Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry

Submission from

Stephen Graham
PO Box 839
Lane Cove NSW 1595

7 August 2003

Introduction

I wish to congratulate the government for yet another brave attempt to examine this thorny issue of Family Law and Child Support. From my observations of this "industry", I believe that there will be strong pressure from various quarters for a status quo. The "*problem-atizing*" of the separation process is one that is well entrenched both here and overseas, as it has monetary as well as political benefits to various parties. I expand on this later.

I am sitting here at my computer, fully three years after making a similar submission to the "Family Law Pathways Advisory Group" and I attended the workshop at Parramatta. I also made a submission to the Self Represented Litigants (SRL) Project in 2001. Sadly, it appears that nothing of substance has emerged from these two initiatives. There have been occasional mumbling and "tinkering around the edges" from the Family Court but again I'm reminded of deckchairs and "Titanics". I remain positive and continue to contribute to the debate whereas many of my associates and friends who have stumbled upon the cruelty of the divorce industry have grown older and more cynical than myself. The only reason why remain actively interested in this problem is that I don't wish my son to go through the anxiety and emotional and financial pain that I have endured over the past 7 years or more.

I strongly believe that a *rebuttable presumption of joint residence* has great merit and feel that it can enhance the opportunity for good relationships between both parents and their children. Kids are the first to suffer from the years of tension and vitriol between parents warring over basic matters such as Contact and access to medical and school reports for example. I agree with Dr Stephen Baskerville who says ..."*virtually every major personal and social pathology can be traced to fatherlessness more than to any other single factor: violent crime, substance abuse, unwed pregnancy, truancy, suicide, and more. Fatherlessness far surpasses both poverty and race as a predictor of social deviance.*" (Baskerville, 2003)

The presumption of joint residence will also benefit parents and grandparents because it can eliminate argument over parenting arrangements and reduce the "win-lose" mentality that is so often the hallmark of the costly adversarial pantomime before the Family Court. This cost is not simply a monetary one where each parent departs with an average of $30,000 in legal and other expenses. There is a far greater cost to the community in poor mental and physical health of the couple. Poor outcomes for men include, unemployment and poor work performance plus high-risk activity associated with alcohol, drugs, sex and motor vehicles. Men still suicide around six times more than women.

The Divorce Industry

I am the Contact parent of a young [redacted]year-old lad. Sole custody was awarded to my son's mother even though I ached to have joint custody.

I have worked in the social service industry for several years now. I have experience in the tough area of Western Sydney with UnitingCare Burnside delivering programs and supporting men in their role as fathers and helping them to build stable family relationships that enable young children to flourish in their development. I have also worked in Interrelate, an organisation principally engaged in counseling and mediation. In their Health Services division, I was also involved in the delivery of programs and workshops aimed at improving the health of men. Additionally, I have recent experience as a teacher within the Secondary Schools system and have first hand experience of the effect that sole custody has on our kids.

Prior to my above experience, I had 20 years experience in the [redacted] and a prime motivation for making this career change in the last 3 years was because I wanted to "make a difference" to the health and well-being of men and their children. The undoubted catalyst for this change was because of my own abhorrent divorce and the observation that this was the experience of many men. I was saddened by the marginalisation of men and their role as fathers and the effect that separation has had on them as well as our children. I strongly agree that ...*"virtually every major personal and social pathology can be traced to fatherlessness more than to any other single factor: violent crime, substance abuse, unwed pregnancy, truancy, suicide, and more. Fatherlessness far surpasses both poverty and race as a predictor of social deviance."* (Baskerville, 2003)

From my experience and observation over the past 7 years, I note that there are some passionate and wonderful individuals working in and around the Family Law area who are genuinely interested in the best outcomes for the families that have stumbled upon the misfortune of separation. They recognize the genuine angst and hardship families suffer when the partnership falters. Importantly, they understand that the partners have done nothing more than fail to keep their promise of a lifetime of commitment & togetherness. This is an entirely human act.

In the main however, I sense that these people are in the minority and to a large extent have been sidelined because of the overwhelming weight of the monetary greed and avarice of those who seek to profit from the misfortune of others. I include in this "industry" the Family Law Court and associated public and private officials such as judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, mediators, counsellors, social workers, medical professionals, Child Support Agency, "professional" expert witnesses and associated enforcement officials. This system is not peculiar to Australia but is endemic in much of our Western World.

I believe the strategy for the FCA's (Family Court of Australia's) perpetuation as an "industry" in itself, is to tilt the "playing field" in one direction. By doing so, it guarantees that those who feel smitten by a likely decision regarding residence of the children and the knock on effects this entails, will rise to the challenge and take on a brace of expensive "legal boffinary" to correct the injustice. There'd be no reason for people to take on this legal hardware if the FCA awarded evenly balanced decisions. The notion that the FCA and its practitioners are genuinely concerned for the outcomes of families is an absolute farce. It's simply a pantomime played out before the court at the financial and spiritual ruination of the partners of a failed relationship.

So, how does the FCA tilt the playing field? Put simply, it has chosen to embrace the "in the best interest of children" motto as its theme. The FCA has high jacked this trendy, politically correct statement and taken this to mean it will award residence to the parent with whom it deems this statement best fits. In the vast majority of cases, this is the mother. I think there are many

reasons for this. To elaborate further would only serve as a distraction to my main argument but I believe it is because the word "mother" connotes a sense of nurture and caring which many of us readily embrace due to our stereotypical view of a woman. A view that I think enlightened men and women are keen to change.

This legal slant guarantees that there is a protracted tussle as the father seeks redress to what he sees is an unfair situation, after he is informed that he likely to become a "Father Christmas Dad", a "pale uncle" and a part time parent because he will be awarded Contact rights only. With Sole Residence come the inequitable reward of a lion's share of property and income from child support for the mother. This can be a strong driver for a wife, especially during a bitter separation when financial assault on the husband provides a means of immediate retribution. It takes an extraordinarily strong and focused mother to put at arms length the monetary prizes that accompany with custody. I believe that this fuels the rate of divorce within this country. Anecdotal evidence from the USA suggests that where joint equal custody is awarded by the court, the rate of divorce initiated by the mother has fallen.

Ex-justice Geoffrey Walsh of the Victorian Family Court made a damning attack on the FCA back in October of 1996 (refer SMH, October 12, 1996) where he was quoted as saying that ... *"the woman has all the power the men has none"*. He went on to say ... *" The custodial parent has been all powerful. She –it's usually she – has had the power to regulate access, sometimes regardless of court orders. She's had complete authority to live anywhere, with the child, that she desires. The power to determine the child's school, church, decisions about day-to-day living and the power to get a greater slice of the matrimonial cake."*

Despite the reforms to the Family Law Act in 1995 to give children a right of contact with both parents, I believe nothing has changed. It's simply a case of "old wine in new bottles" with a few politically correct terms such as residence & contact splashed about to replace offensive terms such as custody and access.

The Need for a Rebuttable Presumption of Joint Custody

I believe that first and foremost, the courts must actively embrace, promulgate and practice this *rebuttable presumption of joint residence*. The fact is that the Family Law Act is written to contain this concept but it is the interpretation of the Act by the FCA "in the best interests of children" where practice does not meet theory. The courts in the main, need to be kept well away from the process of separation and should only be approached as a place of last resort.

Within the current family law industry, I see little evidence that reform will happen spontaneously. There is far too much investment by people associated with the industry who are working to maintain the tilted playing field. There is a conflict of interest here.

The FCA believes it is even handed in its deliberations about residence of the child. They mischievously tout the statistic that of the cases that come their attention, it awards residence equally. They are in fact referring to the cases that go to a Full Hearing and require judicial intervention & determination. These constitute less than 3% of Applications that come before the FCA. Typically they are about cases involving a very real need for awarding custody to one particular parent because the circumstances of the case relate to an obvious situation of child neglect or the mental health of one of the applicants. Many litigants simply give up (usually the male) before a Final Hearing but not after each partner on average may have expended around $30,000 in getting there. The CSA quote the figure that about 93% of custodial parents are females. This is closer to the mark.

In terms of ... **"what other factors should be taken into account in deciding the respective time each parent should spend with their children post separation, in particular whether**

there should be a presumption that children will spend equal time with each parent and, if so, in what circumstances such a presumption could be rebutted"

The family relationship should continue to operate under joint custody and **equal** contact arrangements (as was the case prior to separation) unless,

- The parents express a desire for an alternative arrangement
- There are GENUINE and substantive reasons why joint custody should not be the case.

Should there be disagreement, then mediation should follow.

If this fails then we need a better system of arbitration. This concept was aired in the SRL Project and I expand on this in the next section.

In terms of ***"what circumstances a court should order that children of separated parents have contact with other persons, including their grandparents".*** In cases of equal joint custody, parents should be able to continue to provide contact with grandparents, other family, friends and associates of their choosing. This would have been the case prior to separation and surely we don't need the intervention or interference of the State to dictate who can or can't see the children.

In a situation in which one parent is awarded sole custody for agreed or genuine reasons of the child's best interests, then clearly there needs to be some provision for contact by interested parties. However, the present system of court orders are an absolute waste of time and in my experience and that of others, not worth the paper they are written on. See below re the section on "Contempt of Court".

Many orders are framed to say that the child will have reasonable access to grandma/pa or "others". The problem comes when the sole custodian (usually the mother) is anything but reasonable and obfuscates around this order. I put it to you that you can't legislate to make people reasonable.

Mediation vs Adversarial Approach

It is not a criminal offence to separate. Yet the FCA treat them as such.

It does so in the way they treat the litigants and expose them to totally unnecessary intrusion. There is in general, no reason "Mr & Mrs Average" should be subjected to such puerile and invasive interrogation of their ability to parent. Expensive Family Reports and the use of expert witnesses are a regular feature of the pantomime that goes on in the FCA. Affidavits are often crafted by solicitors to elicit predictable reactions by the judge rather than delve into any deep analysis or truth.

Symbols of criminal court processes such as the wiggery and cloaks worn by barristers and judges, the lavishness of courtrooms and associated administrative structures do nothing to improve the outcomes for families caught in the "separation swamp". The over blown Goulburn St edifice in Sydney with its rich granite, marble and other rich adornments is more akin to something out of Saddam Hussein's Royal Palace and is a prime example of the waste and squander of Nicholson's leadership. It serves only to intimidate couples and add to the ridiculous budget the FCA claims each year. I really don't think Lionel Murphy had this in mind when in originally drew up this court's charter back in 1975.

The FCA should be the absolute last resort in the process of resolving marital difficulties. I favor an approach outline by Michael Green QC (author of "Fathers after Divorce") who recommends that a "Family Commission" be established with no representation except in very special circumstances. I recommend you look at his book as a definition of a model.

DVOs and Child Molestation Charges

There are many commentators, rabid gender feminists and practitioners with influence in the family law, social service and associated industries that have a monetary or political gain in holding to their chant that men in general subscribe to the Duluth model (ie men are bastards and are violent and dads are "deadbeats"). They believe that when separation hits, there is an opportunity to correct the problem and remove "at risk" kids, placing them in the care of the person who parents best ie the mother.

One mechanism that maintains the "tilt in the playing field" is the mischievous use of DVOs (Domestic Violence Orders) and or claims of child molestation by some women. I am genuinely incensed by the men that choose any form of abuse as a method of expressing their grief and fear. I am pleased that we have a mechanism (as unsatisfactory as it might be) of controlling these perpetrators of harm.

The willingness of some mothers and some legal practitioners to use false claims of violence and abuse as a method of legitimizing the outcome of a family law decision or persuading a husband to act contrary to his judgment is equally appalling to me however. Among other things, it dilutes the valuable and scarce resources of our community and the industry that I have worked in, that are needed to address those valid claims and simply exacerbates tension in an already inflamed situation.

The extent to which DVO's can be used as a weapon in the family law arena never occurred to me until I had experienced this first hand. I well recall an encounter with my ex-wife prior to separation when she said to me ... *"I know you would never hurt me but my solicitor advises me to tell you that unless you leave our house I will put an AVO on you ....he says that I only have to feel threatened. So are you going to leave or not?".*

Flabbergasted, I approached the local court and the police with mixed results. The police acknowledged this is a common tactic by the female partners who are often "egged on" by solicitors or extreme right winged feminist support groups. They made it clear that they sympathized with the plight of men facing these false claims. They said, however, they would not hesitate to slap a DVO on an alleged offender if the so-called, "victim" pressed the matter. They felt that the risk of not doing so would have dramatic repercussions on their jobs were they to be found wanting in their decision.

The Local Court's, Chamber Magistrate made it very clear to me that he would also issue an DVO reinforcing this with the comment ... "I think the weak in our community should have the full protection of the law!!"

I left dispirited and shocked.

Little did I comprehend that this happened regularly to other men. We are embarrassed to admit that women are violent toward men for fear of being called a "sissy" and much of this violence goes unreported. Men who I have counseled say that when they have approached the police for assistance, they are asked brutally "are you a man or a mouse?!!" Men are not the only perpetrators of violence or child abuse. In terms of sexual abuse we may predominate (this is still a contentious argument). Yet in areas of emotional abuse and neglect as well as physical abuse toward the infirm the elderly and children, women are far more significant abusers.

My solicitor advised me to leave my matrimonial home. The gravity behind the DVO charade was lost upon me until I it transpired that this is a common tactic used by some wives to ensure they retain control of the house. The house is an "ace in the deck", played out during interim custody determinations in the FCA. It is conveniently viewed by the court, that the parent with the house has a greater ability to care for the children, there being less upset & change to their routine etc. A year or 18 months passes by as solicitors write impressive and expensive missives between each other like a game of ping-pong.

If a belligerent and brave father who is not worn down spiritually (if not financially) by this process dares take the matter of custody to court he faces the clever comment from a judge who says .... " mmm .... and who has had the children over the past year or so ...???" Knowing the likely answer before it is even cleverly offered by an over eager legal representative for the wife, he announces .... "well then ....status quo...I think it best if this situation continues ....in the best interest of the children, I award custody to the Wife".

The effect this has on families as a result of false allegations is catastrophic and I appreciate the difficulty those who must assess the veracity of these allegations may have. I suggest however, that in circumstances where false claims are proven, then the offender should be heavily penalized. If this means financially as well as through a jail term then so be it. This nonsense about not jailing mothers "in the best interest of children" & such like, is just blatant bias and a nonsense. Men are routinely jailed for offences in the community and in this land of equality "what is good for the goose is good for the gander".

Timing is Everything

There is also a consideration of the timing in terms of how best to deal with the practicalities of separation & divorce. Separating couples are more often than not, in different phases of grief when one partner initiates the separation. I understand that people who initiate divorce do so on an average of 4 years in advance of actually expressing that desire to their partner. On this basis the initiator is usually moving through the advanced stages of acceptance, healing and moving on while the other partner is in a state of shock and denial and feeling the full emotional turmoil of the announcement. They are quite ill equipped to deal with the practicalities in a dispassionate and adult like fashion.

Women are the initiators of divorce in 66% of cases. They therefore enter the process of litigation in a more advanced state of grief with, I believe, a greater degree of community support and welfare services behind them than is available for men. Little wonder the court looks upon them as the more favored example of emotional stability and effectiveness.

Men sometimes express their fear as "anger". Men traditionally associate with three things in their lives. Their family, their possessions and their job. When separation hits, all three are threatened and men are fearful of this. Attention to this "anger" is often played upon mischievously by the artful representative for the wife and used against him in the Court process in order to deny the husband contact with their children and/or to award a greater share of property to the wife.

Mediation and most certainly the rigors of an adversarial and intrusive court process are I believe, quite ineffective until <u>both</u> partners have had equal time to reach a stage of acceptance of the situation if counseling has failed to save the partnership. I recommend that that reasonable time be given to both parties to come to a stabilized state of acceptance before the arduous task of property settlement be commenced.

Some interim measures to maintain the welfare of the children should be made but they should not be done to the long-term disadvantage of either partner when it comes to a decision of Residence.

Contempt of Court

25% of contact parents see their children these days. A vast majority of contact parents are men. Why??

There are some parents that walk away and don't want to see their kids because they don't give a damn. However, I believe that many Contact parents do so because they can't endure the pain and anguish they experience and the distress they see mirrored in their kids faces each time that tearing moment of separation happens at the end of each contact week-end (if they are lucky enough to get this) and they must endure the cruelty and barbarism of having to say good-bye to their children. They simply walk away, and I say they are amongst the most courageous of us.

There a many Contact parents, however, that the Family Court frustrates and torments by doing nothing more than slapping the resident parent over the wrist with a "wet tram ticket" when it comes to penalizing them for abducting the kids or frustrating contact whether it be by phone or through the standard fortnightly contact week-ends. Chief Justice Nicholson himself says that he would never fine a woman or put her in jail because it would be taking food out of the kid's mouths. Is there a box on a parking ticket or speeding ticket that says "tick here for single mother" and the fine gets wavered? Of course not.

My woes are mild by comparison with some fellow separated dads who endure the pain of not even knowing where their kids are but are still paying Child Support. A truly tragic situation for our children and the father.

There is a plethora of obfuscation by Resident parents in and around contact and the orders issued by the FCA are regularly breached. In addition to this, Contact parents have many problems in obtaining medical information about their kids from their doctors and information about progress at school from his teachers. I have routine challenges in being able to obtain basic information from teachers and doctors who have been bluffed by the Resident parent in believing she will sue them for providing them with information about my lad's progress. Infuriatingly it costs me around $6,000 to have these skirmishes repeatedly adjudicated in court much to the amusement of the mischievous mother.

I'm often asked by my son's teachers and doctors if I have Orders stating that I have access to this reports and so forth. For goodness sake I'm his father! Clearly, I have no Orders which say I can have access to reports but neither do I have Orders which state that I must speak to my son civilly and/or feed him 3 nourishing meals a day when he is with me.

In drawing up our orders in the Family Court during Final Hearing, the judge stated to both parties that explicitly elaborating many of these orders would in effect, make them unwieldy and impede rather than enhance their purpose. She explained to us that no orders would be made precluding access to medical or school reports, extra-curricular activities etc, which meant that I implicitly had access as my son's guardian even though sole custody was awarded the Wife.

I have explained this understanding to various Registrars during frustrating and time consuming visits to the FCA on number of occasions. One Registrar in the FCA said ..."*I acknowledge that you have a RIGHT to a copy of your son's medical reports Mr Graham but you don't have an ORDER and I can't give you one...*"

The State Schools System have released a policy, which the Catholic Schools Association have adopted and the Independent Schools are soon to adopt. It's called "The Family Law & the

Schools Policy – August 1997". Basically it sets out the clear statement that if there are no Orders specifically saying that a Contact parent can not have access to school reports, school photos or their kids teachers etc, then they shall have that access provide in full as if the children were in their fulltime care.

I have recently approached the Medico-legal Director of the AMA to address this self same issue. I'm yet to obtain a definitive answer. I am assured that I'm no Robinson Crusoe in this matter. The point is, why should I have to do this though? Why don't the FCA do something to resolve this problem in the Orders they issue in the first place or undertake this process of education with those who are associated with child welfare ? Some cynical individuals suggest that the FCA simply see this as another opportunity for the solicitors to profit and to bolster perpetuation of the FCA machinery.

The Court should treat denial of contact, contempt of court and obfuscation re Contact with the seriousness it deserves. The imposition of financial penalties or at the very least reduced contact and in the extreme circumstance the awarding of sole residence to the other parent must be used as a deterrent. At present, Orders issued by the Court aren't worth the paper they're written on.

Again I say, shared parenting and joint residence would alleviate this in any case.

Section 121

Why is it that little of the aforementioned atrocities in the FCA are reported in the media. Because of Section 121 of the Family Law Act.

Section 121 – "the secrecy clause" in the family law act needs massive overhaul if not abolition. It is touted as a means of protecting the innocent. The FCA cling to it with the tiresome epithet that it's "in the best interests of the children". It has legitimacy if used properly to protect children from identification in cases of child abuse for example but beyond that it has little or no use. It simply serves to keep the public's gaze at bay.

Just imagine if GMH or Ford were blessed by a piece of legislation which prevented the community from raising issues with the Consumer Affairs Department about faulty braking systems or speed control units which were suspected to be the basis for a number of fatal crashes. We'd be appalled at this. Yet Section 121 is a piece of legislation unique to Family Law, that prevents all of the "rabbit punching", bullying and biased business of the FCA to remain its own fetid affairs and non of the public's. It is indeed everyone's business because we are divorcing at the rate of almost 1 in 2 marriages. We deserve better in our egalitarian country.

I am appalled at just how out of touch and sub standard many of the FCA Counselors, Registrars, Judicial Registrars and Judges are as I have made it my business to walk into a number court sessions to better understand the FCA's practices. Many of its staff and practitioners appear not to know what the inside of a supermarket or a baby's nappy looks like, yet they are daily making life changing decisions about child welfare. The FCA under the outdated leadership of Nicholson CJ, is just not delivering and I think Section 121 needs to be removed to expose the FCA's tawdry performance.

By way of example of where the removal of Section 121 would be effective, I recount a session I attended in court in which the wife dabbed with measured theatrics at some imagined tears in her eyes. The judge, with predictable and practiced pantomime paused and inquired as to her well-being. He requested a glass of water be bought to her and allowed a brief adjournment for her to regain her composure. What a contrast in his demeanor did I witness when the husband, whilst delivering an impassioned speech about his desire to have joint custody, broke down & sobbed part way through his nervous and defeated delivery. The judge harangued him and said ... "Mr X, no wonder you are not going to get joint custody of your children if you can't control yourself !!"

Had this been reported in the media, I think the judge would have been denounced by the public, carpeted by an (effective) administration and hopefully by now, been sweeping out the offices in the Goulburn Street Registry in Sydney rather than continuing to ruin the lives of those who cross his orbit.

I'll just say that that tawdry exhibit, pales into insignificance compared to other spine chilling pearls of wisdom from the judiciary that I've been told about.

Fairness of the Child Support Agency Formula

General

I am in favour of an agency to look after the administration of child support but not the agency in its present form. The agency continues to be mal-administered (despite the CSA's protests) and this was established in a tomb of a document back in 1994 called *"Child Support Scheme – an examination of the operation & effectiveness of the scheme".* It was performed by the Joint Select Committee (JSC) on Certain Family Law Matters. Roger Price MP was the chairman and Daryl Williams was on this committee also. In total, 6197 submissions were contributed. Why do we need more submissions??

Very few of the proposals that had real teeth have been implemented today. Of the ones that were made, they were mainly cosmetic. What Roger Price said was that there was a raft of changes that needed to be made together to benefit both payers & payees. Several benefits to payees were made and very few to payers.

It was recommended that Child Support assessed via a specific formulae, was to cover the total commitment to the children and that the practice of awarding an extra proportion of the pool of assets (ie double dipping) in the Court was to cease. This still routinely happens today because the FCA don't talk to the CSA and the CSA don't talk to the FCA. Despite the best intent of the Government in undertaking this study, the Family Court still hands out outrageous decision after decision in Property matters awarding the custodial a nauseatingly high percentage of the "baubles and bright shiny objects" when it comes to carving up the assets and yet the Contact parent still pays Child Support at stratospheric levels.

A recommendation of the JSC was to also examine the true cost of raising children rather than using the farcical figures put together in the botched introduction of the Child Support Act and also to be used to replace the "Lovering & Lee" figures used in the FCA. This study was undertaken in April 1998 through the *Indicative Budget Standards Unit (BSU)* of the University of NSW within their Social Policy Research Centre (ISBN no. 0-642-32025-x). Yet to date, it has not been implemented. Why??? I suggest it is because it demonstrates that it does not cost the GDP of a small African nation to raise a child as is asserted by those who seek to maintain these payments at ridiculous levels.

Once again I maintain, that joint custody should be the standard formula following separation and many of the issues surrounding child support would disappear.

I recommend that this JSC report be revisited. It outlined in clear unequivocal language, the woes of the present CSA.

The Deeming Process as a result of Departure from the Formula

In addition to the inequity of the "administrative formula", there are huge problems that occur as a result of "departure applications" when the CSA depart from the percentage based (administrative) formulas.

I continue to have challenges with the Child Support Agency's "income deeming" process as a result of such a departure. This is the process whereby they deem your child support income at a certain level regardless of unemployment or other changes to employment circumstances.

As mentioned in the introduction, I moved from the IT industry several years ago. This came about from a desire to "make a difference" and also because the IT industry has gone through a down turn in recent times. My income, not surprisingly has been cut by at least a third. Despite this, the CSA have "deemed" my income at a level they say represents my "capacity to earn". I am now almost $10,000 in arrears as a result of combined unemployment on occasion as well as my lower income.

Clearly this is ridiculous. It is not fair to expect some to remain employed in one job for the rest of your life regardless of age, health, personal desire & aspiration (following a separation especially), general economic and business circumstances. Australia is second only to Spain (in terms of OECD countries) in relation of the number of people participating in part-time and casual jobs. There is huge pressure by employers to

Many couples manage this process when they are together and "do the dance" in order to provide best for their family. If this involves one partner going back to study or taking time out to have a child then trade-offs are made within the relationship. Yet when separation strikes, the Contact parent (usually a male) finds that they don't have access to these basic life scenarios.

Many politicians are ex barristers and solicitors. Imagine the furor if Michael Carmody from the Tax Office approached them with a desire to help them "better manage their taxation responsibilities". Listen while Mr Carmody is putting the argument to a politician now. *"As a barrister, you could earn about $500k per year compared to your present salary of $200k per year. You would be of far more benefit to the Australian Public, were you to be earning more so that you could contribute more taxes. Should you wish to remain a politician and pursue an existential life helping your constituents, that's perfectly fine. However to help you manage your taxation responsibilities better, I'm going to tax you at the rate were you to be earning $500k per year even though you choose to remain a politician."*

In conclusion, I don't believe the current Child Support Formula is fair nor is the process of administration effective even though I'm support of an agency to manage this.

References

Baskerville, S (2003). Divorce as Revolution. Internet reference - *http://mensnewsdaily.com/archive/a-e/baskerville/03/baskerville062103.htm.*