

**Submission to the House of Representatives Family and Community  
Affairs Committee inquiry into child custody arrangements**

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Member for Cunningham**

House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Family and Community Affairs

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Recently a woman who lives in my electorate came to my office requesting that a submission be made on her behalf to this inquiry into child custody arrangements.

I see many individuals in my electorate who are deeply concerned about child custody and child support arrangements in this country. I hope that this Committee is able to suggest beneficial changes to the current system to ensure the maximum amount of fairness to the maximum number of people who are affected by our current arrangements.

The woman who came to visit me was in a similar situation to many others that I see, and so her situation is a good example of the problems that many parents encounter with child support arrangements.

She is owed \$8000 by her former partner and has been unable to recover the amount that he owes her to assist in fulfilling the responsibilities that they both share by being parents. She is 32 years old and has 2 children. She works casually to cover the costs of raising her family as well as paying off a mortgage. She considers herself lucky as she is able to call upon the support of her parents when things get too tight. Many others of course do not have this kind of support.

The concerns that she has with the current system are that in terms of recovering debt from former partners, superannuation is not accessible. Her ex-partner has been declared bankrupt in the past but is now working, however, she is still unable to recover the payments that are owed to her by her ex-partner.

She also expressed concern that the Australian Taxation Office does not appear to have an adequate follow up system when people fail to lodge tax returns. I have certainly been made aware of cases where fathers, for example, have failed to lodge tax returns year after year as a way of avoiding their payment obligations.

The point was also made that many parents do not see their children because they choose not to. The Government is moving towards assuming a 50-50 child care arrangement however, consideration must be given to the fact that many parents make a choice not to see or have anything to do with their children, and where this is the case, effort must be made to ensure that the parent that does honour their responsibility is properly assisted by the parent who does not wish to be involved in the care of the child.

I hope that the outcomes of this inquiry do enable us to develop a more flexible and fair system of child support in this country, I wish you the best of luck in your efforts.

Michael Organ MP  
Member for Cunningham