

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs		Submission Founder of the
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Shared Parenting

The lack of presumption of shared parenting is at the heart of the problems besetting families on marriage break up. The bonding of Parents to children forms the basis on which most families exist, 45% of marriages break up every year, the enormous cost to our nation is severe. Murder Suicides are too common, even cases involving politicians have happened. While the legal profession won't admit the fact is the residency of children will impact greatly on any property settlement in the event of marriage break up. Marriage break up affects all strata's of our society, costing Australia Three billion Dollars every year (ref " To have and to hold, *standing Committee legal and constitutional Affairs Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives June 1998*).

The presumption of shared parenting is not a means of enforcing an equal 50/50 ratio of shared parenting, but where possible there should be no legal impediments to this occurring.

Mediation & Contact Centres

Because of the fragmentation of the extended Family environment in Australia we need to create a substitute to maintain the bond between children and the non residential parent usually the Father, these should take the form of decentralised Mediation & Contact centres, open at weekends and nights, staffed by volunteers, headed up by professional counsellors, funded by Government.

These centres should only be used where both parents cannot agree to contact arrangements. In house video could also prove/disprove any claims of child abuse. An alternative arrangement would be to reverse residence of the child where one parent refuses contact between the child and the other parent.

Child Support

The one size fits all of Child Support is causing a lot of hardship to families. The cost of compliance both to the family and the Australian taxpayer is enormous and leads to tragic murder/suicides.

Child Support should be based on the needs of the child, not a percentage of taxable income, nor the wants of the residential parent, the ability of the contact parent to pay Child Support must be taken into account where possible by arbitration and not enforced by decree.

Child Support after arbitration should be paid into a Bank Account in the child's name, and based on a flat rate. The Child Support Agency should become a monitoring Agency and should have the role of seeing agreements are honoured by both parents.

Yours sincerely in reform

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