

04/08/03

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
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Secretary:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Informal Submission:

Topic: "Child Custodial Arrangement Inquiry"

I am writing to the Committee Sec. (Standing Committee of Family & Community Affairs) in response to a letter I received from The Hon Alan Cadman MP, Federal Member for Mitchell – dated 24/7/03 on the above.

My input to this all ready well hashed out issue is in it's self, simplistic.

Family Law

Promoting the Family Law Court, essential. It's positive role rather than the negative. Protecting the rights of all parties.

Focus on mutual obligation regarding responsibility to nurturing, educating, and raising healthily minded children able to adapt to change. Follow up of court decisions and the progress of all parties is in fact working for them. This can be achieved in such a way that encourages disputing parties to address issues as they arise. The intention here, reduce possible "ugliness" damaging to the children, physically or emotionally.

The parents including Stepparents, all need to have clear boundaries and goals for the children's ongoing quality of life.

One child I spoke with stated he would like to have all children "micro chipped" so when his father took him away from "mummy" she could find him! This boy's story moved me with his innocence and his genuine concern to prevent other children from his kidnapping experience. His father was a police officer! unable to or unwilling to accept a court decision...Mediation & Family Law may have facilitated a less painful outcome for that little boy. I am wondering if Identification should be used to collect children from Day Care, sporting facilities, schools, hospitals etc. Would this help reduce kidnapping? Or add additional unrealistic expectations on parents/facilities to enforce?

Mediation

More funding from government, private sectors, for mediation services required. Relationships Australia provide great but they cannot do it alone. Would it be possible to recruit more professional mediators attached to the Family Law courts in all districts? Promotion of these services advertised in "Sydney's Child" or similar free monthly magazines? Exposing services availability in a non-confronting way may encourage an increase in seeking the service by individuals facing custodial

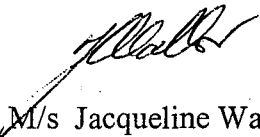
battles before the matter hits the courts. Contact by all parties concerned must be directed through a mutual mediator, essential for continuity, enabling early detection of problems. Specific counseling must also be assigned for the private needs of individuals as required.

Mediation Services for all must be accessible, affordable, multilingual, definitely titrated to the individual need of the children & adults involved.

Extended Family Members

Often over looked group – grandparents, aunts, uncles...also need support in coming to terms of court decisions etc. They can then in turn be a positive, loving, supportive influence in these custodial challenges. This could reduce negative i.e.: Mediation should definitely include this group. Some people I have spoken with are unable to relate to the importance of grandparents in their child's life, coming from single parent backgrounds where through no fault of their own –

Yours Respectfully



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