made in point form and focus on the greater concerns rather than lesser.

1. The Family Court System: in my experience lack considerable empathy for fathers and their children. My greatest concern is when the mother of a child tells the father of the child, " **you will only see your child once every two weeks**". The father can be the best father and want 'share-care' arrangement but only one parent has to say "I can't work with this person". The Court will side with the primary care giver and the label "weekend dad" once every two weeks is a reality. The Courts see that weekend time should be shared between parents and for a working father's weekends are the only time to interact with their children. Holiday leave **can not always** be taken during school holidays.
2. The Child Support Agency still needs reforms. If a father has no assets after a divorce, the CSA does not consider a father's financial status or that the mother has a house full of furniture and the father has nothing in the house for his child.
3. **Support Groups or agencies for single fathers are basically non-existent.** To be labelled a non-custodial parent is degrading and reinforces to a father that he is not significant to his child. Working in the welfare area I have noticed minimal support services and information for single fathers to access. There is a large amount of services for women, which is widely advertised. I feel there should be similar services for men widely advertised.
4. **PLEASE NOTE:** Men are less vocal on most issues than women and most men have low reading and writing skills compared to women in general. Encouragement is needed for men/fathers to talk and be confident that their concerns are valid.

Yours Faithfully



Anthony Roberts