

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
House of Representatives
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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
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To the Committee

I have been married for 40 years and in that time I have had 3 children and 4 grandchildren and one on the way. Also during my 40 years I have attended UNSW and obtained a bachelor of Taxation degree and work as a tax agent.

In the past two years my family and I have had a dreadful ordeal. My eldest son who is a computer IT Manager has had an unhappy relationship with a woman that has destroyed his life. This woman who he loved very much has always been on centrelink income and has never worked for a living. She had twin girls to my son and moved into his home. When the girls were one year old the police came to my son's work place and told him that there was a phone AVO on him for assault. He was shocked as he has never been violent to any women in his life. Let alone the mother of his children. He was taken to the police station and told he could not return to the home and his children until it went to court. During this time his partner arranged for a furniture removal van to come and she cleaned out the home leaving my son 1 knife, 1 fork and 1 spoon. She moved up to the central coast and set up house there. She sold most of the furniture and cameras computers, jewellery and anything she did not need. My son did not know where the whereabouts of his children.

About 6 weeks later she rang my son and asked him if she could return and she was sorry. My son took her back as he loves his twin girls and could not bear to be parted from them. This ordeal cost him \$50,000 for furniture replacement and legal fees. His defacto went to court and admitted she had lied. She even wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Police admitting that she had made the whole thing up.

One year later this woman did the same thing again. Except worse. She stole money from his bank account. She stole my daughter's car and jewellery and furniture that were stored at my son's home as my daughter was in England. As soon as she left my son received correspondence from the Dept for Child Support claiming \$660 per week from him to support his children. The child support Agency would not consider the problem that she had stolen all his money from his bank account while the AVO was in place. He also had to replace furniture and pay for legal fees to try to find his children. It took 2 months to find his children as his defacto had moved them from house to house to avoid him locating them. And the court and legal fees still keep coming.

He has been cleared of all criminal charges of the AVO as she again admitted in court that she again lied but, as the police took out the AVO on her behalf, my son was not reimbursed for his legal expenses.

My son now has access to his children from Friday to Saturday every weekend. This was granted to him by the magistrate's court. He has to travel 8 hours per weekend to get collect his girls and take them back. The changeovers have been so traumatic.

I go with my son on most of the weekends, as this woman is violent. She has even assaulted me. I went to the police about this but because she said that I hit her the police said there was conflicting statements and so they could not do anything. It is so traumatic for the children to see her carry on like this.

I took an AVO out on this woman with the magistrate. The police also told me to take a video camera with me and record the change over of the children for my protection. This should stop her being violent and verbally abusive, so the police and I thought. But again she abused me this time she waited till I was getting into my sons car and came between the cars and kneed me in the leg. She also hit me in the head and verbally abused me. My son had the camera in his hand and took a video of it all. The police arrested her for breach of an AVO and she was let out on bail.

My son does not like me to go with him as he feels I am in danger but I will go up with him on occasions as I feel I should not have to feel like a victim. This woman has only done all this to obtain financial benefits. To secure her financial benefit she has tried to make it impossible for my son to have access to the children. She wants my son to give up trying to get custody of the children. This woman is a violent woman and she still has my lovely granddaughters. The other weekend one of them had a black eye she said it was an accident but can you believe her.

My son should have full custody of these children but he is still waiting to go to the family court for his case to be heard. Even 50/50 custody would help my grandchildren. Already they do not want to go back when he takes them to their mother. My sons solicitor went to the family court for a hearing last week but my son's defacto did not show. Another ploy to drag out the process so that she can claim primary career.

Where is the fairness in this society? We have been let down by the law every step of the way. The children being stolen from my sons home by the support of an AVO, my sons furniture and belongings and my daughters car and furniture, these are all classed as a domestic issue and nothing can be done except through the court process. But the legal fees to get back these belonging are more than they are worth. And the property is probably all sold by now, as it has been 6 months since all this started.

My son is on the brink of losing his home because of his financial and legal liabilities. Where his defacto has access to Legal aid. If he did not have such a good job he would be like a lot of other men. Unable to continue the fight for the right to see their own children. How would a father on the basic wage ever be able to fight this case? He would be thrown on the scrap heap.

All of this was done so that this woman can gain financial benefits for herself and destroy the lives of her children and the lives of my family in the process. She is then rewarded for all of this with financial benefits. Men love their children and want to have some input into their lives. Men are human; they are hurting by this unfair system. My son was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He could not work or

function for some time until he gained some access to his daughters. He could have committed suicide like a lot of our young men are doing, or he could have dropped out of the system like a lot of our men are doing to avoid the financial burden and the disappointment of not having their children. He is also among the many who will not have another serious relationship with a women because of the laws that favor women's rights over men's rights. Also the grandparents that cannot see their grandchildren because of these laws of access. These laws are breaking up the family unit and in the process breaking up our social structure and destroying the future of Australian children.

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Concerned mother and grandmother.