

Dear Senate Inquiry - Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is a my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

Endangering the lives of children

James Hickey

"Child is at risk if dad's rights always put first" by Adele Horin, May 3rd, 2003. This article appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald during the Federal Government's inquiry into child custody arrangement

Family law tinkering causes alarm by Misha Schubert January 11, 2005

"Domestic violence experts and women's legal services have warned that proposed changes to the family system may endanger the lives of women and children."

Are childrens' lives being put at risk by the proposed changes to the family law act?

In a discussion paper "Who kills whom and why by Jenny Morgan, Law School, University of Melbourne, she examines the murders of 90 children in Victoria over a ten year period from 1985-95. 58 children were killed either by parents or step-parents. She found that men and women were almost equally responsible for the murder of children, mothers killed 22 and men killed 24. Unfortunately her paper does not account for the murder of 12 children

All the mothers who committed murder murdered their own biological children. No children were recorded as being murdered by their step-mothers

Of the 24 children who were murdered by men 62.5% were murdered by their step-father.

37 or 80% of children who were murdered, were either murdered by their mother or stepfather.

Fathers who murdered their biological children accounted for just 9 murders or 20%.

Fatal assault is defined as being usually an assault committed with the intention of punishing the child rather than killing them

In 13 of the 15 cases of fatal assault it was the mother's defacto that killed the child. In 5 cases it was the mother that killed the child as a result of fatal assault.

What is clear is that the most unsafe place for a child to be is with its biological mother and non-biological father

A predisposing mental illness, regardless of the gender of the parent, does place the child in a high risk category, however not all parents with a mental illness pose a danger to a child.

It is clear that despite all the emotive rhetoric from domestic violence experts about children being put at increased risk by separated fathers is a myth. The safest place for a child is with that child's biological father and or step-mother

It is the so called domestic violence experts, who actually put children at increased risk of harm by denying biological fathers the chance of having a greater involvement in the lives of their own children.

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[http://www.kittennews.com/cgi-bin/kn\\_opinion/opinion.pl?topic=999946](http://www.kittennews.com/cgi-bin/kn_opinion/opinion.pl?topic=999946)

Thank you for reading my submission

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