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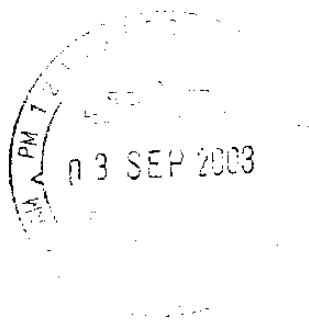
Secretary:

for

The Inquiry into
Child Parenting Arrangements
In The Event Of
Family Separation

Submittee

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Contents Page

FORWARD	3
SHOULD FATHERS BE ENTITLED TO HAVE SHARED CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN?.....	3
SHOULD SHARED CARE BE A GIVEN?	4
WHY DOESN'T THE CURRENT FAMILY LAW SYSTEM SUPPORT SHARED PARENTING?	5
PREFACE	7
INQUIRY QUESTIONS	9
SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TO PRESET SHARED-PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS	12
WHY IS THERE NOT A QUESTION THAT ASKS IF THE CURRENT SYSTEM WORKS TO THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD?.....EVEN WITH THE AMENDMENTS PASSED.....	16
THE ANSWER	18
THE CONCEPT – “COMMUNITY MEGA CENTRES”	20
IN SUMMARY	22
MY STORY	23

Forward

Should Fathers be entitled to have shared care of their children?

The answer is yes; the pendulum sits in the middle and in every case the children and parents of separation and divorce are surrounded by equality.

The majority of current intact Australian families represent, a father that works full time, a mother that works either not at all, part time or full time with very few dads taking on the home husband role. This scenario is accepted by most family units, both husband and wife alike and by the whole of Australian society.

It is under these circumstances of which the current intact family arrangements work. If something was to change within this unit then it would be the decisions of the parents to incorporate those changes.

However, when it comes to family breakdown the father in most cases in this scenario is tagged with the title of not wanting to be in a responsible position of caring for his children. The Family Law System does not recognise what "is" already in an intact family. It is regarded as necessity by both parents, which is the father being the main breadwinner of the family, or the father not having the primary carer role within the family unit. Because the father has not cared for his children as much as the mother during the course of the marriage he is not given the chance to after separation and divorce because of it. This is primarily because the Family Law System does not recognise and validate the current family unit structure.

Family breakdown goes hand in hand with anger, grief, failure, abandonment and it is at this point where these emotions either play an accepting role or one of resentment and bitterness towards each separating and divorcing parent. The children become a bargaining tool in most cases used by the wife and her solicitor and there is only one reason for this, for benefit of them both.

The current system while it does not validate the family unit structure, the culture of the system supports women only who take a primary role in caring for the child or children whilst the father is at work. The legal profession support this culture knowing that whilst this culture operates as it does they will continue to have fathers who will fight for their given rights as parents and know in most cases it is to no avail.

What I see to be such a simple process is made extremely hard by the current Family Law Act and the people who have a vested interest in maintaining the creation and implementation of such processes. Dealing with divorce under the current system is inevitably a chance for the further introduction of conflict or disagreement between separating parties. The current family laws promote it by its policies. If the default position was "**shared care**" there would be no argument to have over children and there would be no conflict. If the pendulum sat in the middle with regards to shared parenting it would negate the process of requiring any decisions to

be made by other persons outside the parents regarding contact. It also would negate a good part of this inquiry. Why the hell would we not want this to happen? Why cannot it not just "be"? Pardon my passion!

Should shared care be a given?

I ask why is it not already? Couples make choices before they marry, whilst they are married and in most cases never when the marriage breaks down. The needs of the Australian family unit change constantly and with unity the husband and wife in intact families make decisions/ choices that will better their own and their children's living standards whilst that unit is intact.

When there is family breakdown all choices and fairness are passed to a system. If these laws were not in place what would each parent be seeking? If the current generation was not conditioned to believe what the current system offers, what would these parents be seeking?

In both cases each would want what is fair. **No bias just fairness!**

The relevance of a system that was convened some 30 years ago really needs to be looked at. A lot of change has occurred since 1975 and it would seem that the laws have stood still. There must be change to reflect the current values of the now today.

Why doesn't the current Family Law system support shared parenting?

The cost of separation and divorce for Australia is both resource intensive and continues to erode what are already sliding family values. The cost of divorce and separation for the parents, emotionally is very high so an outcome should be as quick as possible and should be done by an organization or methods which has this in mind. Two of the most crucial aspects of separation and divorce for the parents and the current system **"does not"** offer to enhance family values nor does it offer quick resolution.

The pathways report covers the need for there to be unity in providing people with the first point of contact. There is no set process in which people can or should access such areas. Instead as your report has shown first point of call in most cases is a solicitor.

My suggestion that there should be guidelines of which need to be followed starting from when two parents believe there is no hope of salvaging their relationship to where things are so hopeless that the only people that can resolve their situation are solicitors. "10 steps to separation and divorce" if you like. You could either incorporate this structure into the current community services centres or provide a separate point of call. All people separating and divorcing should have to follow this procedure, the same procedure where they do not move to the next stage until they have completed or carried out the last point of call and have proof of it. I am talking no solicitors until step 10.

The need to have structure around separation and divorce gives both partners the path ahead but most importantly they are operating on the same page. There is no ambiguity on process or interpretation on what comes next. It should be in simple terms.

To add a solicitor to a potentially already inflamed situation even if there is just a hint of emotion, anger or hatred for the other parent is pouring fuel onto a fire. In this case the solicitors dig in and from here there is no resolve as it benefits the solicitor not to. The more conflict between the parties the better it is for the solicitor and the further the separating and divorcing parents will be lead down the family law system. There is only one who benefits from this scenario and that is the solicitor. Where is the child's needs in this scenario? Acts of prolongation and lies I have witnessed and whilst both the solicitors and the court system portray that a child's needs are paramount not once did my son get a mention whilst these acts were taking place.

Involving persons or organizations who require their own business needs to be met first eg: financially, should be at the last point of call where a resolution as such could not be achieved prior. The current system does not accommodate firstly for the children of separating and divorcing couples. The separating and divorcing procedure is put in the hands of people and organizations where by who's business needs become more important than their clients. Whilst you will not hear this from practicing solicitors it is fact and therefore defeats the primary purpose of the family law act in the first

place. It has the affects of, in essence, prolonging the inevitable and therefore continually erodes efforts in maintaining Australian family values.

Life on this planet is hard enough without someone making it worse. I know of cases where parents separate and divorce and come to an amicable agreement with regards to finance and childrens issues without the use of solicitors and courts. It is only where one or both parties of the divorce have heightened emotions towards the other or each other which enflames the situation. Having this stance is not in the interest of the parties or the child/ children involved, so why go down that track? Why promote a system that feeds the emotional imbalanced parent or parents and is reinforced by a solicitor for his or her gain. The emotions of one or both separating parents cannot and should not be the reason for having a prolonged outcome, again how is this in the best interest of the child.

Three years of my life was taken up because of two solicitors who gained financially from me and one ex-wife who believed she really and I quote "fucked me over in the courts" because her solicitor told her that she did.

The current system does not cater for the needs of the child and for court officials to continue to say that the Family Law system in not bias is just a joke! This system promotes the business needs of the legal fraternity only!

An alternate system of mediation (**the ten step plan**) should be put in place to settle financial and child matters around separation and divorce in every case. But while there are people who can manipulate the system for financial gain, who have interest in making the rules, who have interest in administering the rules and who have interest in protecting the rules how can there be change?

It would seem that if the system of family law was changed to shared parenting who would be affected the most in a positive way. I would say the families of divorce. They would proceed down a track of fairness and equality and quick resolution given an alternate method of settlement/ mediation.

If the Family Law system were to change who would be affected the most in a negative sense. Firstly the solicitors and then the barristers. Both would loose out big time on fees and the people traffic through the court system would dwindle which as a result would see less court personnel.

The government's resources would be redirected to other locations. These locations would be less expensive, less involved and have less emotional affect on persons going through the ordeal. Most importantly, be operated with no other agenda other than being quick and fair with outcomes. Why would you not want to support this way? Have a mediation service which is all about the people and not about solicitors chasing fees. Have a mediation service which is all about people and not about a system which promotes in some cases, further years of torment and trauma.

Preface

I will listen and do this with ease but do not suggest to me that the operation of current laws or what is proposed will put the child first. You will see the solicitors and court administrators portray this injustice day after day with the emphasis on making sure that the mother in majority of cases is primarily given "God status" in this procedure of separation and divorce. This is while the father is ridiculed and portrayed to have not been involved and for this reason as well as other manufactured reasons why he should not partake in an equal role of the child's life.

This is happening as we speak and will happen if the new recommendations are implemented. I ask how would the courts get such an idea? The courts can only adjudicate on what is presented to them.

While it is both realised and a given that not all situations and circumstances are the same for the parents of separation and divorce I can surely confirm that for the children it is definitely the same, at the time. Regardless of your financial situation, your career, where you live you are still that child's father or mother and the laws should recognise, validate this and be fair to both.

If I was running a business and the results of running that business in a particular way, continually contradicted or devalued the purpose of my business objective, I would change it because it would be good business practice.

If the Family Law Court system was run by good business managers and the legal profession had business practices of high moral standing, had a vested interest in providing quick resolution, this enquiry would not be required.

You cannot continue with a system that does not work effectively and efficiently or in this case make changes to something that will never be effective or efficient in the first place.

The current or amended Family Law Systems will not even come close to what I see as best practice!

You have probably gathered by now that I am not a big fan of the current system or what is proposed for the amended system and you would be right. I have lived this system and see more of the same in the proposed. For someone like myself who is a communicator and a problem solver I was lied to, deceived and the course of my time in the current system, prolonged to the end because my ex-wife had a \$60,000.00 faith in the her solicitor, the system, her outcome and there was not a damn thing I could do about it. I had no say as this system and the solicitors who represented, manipulated as they could for their gain. It is so evident that the same could be done if the proposed amendments were to be implemented.

The power of making decisions, which would determine the destiny of the separating and divorcing parents and children's issues, is taken away from

them by the current system. Effectively the parents are giving their power to the legal profession and courts to determine what "is".

The system I propose requires the parents to participate in what should be their decision, take the responsibility of making and living with the decisions they make and being able to approach the other parent for changes if that is what is required.

This is not what I saw and felt through the current system and no matter what I wanted or needed I was not represented anywhere.

The process I propose will not prejudice either parent and will always be child focussed given a platform of guidelines that reflect a default position of equality. This system I propose will **"empower"** each parent and not prejudice either by **"force"** like the current Family Law System does and like the amended system will.



Inquiry questions

- (a) given that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration:
- i) ...what other factors should be taken into account in deciding the respective time each parent should spend with their children post separation, in particular whether there should be a presumption that children will spend equal time with each parent and, if so, in what circumstances such a presumption could be rebutted;

Answer

I would say "no other factors" and "no evidence at all", it should be a given right which means it cannot be rebutted and further I would ask.....

Why is it not equal without any other evidence?

The only debate that would be required with this question in mind is at what age is it accepted that an infant child or children would not be disadvantaged emotionally being away from the mother?

It would be a given that no contact be allowed if the child or children were in emotional or physical danger being with either parent.

This whole inquiry is primarily not about the children. This inquiry is about how the father in separation and divorce is treated. He is perceived to be in this current system and culture, in most cases, as a financial provider and not worthy or viewed as being a shared care dad.

Change the culture and laws of the family Law act to promote equality and this inquiry would not be needed. Providing firstly for the needs of the child and children's issues around separation and divorce will become not of paramount importance they will just "be".

I don't see the need for any presumptions to be made if shared parenting is advocated as fair. How can it not "be" viewed as being fair? How cannot it not be viewed as in the best interest of the child/ children?

Fair is a word which describes impartiality, there are no winners or losers, neither of two separating or divorcing parents can claim, if division is equal, that such a division is unfair. There is no argument, complaining about a system, persons who advocate and operate in the system or complaints about the other partner acting in an adversarial manner.

To have this view is to have the "higher good" of all concerned and the especially children. If this position "was" separating and divorcing would

become like registering your car or voting at an election and the "ten point plan" I suggest would become your registration slip or your voting ballot.

I do not want to suggest that I believe that this process should not be viewed lightly, however, until there is no divorce I believe that this process should be made simple.

Having shared parenting as the default position advocates, validates fairness and equality and cannot be disputed in any way!

Inquiry question;

(a)given that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration.....

(ii) in what circumstances a court should order that children of separated parents have contact with other person, including their grandparents?

Answer

If shared parenting was the default position the court would not have to order anything at all. The time the children spend with either parent is equal and would provide ample time for all associated family to interact on a regular basis.

When you derive at a solution to any issue if it is right it will work and work with ease. My solution is this!

b) whether the existing child support formula works fairly for both parents in relation to their care of, and contact with, their children.

The answer to this would be no the current system is not fair.

Lets view a real life case. First of all a mother with two children is awarded around 70% of the matrimonial assets regardless of her contribution. The father is then required to contribute from what I understand 18% of his income for the first child and 14% of his income for the second child onwards. The system is focused on providing support for mother and children so to maintain their level of living standards rather than the level of living standards of all involved. In the mean time, where the father who has in most cases been the main breadwinner is left to fend for himself without the financial benefits of what he has worked all his life for.

If shared parenting was the status quo the financial split at separation should be 50/ 50 on the basis that they both had equal contribution at the start of and during the marriage.

If either party earned more than the other and brought more to the marriage, than a greater % should be attributed to the greater financial provider regardless of if there are children or not.

If there were children in the marriage and shared parenting was the status quo, the contribution before and during the marriage should equal the % asset split at separation or divorce. How simple is this method?

If one party brings 90% of the assets to the marriage and the other 10% this should account for firstly their initial contribution and represent the lifestyle of which each is accustomed. If the parties are married for 5 years and have no children, the % split should represent what % they have contributed, with a further consideration to the higher contributor being, what % of contribution did the lesser contributor have in the net capital asset gain over the period of the marriage.

The current system advocates a 50/50 contribution whilst in marriage and if there is a vast difference between the contributions of either party the higher contributor is severely penalised and the lesser contributor gains enormously. How ridiculously unfair is this?

The financial side of the marriage should become like the business side of the relationship and should be treated accordingly.

If I were to enter or buy into another business and my contribution was 10% I would get a 10% cut of the company, not 50%. My return would not be a 50% return on something I have a 10% interest in.

I would think that nearly all mums have a job of sorts prior to marriage and with children involved there would need to be an understanding with regards to a set wage that a mum could of earned if her and the husband decided to have children. This would again not be hard to establish given the right formula. If the mum had a job/ career prior to having children than the amount she earned before leaving her employment would become her contribution financially whilst off paid work caring for children. You would also factor in here the rise in income she would get, versus the amount of time she had off work. My solutions are simple, easily established and cannot be vastly exaggerated or disputed by either parent.

From where I sit the government did choose and by way of this inquiry is choosing again the hardest most expensive and inconvenient way for couples to separate and divorce there is. It may be because of some, or all members of the committee portray this to be such a complex situation. Well from where I sit, it could be made simple and that's because I want it to be!

It is my view that if a resolution is right it will reflect all things good for all concerned. It will reflect what is for the high good. You don't require a law degree or be a brain surgeon to arise at such resolutions, you just need to have beliefs of equality.

Suggested Guidelines to Preset Shared-Parenting Arrangements

What I see as the whole basis of this inquiry is to discuss relationships. The point at which we are discussing them, is, after all has failed and is at a point of despair.

In this country I see every day where we do things to counter act, put into place for what has happened in the past and always after the fact. This may be acceptable for events that are not foreseen but for things like relationships and divorce, these events happen once every ten minutes and we sit back and continue to wait and wallow in the aftermath. Why the hell do we continue to do this? Pardon the passion!

Let say for argument sake we set up a committee of child psychologists, councillors and real people who have been through this experience and sat them around a table, hell I would even give my time free of charge to chair the meeting and we decided that a solution "for all time" needed to be realised to put an end to parenting issues after divorce?

For those that represent the too hard basket or say it is too hard to bundle all into one, discard these people from the process. For those that say it can't be done, discard these people from the process. For those that have a vested interest in an outcome are definitely excluded from the process.

This whole process requires people with a can do attitude, people that want to make things easier not harder. People that have ideas of quick and fair resolutions in heart and mind. Anything is achievable if you believe it can be achieved.

If this inquiry was about the children we should be making it mandatory for each parent to share equal responsibility and care of children after separation and divorce. We should be making it possible for each parent to do this by creating a culture for it.

The following is a suggested outcome for shared parenting.

a) Years 0 to 1

A child at this age needs to be mostly with the mother. I am unaware of what % of marriages breakdown when there are children of this age in the marriage, but even so, I still believe that a child so young requires the nurturing and bond with the mother first and foremost.

Visits by the father on a regular basis to where the child resides or to a neutral residence would include evenings during the week with the child having an overnight stay with the father on weekends. A child so young also requires both visible and nurturing touches from the father. The father should also be involved with the child's care during the week, (feeding, bathing, bedtime and play).

If this suggestion becomes an unbearable issue with either parent, than the parent who has the issue should be counselled.

It is my view that any issue with either parent that stands in the way of what promotes a child's development or contact with the other parent needs to be dealt with straight away. For this to happen it must be a given that support for the parents is available.

b) Years 1 to 2

The child would still be under the primary care of the mother in this age group. The importance of the bond with the mother is a priority. The continuing build up of contact with the father should also continue. An increase in overnight contact during the weekend to 2 consecutive nights. Other midweek contact should be maintained as per a).

c) Years 2 to 3

The child starts to find its own way at this point especially around the age of 2 to 2&1/2. The introduction of further contact with the father being an overnight stay mid week at age 2&1/2. From 2&1/2 to 3 increasing to complete shared care at age 3 to 3&1/2. There are many alternatives to shared care. What I see as simple and the easiest to implement and uphold would be a week about scenario. From a Monday morning to a Monday morning start, finish. A Tuesday or Wednesday morning finish on long weekends

d) 3 to 4 Years

Shared care in full swing. The child benefits from the balance of equal parenting time.

e) 4 to 18 Years

More of the same. It is very important that the child feels that they are equally at home in both residences and that both parents are playing an equal nurturing part in his/ her care..

Holidays

Up to the age of 5 or 6 a child or children should not spend more than a week apart from either parent. Three one week block periods during the year and two one week block periods at Xmas.

After 5 or 6 years the same contact during the year and at Xmas increased to a two week block period.

For all other special occasions during the year they should be shared equally on a day.

Schooling/ health/ child's pursuits

All decisions regarding these as well as any other issues regarding the children of the marriage should be discussed and agreed to by each parent.

Whilst this is I believe current law it is not abided by or enforced by the system itself or the mother.

Residence

The current law allows a mother to move away from the area, of which the parents once lived, after divorce. In my proposal this would only be allowed by consent of both parties or to a maximum distance of 20mins travel time in peak hour conditions.

My understanding is that the current system allows the mother to move statewide. Where is the interest of the child having regular contact with the father if the mother is allowed to move where she likes? This is another case of the current system gone wrong!

Conflict issues and false allegations of violence

I have confirmed from sources that it is common practice for a solicitor to give directions to their female clients to make false allegations of assault against their partners/ husbands.

The law that supports this needs to be changed! The wife in these alleged assaults has to provide no evidence what so ever to reinforce her claim. The famous words of someone who has been coached to allege such things is "I feared for my safety"

I don't deny for one second that there is family violence from both husband and wife and this real problem requires a lot more attention than what it currently receives. I do however sincerely believe that those that lie to police or are found to have given false evidence should go to goal. They should compensate the other for undue emotional stress and be disadvantaged in the system for such behaviour. For those that give direction for such adversarial behaviour, the solicitors and accomplices, should be banned from practicing law and also go to gaol.

This practice should be stamped out and the only way to do this is to severely punish those that do it!

It would seem easy to resolve emotional issues if both parties were subject to attend mandatory counselling for issues that needed to be resolved between them. This stance would benefit the parent's relationship and be in the child's best interest.

DNA testing

It seems to be more common of late where a mother in order to gain benefit lies about the father of their children. Why is DNA testing not a mandatory process to confirm the biological parents of children in divorce proceedings?

The current system rewards the behaviour of the mother for cheating on her husband or partner. This behaviour is not accepted in any relationship that I know of and yet is not only condoned by the current system, the mother is rewarded for it.

The mother who has in some cases cheated in her marriage gets to be admonished and the real father does not get to take responsibility for his children.

Where is the natural justice of this system? This mother has knowingly committed adultery whilst in a union. She has fallen pregnant whilst in this union. She has had a child to this other partner whilst in this union.

To have mandatory DNA testing would stop mothers claiming support from the wrong source.



Why is there not a question that asks if the current system works to the best interest of the child?.....even with the amendments passed.

Your own court system, Legal professionals and Court Administrators, all promote the fairness of the family law act and the outcomes! With what evidence do they do this? Their own internal surveys show most outcomes favour the mother. How do they determine that this is in the best interest of the child/ children of divorce?

How can the current Federal Government promote "the family" and "family values" (within the family law arena) when a key ingredient of the two, is fairness to each parent. How can the current Federal Government promote family values when it is not supported by outcomes in your own Family Law Court System?

A contradiction to the terms of this inquiry and a shit load of hypocrisy from the persons who portray that this system is fair! Pardon my Passion!

I am overjoyed with the fact that this government has had the courage to deal with this long overdue issue. I am again overjoyed that most of what this inquiry has found has been fact and truth on outcomes and behaviours of the legal fraternity and mothers.

I am however immensely disappointed that the recommendations made by the pathways committee will just produce more of the same. They have given more tools for the solicitors to manipulate the system for their gain. As I said previously in my submission, how can you have the interests of the child or children met first when a solicitors' primary concerns is his business? How can you have a person or persons on a committee that could have a vested interest in the ideals and practices of the legal profession? It really does defeat the purpose of that persons input to the whole enquiry by way of conflict of interest by those members!

The government had a plan and changed the culture of the waterfront, they had a plan to send our service men and women to war in Iraq because they had a plan and whilst the media had a field day because it sells news papers, the majority of Australians I believe realised that these things had to be done. How did the government determine this? I believe they realised that the action being taken was for the higher good of men, women and children of this country. They had the perception that it would make things better.

Had the waterfront union been involved in the waterfront reform do you really think that the same outcome would have been reached? If Saddam Hussein or one of his henchmen had been involved in the disarmament or invasion of Iraq, do you really think that the same outcome would have been reached there also? Of course not and why, because these people have a vested interest in the results of such government action just like the solicitors do in both the old family law system and also the new if it is legislated.

The government in both these instances has and is playing a pro-active roll for the higher good. This is also required with the family law act. It needs more than an over hall, it needs replacing on the grounds that he who has a hand in making the laws has a vested interest in the outcomes of such laws. Not only this, what choice is there other than to use this system?

To introduce an independent mediation service is what is required and to have a much changed Family law system as a last resort.



The Answer

Nothing less than a full commitment from the government for an alternative mandatory approach. The fabric of our society as we know it is breaking down under this current system. The essence of our being on this planet is being eroded by laws and people that just don't work or act in the interest to support the higher good of humanity.

What I have proposed is just the start. The following is what I see as a support network to implement and reinforce the qualities and standards of people, life and families back into our society. You cannot have a resolve if there is not a continuing directive/ guideline to be followed. No ambiguities or other interpretation other than for what is the higher good for our children.

All can sit back and say "but there are laws to cover this part of life". Laws are the intellectual property of a person and profession. What needs to be looked at and acknowledged is that the laws are not the emotions. It is the emotional issues that place people in these situations in the first place and the answer to this is to let the law deal with it, I think not!

We have seen the results of this course of action and it does not work. Why? It does not deal with the real issues and they are our emotional selves.

If you start out with a bad egg, do nothing in the course of its life you will surely end up with a bad egg at the end. How simple is that equation and yet past and present governments continue to support the notion of it.

Not so long back the federal government introduced mandatory health cover. Great idea, why cannot the same type of law be passed for persons wanting to get married. Why can't the same types of laws be introduced to have mandatory education around having children? Have a mandatory course of which the two "in love" persons are given a degree in family morals and values, are given a degree in how to be a responsible and caring parent which would then set the benchmark of their relationships.

This course would be extensive and deal with separation and divorce. It would explain why we choose a partner in the first place. It would ask questions on why people separate and divorce and in simple terms explain to them 2 out of three couples will not make it. It will also delve into the reasons why we choose the partners we do and why after a period of time things change between them. It would bring to consciousness the realities while they are in love instead of at the end where there is mostly an imbalance of feeling for the other partner.

Having a relationship is easy, even if things are not so good in that relationship. One of the hard parts of a relationship is acceptable expression and identifying a problem and solving it if it is solvable.

Who gave us the tools to deal with relationships, to have our needs and wants met to experience love at the deepest levels. I gather there would be

no response to this because I could nearly guarantee that all could say that their child hood was not what it could have been.

We are not here to point fingers but we are here to resolve family breakdown so we must at first identify why.

Education is the answer. Teach people a set of family values, make courses available and mandatory so that we promote the higher good as the next generation of people need to do better than we did. The issues that are dealt with in the family court should be issues we are resolving prior to marriage, prior to commitment. Instead we brush over these issues to not create conflict before the relationship gets started.

I have been for the last 10 years working on a concept, a community centre that will run these types of courses and more and will be assisted if someone has the courage, who is in a position of influence to make the changes necessary for these centres to become reality. I have the concepts, I have the ideas of which you have read some. All I require is someone who can see the same vision as I and commit to the task of making things better for all Australians.

You have heard my grievances about the system, you have heard the same things for years from thousands of Australian citizens and this committee has found the same and yet nothing has changed, why should I believe now that things will!

The reason for my submission was to voice my opinion and ideas, I will wait to see if they are firstly acknowledged and more importantly if I am heard!

I have taken the opportunity to access some data from US studies which relates to our very own real life drama. I do hope you have a chance to read them as this is what will continue to be produced under the current system and the so-called new family law objectives.

FATHERS' RIGHTS

By Jeffrey M. Leving with Kenneth Dachman, Ph.D.

* Seventy-two percent of all teenaged murderers grew up without fathers. * Sixty percent of rapists were raised in fatherless homes. * Seventy percent of the kids now incarcerated in juvenile corrections facilities grew up in a single-parent environment. * Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school as their classmates who live with two parents. * Children whose fathers are absent consistently score lower than the norm in reading and math tests. * Three out of four teen suicides occur in single-parent families. * Children who live apart from their fathers experience more accidents and a higher rate of chronic asthma, headaches, and speech defects. * Eighty percent of the adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from fatherless homes. * Compared to girls raised in homes where both parents are present, the daughters of single parents are 164 percent more likely to become pregnant before marriage, 53 percent more likely to marry as teenagers, and 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. * A growing body of evidence establishes a high correlation between fatherlessness and violence among young men (especially violence against women). * The absence of a biological father increases by 900 percent a daughter's vulnerability to rape and sexual abuse (often these assaults are committed by stepfathers or the boyfriends of custodial mothers).

Where is the unconditional love and nurturing that the children in this study have gone without? It left when the policies they live under were introduced.

If a child or children are doing these sorts of things there is something wrong with his or her guidance. This starts with government policy and also includes the parents of the children. These children have been let down by the system in which they live, including the parental guidance. The children have been conditioned by what is around them and believe that this is normal life. Whilst not on this scale these are the results of our very own system, it has been screaming for change for nearly thirty years and no one is there to listen. How many years more has this type of thing got to happen before it is realised that what has been happening is a child's nightmare. Our very own system needs to be replaced with something more humane.

The Concept – “Community Mega Centres”

My proposal works on the principal that all issues are relative to people and emotions. Family breakdown, child abuse, assault etc the majority of all, originate from experiences of the individuals concerned in the early stages of life and yet there is no focus, no mandatory pro-active involvement on the early stages of a child's life in which deals with these issues.

For example; A child from a broken family is more like to find himself or herself in that very same situation. Why? The child's given belief system recognizes that this is what happened in his or her life and repeats the same. Another example; Sexual abuse, a very large number of children sexually abused end up being the perpetrator in their adult life. Why, for not so much the same reason but there is an association.

To resolve such people issues, you must be pro-active just as the directions of the current federal government were with the waterfront and Iraq. Had the government left the waterfront, what was happening down there would still be happening. Had the current government not committed to invade Iraq, well the results of that could have been more catastrophic.

We must be pro-active about teaching people to learn about themselves and what has and is resulting from their life experiences and upbringing. We must educate adults on choosing the right partner for the right reasons. We must educate parents on how to raise children. We must educate parents on how to resolve issues within a marriage and not just walk away. We must educate all on the morals and values of which we all would like to live under the influence. We must educate all on how to communicate on an acceptable level. We must make this mandatory. We must make this change now! Why must we do this? Because there is no one out there doing it and it is slowly killing us all emotionally!

Could you visualise the concept of all the current community health, fitness and education services offered, both current and what I propose were available in each municipality via a “Community Mega Centre” .

These Mega centres would become the, that's where I need to go for every conceivable thing to do with people. All that lived in each community would know in the back of their minds what and where this place was. It would become a centre of which people would become conversant with, just like a shopping mall.

Could you then visualise that under this one roof organization/ charities, kids help lines etc etc etc. There is a lot more to this Community Mega Centre and I hope have painted some sort of picture of it.

Suppose then that an adult is given a life booklet for their new born, a life booklet for their for their own development and a booklet for marriage. Guidelines of which would guide and educate via the booklet with mandatory courses run at these Community Mega Centres.

You may be thinking at this stage how something like this would become reality. Well let me say that it has started already. Councils in the Sydney Metro area are setting aside land for aquatic/ leisure and fitness centres as we speak. From what I have seen these centres have a construction cost of around 5 million dollars. For the federal government to add to this already available land and centre, would be quite easy given some courage, and of course money.

What I propose is groundbreaking, bold, something different and will be done with or without the support of the federal government. Wouldn't it be just out of sight if the government backed this idea as a commitment to morality and most of all a commitment to the children of the now and the future.

This proposal looks at the real issues and would have a pro-active approach. What has happened in the past 20 or so years will take a long time to change, and the time to start changing it, is now.

This proposal would once initiated have immediate results and over a period of time ease social pressures across the board quite substantially. You would see a majority of evils that show their head through human behaviour decrease to a point of non-existence. You would see love become primal to all.

I would be happy to present to this committee or government a full proposal given an opportunity. What I see as relative to this inquiry is the same for your next inquiry regarding a child's well being.

Both separation and divorce are people issues. A child's wellbeing is a people issue. These issues are human/ emotionally based and to deal with these types of issues you must adopt a wholistic approach.

In summary

The current family law system is not fair, nor are the laws focused on the best interest of the child. The proposed changes will be just that, changes. They will give further tools to the people who operate in the system for more of the same results.

The federal Government cannot support a family law system where by the primary focus of the people operating in that system is on their own business and not on the family unit.

To prove my theory, count how many submissions were undertaken by solicitors, or by solicitors wanting to abolish the current system?

You must initiate a mandatory mediation / settlement solution.

You must adopt child and people focused solutions. These solutions must have a primary focus on children and people.

The centres I propose will have this and quite a lot more.

The Link of this inquiry to a Child's Wellbeing is the same

The pro-active initiatives I propose are not a quick fix, they are for all time. Once the centres are operational they can be a vehicle for the continued upgrading of life standards. These centres will become an across the board standards belief system of all.

Whilst the centre would focus on the learning of all ages the primary focus is the children between the ages of 0 and 8. Most emotional beliefs are learnt between these ages.

My approach is about putting the needs of people first!



A Day In a Mans' Shoes

It was just a while ago
We all lived in harmony
As a group of three
We all lived as a family

My dreams and hopes shattered
A life once of happiness and Joy
One now of grief and loss
Gone were my wife and boy

No valid reason
Not any attempt
I still ask myself why
Why is this the way it went?

Many cries for help
A pouring of tears and emotion
Cast adrift in a system
No equality or respect for a fathers' devotion

A pursuing struggle
A bout about greed and power
As a father in this system
I know now what it is like to be devoured

A denial of me
A denial of what should be a given
An outcast and a visitor
But for my son I am driven

Another weekend alone
Void of my friend my son
I wonder in the eyes of natural law
Just what the hell I have done

When is a mans pain enough
For those outside looking in
To see and validate his suffering
To make a change, let it begin

My love and strength got me through
My guides have shown me well
For some not so, have passed,
Not recognised still, not one to dwell

I ask why is a mans life
Not worth a second thought, dear lord,
No questions of why?
Why In this system he is ignored

An out of focus, a non-clarity
Men alike, we need that big brass band
This system, supporters who declare as fair
It thinks of everybody but the child and the man

Not unlike loosing, loved ones and war
Generations stolen, same feelings you can bet
When will this nightmare end?
Lets hope soon, lest we forget!

Written By Ricky J Harris
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