

5th August, 2003

The Honourable Kay Hull MP
Member for Riverina
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Dear Mrs Hull,

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 527

Date Received: 8-8-03

Secretary:

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Being a grandmother for many years, and also a great-grandmother, and having the best interests of all children at heart, I feel qualified to express my opinion in respect to the proposed inquiry into child custody arrangements following family separation.

- a) i) As the best interests of the child is the paramount consideration, the 50/50 plan should definitely not be implemented. All children need an ongoing stable environment, providing love and security together with defined behavioural patterns and limitations, and to know this is their home. To be shuttled at short intervals between two households with possibly differing values, aspirations and life styles would deny them the essential feeling of security, especially necessary in the formative years. Maladjusted children can go on to rebellious behaviour, problems at school, and become the misfits of society. This must not be allowed to happen.

Where family separations have happened due to improper behaviour by a parent, such as violence, sex abuse, verbal or emotional abuse, alcoholism, etc, special consideration would need to be given regarding access, if any.

- ii) It would be proper for the grandparents of the children involved to have occasional contact with them, if desired. Contact with others should be by arrangement between parents.
- b) The proposed change in the existing child support formula may react harshly on separated wives who look after a child 30% or more of the time. If the child is with the father every second weekend, a little may be saved by the mother on food, but the greater expense of rental and running the home, plus the needs of the child, is ongoing. Reducing her maintenance payments may possibly deny the child some necessity. Yet isn't the child's welfare paramount?

Those receiving a comfortable income appear not to appreciate how difficult it is to cope with escalating prices in the supermarket, and soaring rentals of houses due to the real estate boom, plus the impact of the iniquitous GST on goods and services. At a time when the Government is donating millions of dollars to a number of neighbouring countries, it reprehensible that a move is being considered which will increase the burden on separated wives with children.

It has been said that children are the future wealth of our nation. Thus it is illogical to reduce the payments made to their carers.

Yours faithfully,

