

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

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 734

Date Received: 8-8-03

Secretary: .....

Dear Committee Secretary

I write to you on behalf of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] received a letter from Alan Cadman MP asking for any suggestions she may wish to share on the Family and Community Affairs Inquiry into Child Custody Arrangements in the Event of Family Separation.

Knowing that I have co-ordinated a seminar at [REDACTED] Salvation Army every year since 1990, for people who are going through Separation or Divorce, [REDACTED] asked me to respond on her behalf.

In dealing with all the individual people that have attended our seminars the thing that I am reminded of constantly is that no 2 separations are the same, each is individual, as each family, before they separate are made up of different configurations and they interact differently within that family.

This being the case I cannot see how anyone or any Government Department can do a blanket policy. Each case needs to be looked at as an individual case not just for the parents, but more so for the children sake.

We need to look at the quality of how the children of the marriage, were living before the parents separated and although we appreciate it can't be to exactly the same standard, try as much as we can to keep it as close as what they are used to, so as not to distress them more than what they need to be.

As the adults will try and bargain with what ever they have available, those looking out for the children's interest need to be fair, as well as realistic.

In relationship to looking at extended families rights, if you were to generalize and give grandparents say monthly visiting rights and yet one set of grandparents might only see the grandchildren 2 a year while the other set might mind the children after school each day, this is where I'm suggesting that each case needs to be evaluated separately and not a general ruling made.

This also would impact if a father hardly had any role in the child's life compared to other father's who might even be the stay at home parent, to give the father weekly or fortnightly custody just isn't in the children's best interest.

If you feel there is anything I have commented on, that you would like to discuss further, I would be more than happy to discuss this matter with you, as having gone through my own separation in 1984 and then been involved with the seminar that we run at [REDACTED] Salvation Army for the past 14 years, I not only can draw from my own experience of going through a divorce, but all the people that have shared with me, that have come to our seminars and they would run into the hundreds.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]