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House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

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Secretary:

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Federal Government Inquiry

I am writing to you regarding the above inquiry into Family Law, Child Support and Joint Custody.

I have so much to say and only realized tonight that submissions closed tomorrow.

A lot of emphasis is being placed on the Joint Custody area it seems and all though this is important, there is a sequence of events that finally leads to this need by non-custodial parents.

1/ The Family Law Court does not take into account settlement of a separation and the chattels. One partner may do nothing for the minimal amount of time they are together yet the other may have to relinquish what they have toiled for many many years.

2/ A female may walk into the Child Support Agency and nominate any male as the father and the male has to prove and spend copious amounts of money to prove he is not.

3/ That is if he knows where the children are and if he has the permission of the female and **finally after all of the above can afford to do so.**

4/ The Child Support Agency then goes on a hell for leather chasing you for money. First they send you a bill for monies after the claim has been in for months and you suddenly owe thousands of dollars. Their explanation it took time for the documents to come from Melbourne. I don't know any organization that makes a bill retrospective because they were slack in the dereliction of their duties.

5/ You then feel anger at the system that you are told is there for both of you. No negotiation nothing. The torment and trauma that has been this relationship and now the new enemy the Child Support Agency harassing you giving you penalty payments for outstanding amounts. If you can't afford the back payments what chance is there of catching up with the penalties as well.

6/ You get a caseworker were here to help, but in most cases they are not any help and are judgmental you the non-custodial parent? (**I don't know if I am the parent**) is the bad person.

7/ I required help by means of psychiatric counseling because they would not help, unemployed on benefits they still said I was to pay as if I were working.

left the country for a while and I still accrued a debt. I was given some money by my sister to seek counseling and they seized my bank account. When I approached them I was told because of my debt. I asked what was I supposed to do to eat, put a roof over my head and the day to day things I needed to do. The response you owe money, you have a responsibility, go to the salvo's. Again I rang and spoke to somebody else the same response. I was devastated, no where to turn on the verge of suicide no one wanted to hear me had the least bit concerned, cared whether I existed or survived or not. It took me to speak to a supervisor and her tell me that under the statute that this was not allowed because of the amount. **The anguish, humiliation, worthlessness, desperation, please excuse my language I felt like a piece of shit.**

8/ I am unable to do a thing yet this person can make claim that I am the father take all my life savings, leave me destitute. The system is looking out for the children yes, but the female has all the same options as the male.

9/ I have up to recent times been a responsible, honest, law abiding, citizen. Never in debt, always doing the right thing but this situation has made a sad, bitter and at times feeling like I can't handle this any longer.

10/ I am currently being made to pay \$225 per week maintenance. I have been working to try to get my life and situation back on track. Not only do they want money out of my normal wage but when I am trying to make headway and start again they want money from my overtime as well. This huge amount means I can only just live and I can never go on holidays that is just recreate, or have time out, I can't afford the time off. That is just to stop working.

11/ I know women have not had a fair deal in the past but the pendulum has swung the other way.

Please, please whenever I allow myself to think about the way things have happened and are at the moment my thoughts get very disjointed but I just want a fair go.

Give me the chance to firstly see if the children are mine, the costs are inhibitable.

I can't get legal representation because of the cost she can.

The burden should be equally shared.

The court not make a mandatory or arbitrary decision of the chattels in greater favour of the female but who made the major contribution whether by monetary or years of marriage.

As I sit here and type, this only one bit of the whole story but as I continue the pain of then, now and the future grieves me and I will stop but just to say I am willing to discuss any or all of this with any person from this inquiry.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE I AM NOT SHIRKING MY RESPONSIBILITY BUT JUST WANT THE WHOLE PROCESS TO BE EQUAL HANDED. Thankyou for listening.