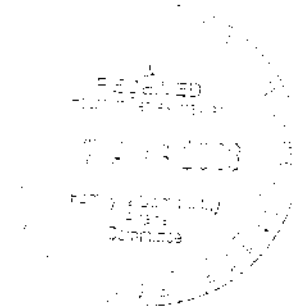


4th August 2003

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	[REDACTED]
Submission No: 1185	[REDACTED]
Date Received: 7-8-03	[REDACTED]
Secretary:	[REDACTED]

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department Of House Of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia



Dear Secretary

RE; Inquiry Into Child Custody Arrangements In The Event Of Family Separation

I take this opportunity to express my feelings in regards to custody arrangements for my only child Aaron following the separation of my wife and I in January this year and the impact upon Aaron.

At this point in time there been no determination by the Family Court in relation to custody arrangements (we have a hearing on [REDACTED]). Following the separation my former wife and I have enjoyed custody of [REDACTED] on 50/50 time share basis. This basis was agreed upon mutually by ourselves to cover an interim time prior to a court determination. Our son is very happy with the present arrangements and is provided for .

My wife through her solicitor is seeking full custody with my access only once every second weekend.

It is vitally important that the best interest (ie basic needs provided, safety and happiness) of the child is paramount. Every situation must be assessed on the individual basis, and that I believed it is grossly unfair on the child, the parent whom has limited access and grandparents to make a biased assumption based on gender alone, that the mother should have the greater custody of the children.

Clearly we live in a time when parents bring up the family together and share the responsibilities. The mother/father role model of our grandparents or even our parents where the mother stayed at home doing housework and preparing the family dinner etc whilst the father was the bread winner solely and had limited child raising input is no longer the typical household.

Even in separation I believe, provided both the father and mother has a genuine desire to, and the time and ability to, and it is in the best interest of the children, and the

children are happy with the arrangements, then I believe joint custody should be a far more assumed arrangement.
Of course there are circumstances where for many very genuine reasons the children should be in a sole custody arrangement.

The point I make is that the mother is not necessarily the right person to enjoy full custody and that the court should consider a custody application not based on an outdated no longer relevant "mother knows best" gender bias, but on either a shared parental basis or a father/mother sole basis if that is in the best interest of the children.

I make these comments also out of personal experience knowing the I personally have a greater ability than my former wife ,in many ways, to provide for our son and I believe it would be criminal for the court to have an automatic gender bias toward his mother having full custody.

I welcome this enquiry and hope that in the fullness of time through legislation the court will see fit to make a custody determination not based on outmoded family roles.

Feel free to contact me should further comment be required.

Yours truly

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]