

Submission No: **1004**

Michael Silvers Received: **8-8-03**  
6 Gibson Street  
Northcote Secretary:  
VICTORIA 3070

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Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs  
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry  
Department of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Tel: (02) 6277 4566  
Fax: (02) 6277 4844  
Email: [FCA.REPS@aph.gov.au](mailto:FCA.REPS@aph.gov.au)

Thankyou for accepting my submission for consideration in the Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry.

### Introduction

The proposals made in this document are relevant because they come from personal experience. They are from somebody who lives with the implications and duties of a separated and fragmented family.

In order to give these proposals some legitimacy I have provided an example based on my own situation. I Acknowledge that the sample size is small, however it is a reality for me and my new family.

Every situation is unique and no system of administration will be perfect. I believe however that **parents should be peers rather than contenders**. By removing the potential for competition over resources (financial or otherwise ) and ensuring that responsibilities are equal parents would focus on the child rather than themselves.

Hence, I have two proposals for consideration,

### Proposals

#### 1. Child Support Payments and Residency

- **Where residency and responsibility for children is shared equally no child support should be payable.**
- This also means that the responsibilities for children cannot be transferred to the ex-partner simply by paying large sums of money as child support.
- Other expenses that relate directly to the child should be shared equally- except where they are unilaterally applied by a parent.
- There are two complexities in the application of this proposal
  - a. One centred on the gender based inequities of our society. That is men generally earn more than women and have access to greater resources. Women, by virtue of motherhood, have a unique relationship with babies that requires consideration regarding employment- Once this early phase has concluded and equally shared residency can be implemented this

consideration may be de-emphasised. Also where the woman has been able to stay in the work force and has adequate qualifications "maternity" should not be a consideration when equal residency is achieved.

b. The next complexity is about ensuring that the child does not have a "polarised" standard of living between the two households. For example disability or significant difference in resource availability for whatever reason etc between the parents/careers.

- Where responsibilities are equitable parents are more willing to meet as peers with a common purpose (ie the welfare of the child ) , rather than as contenders for financial resources.

**2. Access to the extended family**

- **Children have the right to see and know their extended family unless it is shown to be detrimental to the child.**
- From a child welfare point of view anything can happen in life. The greater the family / support network the more access to emotional, physical and financial resources the child will have.

**Example**

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Thankyou for your consideration.

Michael Silverson.