

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

why does one parent gain financially by receiving large ,tax free benefits ,when the child they collect on behalf of does not even have to reside with then ,from the child support agency?

Why does the child support agency supply private tax and income information to the parent applying for support when the amount will be calculated by the agency anyway?

Why does the custodial parent not have to justify what the money is spent on , as the large amounts are often 200% of the cost of keeping the child? why are they the beneficiaries of such large amounts of money which I am sure the child does not benefit from.

Why does centrelink use different information than the child support agency, I think this is because one formula is used for all applicants applying to the child support agency, they do not have to be in financial need to receive payments and there is always a financial winner and loser when the child support agency becomes involved.

The child support agency uses information that encourages parents to claim they are the major carer of their children because the alternative is that they will have to pay their x partner large amounts of money.

Custodial parents often deny their children contact with their other parent so they can continue to claim their number of nights so they can get tax free money from the child support agency.

As things stand at present having custody of children makes children a financial benefit to the custodial parent because the payments are tax free and often are in excess of 200% of the cost of maintaining the child.

Why does the child support agency accept all the information supplied by the parent applying as major carer as being true with no back up information and often the application is based on lies.

Why does one parent have a greater right to contact with their child than the other.

Why is one parent expected to meet all the cost of raising their children while at the same time being denied their right to have contact and a say in their child's needs, .

Children should have the right to spend equal time with each parent whenever it is possible.

Children should not be used as pawns by bitter x partners to inflict as much suffering on their x partner as possible.

When will the rights of the child be the priority and not the bickering between parents over shadow their basic need for ongoing relationship with both parents.

When will the so called non custodial parent be given their basic rights as a parent and not have to fight in a court to receive what should be accepted as the norm ie/ 50/50 shared care and responsibility, 50/50 say in what decisions are made in regard to their child instead of being excluded and when will they only be expected to meet 50% of the cost of raising their child which would be given willingly if they had more say in what the money is spent on.

50/50 shared care should be the norm in today's society as it is the only way for children to build relationships with both parents.

A single non custodial parent can be expected to survive on a negative income because the formula used by the child support agency only allows them an exempt income amount of \$13465 which is probably how much they pay in tax so their exempt income is actually \$0 and if they are unlucky enough to salary package ( because this is grossed up by 100%) they can end up with exempt income of negative \$8799. So making payments based on \$20,000 that they do not receive and be left with not enough money to live on, even less than someone on welfare payments with none of the associated benefits.

While the custodial parent has an exempt income of \$22500 and if they are lucky enough to be living with another custodial parent this amount is doubled. And if their new partner happens to have a high paying job, such as a doctor or lawyer they are even better off.

So why are these payments so generous to one parent and so negative to the other. No wonder there is so much bitterness when dealing with family separation. As long as children are seen as \$ they will be treated badly by the family law system with the only true winners being the lawyers prolonging the fight between the parents and making our children more unhappy than they already are.

Thank you for reading my submission

Name: karen.Kennett

Postal Address: hamilton