

Roslyn Flanagan
17 Mt Berryman Road
Blenheim Via Laidley
Queensland 4341
6th August 2003

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: **584**

Date Received: **8-8-03**

Secretary:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into the Family Court and Child Support Agency

I would like you to consider my submission into the above inquiry as I have been a customer of both for the past 13 years.

Firstly in relation to the shared cared arrangement for child custody, I feel this would be very beneficial to the children as they would see both of their parents more frequently rather than the every second weekend access arrangement that is now in place. Both parents would have more of an input into the childs life, the way it would have been if the parents had remained together.

This arrangement would also take the stress off both parents in relation to Child Support as both parents would have equal care of the children therefore eliminating the need for the Child Support Agency which I feel adds to the animosity between parents in the first instance.

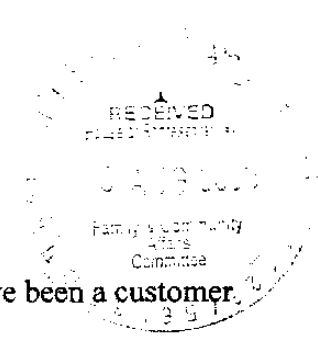
Both parents would be able to continue on with their chosen field of employment with the knowledge that their hard earned dollars are going towards their childs education etc, rather than their former partners drinking, smoking or gambling habits.

The child would benefit enormously to these changes as there would not be the need for either parent to belittle the other parent(in the hope that the child would live with that person) resulting in the child receiving more of a balanced upbringing without the denigration. A child loves both parents unconditionally, it is not fair for any child that the menagerie of "professionals" that are in our court system today should dictate where a child should or should not live. In the majority of cases the child is not even asked, resulting in confusion and a feeling of loss for that child.

Secondly the Child Support Agency would have to be one of the most inconsistent mismanaged government agencies I would have ever had the misfortune of being involved with. I have been a client from the very beginning both as a receiving parent and a paying parent. Not once have they ever got my case correct I have been given the bureaucratic run-around for the entire 13 years.

I have asked them repeatedly to investigate my case, but to no avail. I am reassured time and time again that the matter would be promptly looked into and dealt with. But of course that never happens.

The Child Support Agency should be abolished and another infrastructure put in place ie; a special court to deal with each matter on it's own merit rather than the paying parent all being labelled as equal. We are all different, why should we pay 18% etc of our wage before tax to



the other party. How is a person supposed to have a life after divorce or separation if they cannot financially support themselves let alone be involved in another relationship.


Perhaps the high divorce rate of second marriages may be attributed to the financial strain that the Child Support Agency places on the non custodial parent! Also emphases has to be placed on the high suicide rate we are seeing now due to the family breakdown, is this also a direct consequence of the strain of the paying parent not being able to have a second chance at a happy union?

I was in the system before the Child Support Agency whereas the custodial parent went to the local Magistrates Court and both parties were heard and there financial responsibilities were discussed. The Magistrate then ruled on the amount after carefully taking into consideration both parties situations. I am still a party to this arrangement and it works well. My former partner has a set amount of money taken out of his wage every week and he is still able to go on and have another relationship and support the needs of that family, knowing that if he works harder and earns more money it will benefit his present families situation not his past therefore resulting in a more productive workplace, and a happier home environment for him.

I also strongly object to the practice of paying Child Support for a child from the funds the Government gives for supporting another child, eg: family tax benefit, baby bonus etc. Why should this money be deemed as income when it is used to support another child, resulting in the child the money is meant for missing out. I thought this money was an election ploy to make it more attractive for a woman to stay home and raise the children rather than put further strain on already exhausted child care facilities, not to be redirected as Child Support.

I have absolutely no objections to paying child support, but I vehemently believe the current system is a failure in desperate need of either total abolishment or a drastic structural shakeup. I do not believe the huge percentage, paying parents are required to pay is fair or just and it certainly does not allow the non custodial parent to "get on with their lives".

Yours Sincerely



Roslyn Flanagan