

GRANDPARENTS IN DISTRESS
GRAFTON.

To: Committee Secretary,
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee,
Department of the Senate
CANBERRA.

A.C.T.2600.....SUBMISSION.....
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Inquiry into the provision of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental
Responsibility)
Bill 2005, Bill Number 05196

Dear Secretary,
Our group has made previous submissions to the Child Custody Enquiry
(Nos.320,1658)
and later correspondence acknowledged. We have always supported equal rights
for both parents to share the life of their children (and our grandchildren).
We fully support 50/50 sharing of children, where this is possible.

We wish to make the following comments for your consideration:

We are concerned about Item 10 Schedule 9, which states:

"Information in this column may be added to or edited in any published
version of this Act"

also "Provisions inserted after this Act".

This would appear that the Act can be changed at a later date? Please read
carefully.

Schedule 1 - Part 1, 1 Subsection 4 (1)insert:

We do not understand why Torres Straight Islanders and aboriginal people
should be
treated as separate people.

Does that mean that all cultures should be catered for, according to
race?

3 Subsection 4 (1) Insert:

"family violence means, conduct, whether actual or threatened".

No it does not. If someone threatens to steal something, but does not
carry out the physical act, it cannot be regarded as stealing. This is a
most dangerous aspect of this Bill.

The old custom of telling the truth was lost in the GST Bill (Par.165-
55)when

lying became legal under Australian law.

Please let us not add to our woes with threats interpreted as actual acts
of violence.

22 Subsection 64B..2(f) Maintenance of a child.

We are most concerned that this Bill does nothing to relieve the burden
of those now paying excessive maintenance under the Child Support
Assessment Act of 1989.

This was one of the main objects of the thousands of submissions, a
leading cause

of suicide in our men and great distress in our society

61D Shared responsibility, but not shared access. (See 65AA)

This section needs to mention shared time as being "a right of all
parents".

A nationwide education programme needs to be instigated, showing the affects of divorce and fatherlessness on children and society.

63D (h) Obligations of Advisors.

Advisors should be obligated to advise that "shared parenting is preferential and is covered by law".

SECTION 70

We do not want to send offenders to prison.

This would only traumatise the children even more to see one of their parents jailed.

The expense on taxpayers and loss of income to the family would only increase problems.

Perhaps community service would be an option for consistent offenders.

These are very complex changes. We feel it would have been wiser to rescind the 1975 Family Law Act and prepare a new and simpler Act. We trust these points will be examined in your inquiry.

Yours faithfully,
Bev Pattenden (Co-Founder)
Grandparents in Distress.