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To Whom It May Concern:

In the process expressing my point of view, I wish to refer to my own situation. I believe this will allow you to appreciate my insight and also understand how I have been hampered in trying to do right by my children.

[REDACTED] I am 33 years old and a Dole bludger. It isn't anything to be proud of. The past two years I was working on drill rigs and it was usual for us to work 90hr weeks, usually 4 weeks on and 1 week off. I wish I were there now.

My son [REDACTED] and I were very close. How I have missed watching my little boy grow. "You no forget me hay Dad". That's what my child said to me. I will never forget the night in hospital with my eldest daughter [REDACTED]. During the night when all was quiet and my little princess was so sick, I remember sitting her up to help her get something of her chest. She seemed so happy with me and I was so happy to help. My youngest daughter [REDACTED] came into the world as quiet as a mouse. The nurse went to shake her, but I whisked her away, she just made a little peep. I present you with these little details to separate my children from a number and assist in the appreciation that we are all individuals, and that we should be judged on our own merits.

As for my children's Mother, she is aware of the system and does her best to abuse the rules.

Examples:

- Judge [REDACTED] made comments directed to the Mother including, "he should be allowed to see his children" "you should take a good look at yourself". "You are trying to hold this court to ransom" "you will do what ever you can to sabotage contact".
- Dr [REDACTED] evidence in court plus his reports.
- Mr. [REDACTED] court appointed child's representative, has first hand knowledge of the Mother and her attempts to sabotage contact.

The above-mentioned people hold prominent positions within the system that regulates access. They believe I should be allowed to see my children. However apparently in the best interest of the children (?) under the guidelines of the system I am restricted. Actually I am denied any access.

- Ms [REDACTED] court appointed child psychologist thought I should not have access on the strength of her observation at an access arrangement she had set up. However I believe it should be made apparent that myself and other people involved, thought it was very poorly organized and the result represented this. In my opinion the exercise failed miserably for all concerned.

Terms of Reference:

- A) This, of course, is what it's all about. Nurturing the young minds and making sure they're able to develop and prosper as freely as possible. This has to be achieved within the common guidelines that hold society together and hopefully let it prosper. They are tomorrow's leaders, but where are we leading them.

On a personal note: there will be no use in laying blame. Fathering children is not what I had hoped for. If the system, society, the courts and possibly parliament do not deal with my children now, I fear they will be forced to in the future. Their mother has taught them by example to disrespect, not only me, but also any societal laws she believes hinders her lifestyle. As for me, well I've just stood in line and said 'yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir' and sent money. It seems the repetitive message that I receive is to 'just keep smilin' [REDACTED] and best be thankful'!

I believe the absence of one parent permanently from a household is not in the best interest of the child. Quick access arrangements should be made where the children are able to be with the respective parent almost immediately so they are able to begin a relationship post parent separation.

- 1) Yes there should be a presumption that children spend equal time with each parent. These rights could only be revoked if the child has been abused in any way and/or it's in the best interest of the child's stability so to meet schooling requirements.
 - 2) The screening process would again be used were both parties would attend counseling and move on quickly to supervised contact.
- B) I most certainly do not think it is fair, without a doubt that the females are presumed to be innocent victims of all circumstances. If the break up is 'hostile relations' it's possible for the female to manipulate the law. The misuse of a d.v.o keeps a father from his kids and house. I once received one on my birthday, and another on my daughter's birthday. My eldest daughter's birthday is the day after mine and my son's the day after that. [REDACTED]

When a D.V.O was in place or even a complaint made to the police. My children's mother would abuse the service of the police, to the point where they became her personal 'whipping boys'. I remember once she rang the police from my house. I was in the room with the door closed [REDACTED] I could hear her playing up to the person on the phone. When the police came I showed them the knife holes in the door, they took her to the police station for a statement then drove her home [REDACTED]. She came back the next day laughing about the taxi ride home. We needed baby food formula and other necessities. At this point in time she had her own car. Not much was said about the incident the night before, as I was just happy my youngin's came home. But now another D.V.O in place, the police in the area have been alerted because she had the shits the night before and now I have to step to her tune a bit quicker if I expect to father my children.

I am certainly not suggesting we get rid of D.V.Orders, but when dealing with personal matters of the heart, it's an emotional rollercoaster for all concerned. People's family's are being torn apart.

When a D.V.O. is registered the respondent parent should be made aware they're allowed immediate supervised access at an appropriate center. Of course there are two different courts involved. I understand the need to register the act of violence as a criminal offence, and the need to have the police involved to protect. However, more of an active diplomatic approach in serving the broader community could help wonders in public relations.

So if the parent on the outer is made aware and pursues this, then the police or some fragment of it and preferably the person who took the statement should help the mother through the process of the access arrangement. More of a personal touch to a very personal situation would be beneficial for all involved.

Preferably the best place for access is somewhere familiar to the child. Day care centers, and schools could be used and also a room at the local police station for more intense supervision requirements. I realize it is not within the policy of any of these organizations to provide such a service. However, I believe they should adapt, evolve to cater for the present needs of today's society. They don't have to run it, just help. A healthy family's equals a healthy community.

Because remember the parent on the outer, has a lot to do, and a lot to overcome. I seemed to be required to be constantly proving myself, for one thing. Everyone I come in contact with, within the frame work of the system has usually stereotyped me. It's not till they see the circumstances for themselves that my situation can be appreciated. With family arrangements being of such a personal nature it's hard for them to be easily categorized.

I would like to touch on the rapid diminishing value of a father in today's Australia. Let us look at what must be overcome first:

A couple break up and the man has to leave, he doesn't have much of a choice, he doesn't like to make a fuss and he certainly won't have his kids put out on the street. Due to trying to get the Mother to leave or to take the kids would stir up too much trouble. So he wears the pain, moves out, and tries to seek a mutual solution. This is when the proving yourself stuff really begins. A man has to prove to anyone and everyone that he loves his kids and how he will do right by them. Everyone has different ideas on what you should be doing, and you try to cover all of them by attending countless meetings of various kinds in order to prove your worth as a father and sometimes as a person.

So you find a new place to live, and then it's off to work you go, where the police will properly visit you. You're up for bond and rent for your new accommodation, plus maintenance payments and then you go and see a solicitor and it costs you \$200 just for a quick talk. You are broke; you can't see your kids. You remember one of them crying as you left, saying 'I want Daddy' and then you heard them getting smacked for it. You cannot go near the house or the kids, but the mother will come to you and entice you to go to her. You hear how your kids attended a party full of adults and adult themes. You know the people involved and there where no other kids there, nor should yours have been. But who am I to speak out, I am just there father.

The Mother doesn't have to prove herself; she has first rights to the attachment of the children. She's allowed to be emotional she's a woman. The mother is in the house with the kids getting child maintenance, family payments, and legal aid. The children are in day care 5 days a week, the mother doesn't work, but the children cannot see their father, and the father cannot see his children.

Why? Because she doesn't want them to!

Yours truly,

Sorry my daughter
I am not there to hold you tight
Tuck you in at night
Not a day goes by that I don't think of you
And when I do you make me smile
Thank you
Sorry my daughter
I'll push forward until the last
But your growing up so very fast
I dream of a day I run with you
Through a field of flowers
With a smile so bright
And a sky so blue
You two so pretty
so new
I plunder the world for richers to give
To you two
with a heart so true
I just wish I could be there to say goodnight to you
To see you in the morning
Just to look at you
For I love you my Daughters
All that I can
I am nothing without you
