

Submission No: 943

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Remount Place  
Cairns  
Secretary:  
Queensland 4211

6 August 2003

The Secretary  
Child Custody Arrangement Inquiry  
Department of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA  
ACT 2600



Dear Sirs

For the past four years our grandchildren have spent two nights in the week with their father (our son) and the remainder of the time with their mother after the breakdown of the partnership, an arrangement made possible because the parents remain living in the same area. Their mother left without any separation agreement, taking the children, then aged two and four and a half, with her. She did not have to show any cause for leaving but was able to claim financial support from their father and set down access arrangements. She now wishes to reduce the time they spend with him and the matter is likely to end in Court.

The children have coped well with an arrangement which is a step towards shared parenting but having a week in turn with each parent would be less disruptive for them and make changeover time easier. Like many fathers today our son had fully shared caring for the children from babyhood and his commitment to the children is no less than that of their mother.

We would like to make a plea for all children's voices to be represented in this Inquiry. When parents split up decisions are made by adults and the children have to accept what is decided for them whatever their own feelings are. The first hope of most children is that the family can all live together again. When they have to accept that this will not happen most then want to spend as much time as possible with each parent - shared parenting would provide this. Children have a very strong sense of 'fairness' and we think would regard spending an equal amount of time with each parent as the fairest solution.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Webb".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Webb".

Derek and Beryl Webb