

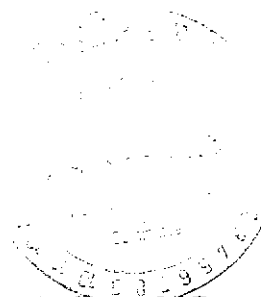
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 1473

Date Received: 29-9-03

Secretary: .....

The Committee Secretary,  
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs,  
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry,  
Department of the House of Representatives,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600,  
Australia.



In light of this inquiry I have made representations to the Hon. John Anderson M.P. and the Hon. Larry Anthony M.P. A copy of each of those representations is attached setting out the circumstances of my son becoming a father.

We have also set out our concerns with trying to obtain access to the child given the insecure nature of the mother. In the initial stages our son expressed a desire to have access to fulfil his obligation as a father however the circumstances under which she would allow him to do so did not make it possible. He has since not expressed any desire to have access, however we as grandparents and our very close extended family would gladly accept it.

In your Terms of Reference (b) we feel that the circumstances of our son becoming a father should be taken into account in determining the amount of child support paid. We don't believe that he should be excused from his duty but feel that the 18% of gross salary in the case of someone earning larger wages is excessive. Especially considering that he was never a husband or a defacto partner of this woman. Perhaps support of 18% of a base salary allowing him to better himself by working overtime and earning penalty rates.

We firmly believe that there are many young women who have children purely to receive the benefits. Making an adjustment to the benefits received both from the Government and the father in these cases could deter young women from deliberately falling pregnant to receive benefits. Our son pays in excess of \$260 per week for a child that does not bear his name and has had access set at a time that does not allow him to attend due to work commitments.

The office of the Hon. John Anderson has informed us that there will be Interviews in Gunnedah on Monday 27 October, 2003. We would be pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the committee to further state our concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[REDACTED]

Hon. John Anderson M.P.,  
Federal Member for Gwydir,  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
Minister for Transport and Regional Services,  
Leader of the National Party.

John,

We are writing this letter due to the current review into Child Support. Also at the request of your staff following our attempt to meet with you. We feel the current system for assessing child support is not completely fair in respect to some cases.

The current system assesses child support for one child at 18% of the gross income of the father. This we are informed is to allow the wife or partner to live a similar lifestyle to that she would live if the couple were still together. This we believe is fair in some cases, however, we would like to explain the situation our son [REDACTED] has found himself in.

Early last year following an engagement breakdown [REDACTED] attended a local hotel to drown his sorrows. This is not something we would recommend, however, he did, and he became quite inebriated. Without much knowledge of the events following, he found that the female barperson, a former girlfriend from school some 6 years previous, had looked after him for the evening. As a result he is now a father.

Following D.N.A. proof [REDACTED] is now paying child support of \$260-70 per week. He is fortunate to have a well paying job in which he works long hours underground in a coal mine. There are opportunities for him to increase his income by working overtime hours, however he finds that 18% is taken from this also. The \$260-70 per week currently assessed was taken on his 2002 tax return, which did include quite a sum of overtime.

Mediation was arranged by the mother to talk about access and [REDACTED] surname. [REDACTED] is currently registered under his mother's maiden name and she has refused permission for [REDACTED] to register him with the [REDACTED] name. Access was also discussed for both [REDACTED] and our family. Access for our family was declined, supposedly to be arranged at a later date, and access for [REDACTED] was allowed if he attended her home on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month between 10.00am and 12noon, on his own and with her in supervision. [REDACTED] currently works in [REDACTED] on Night Shift commencing Sunday evenings.

We have known this girl for many years and we are aware that she has made allegations in the past and at times she handles the truth carelessly. For this reason we agree with [REDACTED] that it would not be in his interests to attend her home on his own. We know that the court system is available for us to take this matter further but recent letters from [REDACTED] solicitor indicate the costs to be extreme. With the cost of D.N.A. and the cost of legal fees prior to and for the mediation, [REDACTED] has outlaid almost \$2500-00, whilst the so called victim (the mother) receives legal aid paid for by us tax payers.

This girl, we believe, has taken advantage of our son at his weakest moment and is now reaping the benefits similar to those of wives or partners. I am aware of one other young man she took home from the hotel in similar circumstances, and who she also accused of being the father. Unfortunately D.N.A. proved [REDACTED] to be the father.

For these reasons we believe the system should allow for cases to be assessed on their individual merits. We believe the mother in this case should make an equal contribution financially, to the upbringing of the child. If the roles were reversed and [REDACTED] was the barperson I believe a case could be found against him for rape.

John, we look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
28<sup>th</sup> September, 2003.

Mr. Larry Anthony,  
Minister for Youth & Community Affairs,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600,

Dear Mr. Anthony,

After watching A Current Affair tonight (1/9/03) we feel a need to write to you to explain our situation.

Today our grandson turned seven months old. We have no contact with him. We do live in the same town, [REDACTED] which is not a big town. Our son, [REDACTED] aged 23 lives and works in [REDACTED]. He also has no contact with his son and pays \$260-70 per week maintenance.

Our situation is different to those on A Current Affair. [REDACTED] was neither a husband or a partner. He was engaged to another girl and she finished that relationship. [REDACTED] was devastated and tried to drown his sorrows at a local hotel. He remembers nothing of sleeping with the baby's mother. The mother of the child was also the bar person serving him the alcohol in the hotel. (Is this responsible service of alcohol?)

We are not saying [REDACTED] should not have to pay maintenance but we feel he is paying an excessive amount in accordance with the circumstances of him becoming a father.

We feel that each case should be judged on it's individual merits and in this case the mother who obviously participated as much, if not more should be made responsible for her actions as well. We as grandparents would gladly welcome access but because this woman handles the truth very carelessly we are not game to take this matter further. If we were to gain access we feel she could and would make allegations about us.

We have written to both the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Gwydir Mr. John Anderson and sent a copy to Member for New England Mr. Tony Winsor. A copy of that letter is attached.

Since writing to Mr. Anderson we have become aware of another young male (18 at the time of the incident) who doesn't even remember speaking to this same woman in the same hotel, and who found himself in bed in her home the next morning. He told his mother this scared him and he left the premises. He was also accused of being the father of this child. This young man like my son [REDACTED] spent 12 months quite stressed and traumatised until D.N.A. proved [REDACTED] to be the father. We often wonder, was there some spiking of drinks?

As we said to Mr. Anderson, if they had done to her what she has done to them there would be grounds for a rape case.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]