

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

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Secretary:

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To The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600



To the Secretary,

I appeal to the committee to consider the best interests of the children regarding child custody issues, with keeping the following issues in mind, which directly affected the lives of my children and the lives of so many others in various custody situations.

I was separated due to domestic violence and my two children, then ages [redacted] remained in my residence, and continued contact which I encouraged with their father, but with no formalized arrangement.

As issues arose on many occasions about changes with weekends or a family occasion which either parent wished to attend with the children, and when the parent attempted to change the informal arrangement this caused extreme feuds and the children ultimately are the only people who suffered the consequences.

I as a parent believe I have always been obliging, however as a full time employed single mother with the residence and care of my children had and still have to be organised. This often means that dentist appointments, haircuts, doctors visits, or just fun weekend activities are planned well in advance. Changes to the weekend contact is very disruptive to these every day necessities overlooked as being in a mothers schedule.

My children have now grown to [redacted] years old and the impact of flexible weekly or any suggestion of shared custody is now more evident.

Given that there is an intervention order on the father of my children, communication between myself and him is non existent, therefore on occasions where the children have left school books or uniforms at their fathers house on contact, it has been nearly impossible to retrieve these items, meaning that my childs school week was disrupted and that they felt they had done something wrong.

The father of my children resides only 15 km from myself, yet as a full time employed parent, who also encourages after school activities, as with parents still in a marriage or relationship, there is simply not enough nights in the week or hours in the day. Add to this the additional travel which both the parents and children then encounter.

My [redacted] year olds transition from Primary to Secondary School was already a large and daunting experience in his life. The secondary school he attends is 30 km's from our home. Without taking into consideration the extra travel for child contact, his school day increased by 2 hours in travel time and his homework also increased. This particular transition year identified that any disruption to our routine significantly impacted his marks.

In closing I believe that children form their lives in their demographic and with current fortnightly contact many Australian children are confused enough and count weekends in the school playground when asked to play with another child.

Any further disruption would cause more imbalance and decline in all Australian children's wellbeing and stability.

Yours Sincerely

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