

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 387

Date Received: 5-8-03

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

03.08.03

Committee Secretary

Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs

Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry

Department of the House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

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2 AUG 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write this submission to the Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs - "Inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separations", as one lone voice in the wilderness, one of the half million non custodial, paying parents in this country.

My submission to this inquiry, sadly, will focus upon section (b) of the inquiry regarding the fairness of the child support formula. Sadly, as I am unable to respond to section (a), it is too late for me. I was working full time at the time of separation and therefore was unable to gain equal time.

I write this submission as I return to my desk after, yet again, organising Family Services to assist with another one of my students who live with daily family crisis. I am a Principal of a low socioeconomic ACT Government Primary School. Nearly twenty two percent of my school community are single parent families, given 95% of non custodial parents are male, most of these above students have little to no adult male contact. Given also, the high degree of contact I have with

Family Services, Playmead, Childrens Advocate and  
mandatory reporting. Little or trust is positive  
I returned to Canberra, the pride of my birth, last year  
following many years as a Principal in elite Queensland  
non government Schools.

I see both sides of the child support issue. I know I  
miss a difference - I am the only positive male role model  
for nearly a quarter of my students - to many of these  
youngsters I remain the last emotional life line before  
they give up. This alone helps me face each day, for  
due to the workings of the child support formula, I am  
unable to do the same for my own two "little men -  
ie them I am only a financial provider.

• I pay \$1400 per month child Support

After paying mortgage, car loan and usage costs, food  
insurance and other costs I am left with \$10 to \$15  
per week. I save up to buy school shoes.

• I was forced to use all my available Superannuation  
money to gain a deposit on my house - well

below median price range in Canberra

- I cannot afford the cost of seeing my own two boys
- My sons enjoy a far better living standard than pro. to separat:  
In my submission to the Standing Committee regarding  
action (b) of the terms of reference of the inquiry  
I strongly state that the existing child support formula  
(developed in the 1980s) does not work fairly for both  
parents in relation to their care of, and contact with,  
their children.

- The formula takes no count of individual situations - a  
"one size fits all" formula simply doesn't work and is  
unfair.

The formula is based upon gross salary which is not  
accurate. I pay 27% of my gross salary. In reality  
this is 39% of my take home pay.

The payer is not obliged to show how the money is  
spent - I have no idea where this money is being  
spent and how this is helping my sons.

The formula creates the total loss of dignity felt by  
the paying parent - it is this system / formula which  
leads to depression and loss of contact.

- The formula is unrealistic as it does include a fair  
of maintenance.

- I want to support my sons. I want to see my sons.  
I do not wish to be a burden on society in my  
old age - this is not possible under the current  
unfair and unjust system

As the number of separations continues to grow, more  
families and relatives are beginning to see how  
unjust this formula is.

I once thought that being a Wallaby was the  
highlight of my life - being my boys, being able

to be a part of their lives, would easily outweigh  
them.

I live in hope, only.

Yours Sincerely

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