

Submission No: 1155

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary: .....

**From:** Claude Memma [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 7 August 2003 11:14 PM  
**To:** Committee, FCA (REPS)  
**Subject:** I wholeheartedly support the current Family Law Reform Bill issue.  
**Importance:** High

I would like to express my full support for the current Family Law Reform issue, namely, the "rebuttable joint custody" proposal. Research of the most stringent, unbiased and reliable quality clearly demonstrates that children who have equal and fair access to both parents will gain enormous benefits throughout their life span and develop into well-adjusted adults. This fact is VERY CLEAR and can no longer be ignored. Any opposition to this idea can honestly only be seen to be emanating from those with alternative "vested interests and hidden agendas" - the general public is now becoming very aware that this is going on and are beginning to demand that something be done about it.

There is one "serious" problem and real danger with the passing of this bill and that is that it will herald in an unprecedented number of false allegations in divorce and custody proceedings. As a consequence, the passing of this bill alone will not suffice to ensure the upholding of the "family" as a strong societal institution. Serious consideration must now be given to make all forms of investigative procedures into allegations of child abuse during divorce and custody proceedings absolutely "transparent" to public scrutiny with no exceptions whatsoever. Those who make deliberately false allegations must be made punishable by law. This would have the effect of "discouraging" those people who maliciously and deliberately make false allegations from doing so in divorce and custody proceedings.

If no changes are implemented in the area of false allegations in divorce proceedings in conjunction with the passing of the Family Law Reform Bill, this will clearly not be enough to ensure that children do in fact have contact to both parents "in reality". A check of the number of "allegations" soon after the passing of this bill should be enough to convince the government that it has indeed opened a "pandora's box". It will be an unfortunate position indeed to find that nobody had the "hindsight" to believe that false allegations in divorce are and will continue to be used by many as a weapon of choice in divorce and custody proceedings. The blood of these children will be on the hands of this and the governments that ruled from the 1980s and the subsequent three decades that followed. Nevertheless, there will also be an "unprecedented level of law suits and class actions" that arguably would force this issue forward regardless. The training and level of expertise required to investigate allegations of child sexual abuse is way beyond many of those currently employed in the system and this should be rectified immediately.

This is an opportunity for this government to come forward and say, "we had the courage and determination to stand up and recognize that there are better life outcomes for children who have access to both parents throughout their lives". The importance of this issue cannot be overstated.

I thank you for your time to read this letter. &nb sp;

13 AUG 2003