

Submission No: 690

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary:

Mr V.F. Bond
14 Cox Cres
RICHMOND NSW 2753
6 August 2003

**SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO CHILD CUSTODY
ARRANGEMENTS**

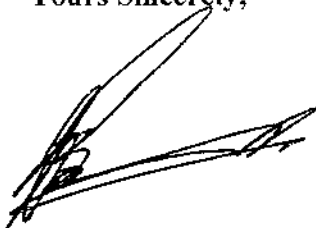
I wish to advise the inquiry of my experiences with child support as both the non-custodial and custodial parent. I have four children from my previous relationship which ended in June 1991. I began paying children support in February 1993 after other arrangements with my ex partner broke down. I am currently married with a nine year old daughter. I have had four reviews in this time; 1994, 1995, 1998 and 2003. In 1994 the review was straight forward in that I had moved interstate and it was based on the costs of collecting the children for access visits. In 1995 my ex-partner wanted a total of \$5000 a year. Again this was dismissed on the basis of my wages for that year. In 1998 I first came in contact with the attitude that I am guilty and no matter what I say it will not make a difference. While accepting the decision of the child support review officer I lodged a formal complaint (a copy of which is attached) against the person doing the interview because I felt they had made up their mind before the hearing. This was totally apparent from the moment they sat down. This attitude was again apparent earlier this year in a review where my ex-partner asked to have her debt to me cancelled. She was successful in this but my concerns are twofold. My first one is the attitude of the reviewer. He stated to me that \$20 a month for child support for four children was not much. I pointed out that I was on austudy at the time and that this was the amount what child support said I had to pay. I further pointed out that this was only for twelve months. I do not believe that I should not have to justify decisions that child support have made. For the rest of the time I was studying my ex-partner received \$100 a fortnight because I decided to return to the workforce part-time. However the reviewer did not think this was sufficient either. Secondly, those things my ex-partner put in the review have not happened. Most notably that my youngest son needed a laptop computer for school. To date this has not happened. However my ex-partner has purchased a new car and television since the decision.

As a result of the decisions made by Child Support over the years my nine year old daughter has had to go without many things. How do you explain to her that Dad and Mum cannot afford for her to have music lessons anymore and then her half brother and sister come to stay telling her about their drama lessons or music lessons?

A solution to this problem maybe to look at how child support is assessed. The assessment is base on my gross income. In other words the government take the child support and then taxes me. Would not a better solution be to base child support on my net income prior to any tax deductions? This would allow the custodial parent to obtain a reasonable amount for child support while not penalising the non custodial parent twice which is how it now appears to me.

In conclusion I will continue to pay child support as I believe that I have a moral right that overrides any legal right. However I would ask two things of the inquiry. Firstly, that a fairer formula would be worked out so that our children from later relationships do not suffer as my daughter has had to up till now. Secondly, that greater effort is made to obtain child support from those non-custodial parents who currently avoid paying child support through legal loop holes. The two that come to mind are those people who sent up companies and then live of the company claiming that they do not earn a wage: and the person who works for cash in hand. Over the years I have heard of numerous stories where people have avoided paying child support this way. The child support agency needs to be able to locate all non-custodial parents who are not willing to pay child support and then have the power to collect the child support. I believe if this happens the rest of us honest people who pay child support will not be treated like second class citizens.

Yours Sincerely,



(V.F. BOND)

