

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No. 1689

Date Received: 15-10-03

Secretary:

Atkin, Margaret (REPS)

From: Kristine Clement [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 November 2003 8:38 PM
To: Atkin, Margaret (REPS)
Subject: Re: FCA Child Custody - your postal address?

Dear Ms Atkin, I would like my email to be used as i submission. [REDACTED]

*point:

"Broken" families, where the parents of children have separated should be treated as families. That is, regardless of other relationships of the parents, those parents and their offspring should be treated as a functional family unit, no the least because children see themselves as belonging to a family. (even when parents are separated or in dispute). Children and parents may belong to more than one family, but the unit of most significance for children would usually be that which included both of their parents. The family units, where parents have separated, would, be operating at less than optimal efficiency as a device for nurturing children and the major task for all should be to increase the functionality of the (impaired) family.

A few major benefits of the proposed model/approach include:

1. Communication of the idea that parental (for both) responsibility is ongoing.
2. It would help reorient family services towards rehabilitation/habilitation of parents, as needed, regardless of their relationship with each other. Of course, specialist services for children, which do not involve minimisation of the parents' roles and responsibilities, should be maintained.
3. Communication of the idea that functioning families are the means for raising capable people.
4. Give children a sense of belonging to a family and thus enhance their identities.
5. Assist parents to focus on their roles and responsibilities as parents.
6. Reduce conflict between parents as parents, with any or all the help needed, learn to cooperate.

Please also not that people, such as Justice Nicholson of the Family Court argue from the position that parental conflict is a "given" in cases where parents separate, conflict should never be accepted by anyone as the right of two adults or something that cannot be changed. Reduction of parental conflict should be a fundamental goal for all who are concerned about the welfare of children and the maintenance of our society.

Justice Nicholson et al seem to accept that selfishness, lack of personal control and irresponsibility are "qualities" that can be expected in Australian parents. I and many other disagree.. When people have trouble coping with life they need help to make a go of it, not to foul up and, as is often the case, to spoil the lives of their children.

Kristine Clement.

PS I trust that you will not publish my address!

Original Message -----

From: Atkin, Margaret (REPS)
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 02, 2003 4:43 PM
Subject: FCA Child Custody - your postal address?

Dear Kristine Clement

Thank you for your email of 14 October. In order for the committee to determine if this is a submission, we require your postal address details please? Grateful if you could provide.

Many thanks,

Margaret Atkin
 Senior Parliamentary Research Officer
 Child Custody Inquiry