

**Atkin, Margaret (REPS)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 21 November 2003 10:32 PM  
**To:** Atkin, Margaret (REPS)  
**Subject:** Submission re ref 1625

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No

1625

Date Received:

30-9-03

Secretary

Thank you Margaret, the following is a more in depth submission. This is the version I request to be submitted. I accidently sent an earlier version. Thank you for your time, Margaret. I really appreciate it.

[REDACTED]

My partner's experience re this inquiry is very topical and valuable. The system needs to be more just. Father's who want to play a major part in their childrens lives and pay their child support (\$24k pa) need to be given a fairer go. Mother's should not be given the total control (and in turn manipulate the system re denying access due to a decrease in their child support and how that child support is spent etc) of their childrens lives. The system stresses that the father pays child support because the father is still responsible for his children, which is fair enough but why does that responsibility stop at money, what about being an active part of their children's lives and not just a by stander who see them every second weekend.

In our case, it is evident that the \$24k (tax free mind you as my partner has paid the necessary tax) that my partner's ex-wife receives for their 2 children is not being spent on the children. Instead it is supporting her lifestyle. She dresses the children in second hand clothes, tells them they have no money etc, while she prances around in designer label clothes, dripping in jewelry etc. This is a woman who gained the family home (with no mortgage attached in an up market area) and the family car (no finance) in their financial settlement. She works cash in hand and also gets the relevant single parents allowances from Centrelink. We estimate this woman is receiving over \$35k a year, tax free! She receives all the benefits/concessions of being a single parent and yet is doing better than most people who work full time. This makes me angry as there are single parents out there that do not receive child support from their ex-partners and they have to work to make ends meet, they need those concessions to survive. How is this fair for everyone within the system?

Onto the infamous CSA. How is it that CSA takes the mother's word over the father's. Initially my partner was making Non-Agency payments. He paid the children's school fees, the lease of her car and then also directly deposited the remainder of cash into her bank account (he used the CSA advanced calculator to ensure he was paying the correct amount, which in the end, he was paying more). In Novemeber '02, my partner and his ex-wife had a financial settlement hearing. Upon leaving the court, she turned to my partner and said 'you are in big trouble with CSA, you owe them over \$10, 000'. With that my partner went straight to CSA and sure enough, he owed CSA over \$10,000 in unpaid child support. Apparently his ex-wife went to CSA in April'02 and told

them that she was only receiving the cash amounts and from that day his debt started. She intentionally gave them the wrong mailing address so he did not receive any correspondence from CSA during that time. How is this right? Is this not fraud? As it turned out my partner paid more than he had to but is still in the process of paying the amount back due to the antiquated system. What sort of role is this organisation (CSA) playing to help mediate? To me they automatically side with the mother (or the payee), it's just all too easy when the mother rules the roost.

Furthermore, the mother currently also has control of access (whether there is an order in place or not). In our case, for 2 years my partner had his children every second weekend and every Tuesday night. The children adjusted to this almost immediately. It gave my partner the opportunity to be part of his children's everyday lives, but taking them to school etc. As it turned out my partner had his children more than 110 nights per year, this made him a substantial parent and thus his child support was reduced. The day his payments were reduced, the mother decided that Tuesday night access unsettled the children, and told the court that he was an unfit father, she asked people to write her letters to support this even though the people admitted to my partner (after the fact) that they should not of supported such actions. This was all to stop Tuesday night access. If he was so unfit, why let the children see him at all? My partner had to prove that he was a substantial parent (which he had kept the necessary proof to do so), while the mother just called CSA and told them this was untrue and that she was the sole parent...of course they took her word, no proof needed. After an expensive visit to the Family Court, my partner managed to regain one Tuesday night a fortnight, which kept him from being classified as a substantial parent. Needless to say, the mother also regained her additional \$400 per month. Who is the winner here? Not the children, not the father but the financial gain of the mother. What a just system!

I also believe that shared custody should be the starting point and it worked back from their if need be (ie parents live in different States or abuse) and not the other way around (as the system is now). The system discriminates against the father as mothers get the assumed right of being the major carer while the father is just the cash cow. In our case, the children reside with their mother which is only 10 minutes from our place of residence. The school is basically in between both places of residence. Shared custody is a very viable arrangement for my partner but instead my partner only sees his children 3 days a fortnight and they only live 10 mins away. This arrangement is beneficial for the mother as she receives maximum child support, while the relationship between my partner and his 2 children is constantly stop start.

And finally, how is it that if my partner and I were to have a baby, his ex wife's child support payments are reduced by ~\$3000 per year. While it is estimated that she needs \$21k a year to raise 2 children, the system as it stands suggests we only need \$3000 to raise a child. We have a mortgage, car repayments etc while she owns her house and car outright and has the luxury of sitting at home while her children go to school. I believe there needs to be a set amount calculated for raising a child. Surely 2 small children don't cost \$454 per week

to raise, I mean, they eat half a sandwich between them! Supporting documentation should also be available to the paying parent so they can see where their 'child support' is going. Or alternatively, payments need to be calculated on a case by case basis.

Overall, I think the system as it stands is driving families apart, instead of bringing them closer. Parent/child relationships are priceless, no amount of money or legal jargon can foster such relationships. The role of the father has been greatly underestimated, and it is about time we recognise that father's have an equally important role in their children's lives and well being. Take away all the material things and you have children who need both parents in their lives as much as possible. Parents need to put aside their own bitterness and revenge and start thinking about the needs of their children both financially, emotionally and physically.

Change is in the air and fingers crossed for all those father's out there, it is in their favour!

---

Hot chart ringtones and polyphonics. [Click here](#)