



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

New Inquiry: Proposed family law changes

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 19 July 2005

Chairman: Peter Slipper MP

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR FAMILY LAW INQUIRY

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee will be holding public hearings in Melbourne and Sydney this week as part of its inquiry into proposed amendments to the *Family Law Act 1975*.

The Chairman of the Committee, Peter Slipper MP, said that the Committee would be hearing from a number of individuals and organisations regarding the draft Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005.

“The Committee wants to hear as many different viewpoints as possible within the short timeframe for this inquiry”, said Mr Slipper. “To this end we have organised two full days of hearings in Melbourne and Sydney with a range of witnesses for each day,” Mr Slipper said. “Further hearings will be held in Canberra next week.”

The draft Bill aims to support and promote shared parenting and to encourage people to reach agreement about parenting of children after separation. It also seeks to promote the benefit for children of both parents having a role in children’s lives, recognises the need to protect children from family violence and abuse, and aims to ensure that the court process is easier to navigate and is less traumatic.

The first hearing will be on **Wednesday 20 July** at the **Melbourne Town Hall** from **9:15am – 4:30pm**, and the second hearing will be on **Thursday 21 July** at **Parliament House, Sydney** from **9:00am – 4:30pm**.

In Melbourne, the Committee will take evidence from the Law Council of Australia, Professor Lawrence Moloney of LaTrobe University, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative, the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, the National Abuse-Free Contact Campaign, and the Australian Children’s Contact Services Association.

In Sydney, the Committee will take evidence from the Law Society of New South Wales, Relationships Australia, the National Network of Indigenous Women’s Legal Services, the National Association of Community Legal Centres, the Women’s Legal Resource Group, and the National Network of Women’s Legal Services.

The Committee will be holding further public hearings in Canberra on July 25 and 26.

For interview:

Please contact the Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP on (02) 6277 4975 (Canberra) or in his electorate on (07) 5443 3555.

Or Mr Slipper’s media adviser, Richard Bruinsma on 0417 486 673.

For background information, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions when they become available, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358 or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/familylaw/index.htm>.