



TONY WINDSOR B.Ec. MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340
Phone: 02 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: 02 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

11 August 2003

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

Submission No: 1471
Date Received: 14-8-03
Secretary:

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been contacted recently by [REDACTED] whom I understand will be forwarding a submission to the Committee's Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry.

[REDACTED] has advised me that he has obtained a one week extension for his submission to enable me to prepare this letter relating to my representations on his behalf concerning his family court matter.

I would confirm that since early 2002 I have made a number of written representations on [REDACTED] behalf in an endeavour to assist him with several aspects of his case and appeal.

Some of the issues which I have raised on [REDACTED] behalf with either the Family Court or the Attorney General include:

- Delays experienced by litigants, particularly those in regional areas, in having their family law matters dealt with;
- the costs faced by regional litigants who have to travel to Sydney or Newcastle;
- difficulties experienced by regional litigants who wish to obtain Family Court transcripts to assist with appeal proceedings and the possibility of these transcripts being made available on the Internet;
- financial assistance to obtain transcripts to assist with his court appeal and to justify the merit of his appeal to the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales;
- issues relating to procedural fairness within the Family Court;
- his endeavours to obtain a copy of the Judicial Officer's Transcript of his Family Court hearing;
- concerns relating to Family Court administrative matters involving the preparation of a Family Report during his hearing; and
- several other issues relating to this matter.

Although I have received a number of responses to my representations from both the Family Court and the Attorney General, a number of my letters have remained unanswered. [REDACTED] case is an example of the issues, difficulties and frustrations faced by litigants who live in regional areas and which impact upon litigants obtaining reasonable contact or custody arrangements through Family Court proceedings.

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I trust my comments will be of assistance and should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Windsor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tony Windsor MP
Member for New England

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