

Submission No. 28.
Date Received.....

RECEIVED
15 JUL 2005
BY: LACA

15 July 2005

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Ms Joanne Turner
Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

and by email: laca.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Turner

Review of the Exposure Draft of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Exposure Draft of the *Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005*.

The document has been considered by members of the Society's Children and the Law Committee. Their comments relate to the express provision for the "views" (previously "wishes") of a child to be taken into account. They note that there is no clear indication in the Bill as to how the child will be assisted through the process to express those views. For example, can the child seek to express their views directly to the judicial officer?

They have pointed out that this is a current failing of the Act and regrettably it has not been addressed in the new Bill.

We recommend therefore that the legislators make explicit provision in the Bill for the method by which a child can express their views.

We trust that these comments are useful.

Yours sincerely

Jan Martin
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR