



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation: call for submissions**

The Member for New England, Tony Windsor, is encouraging public submissions to a new inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation.

The inquiry, by the House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee, was announced by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives late last month.

Mr Windsor is encouraging people to put their views on the matters outlined in the inquiry's terms of reference. These include an examination of the concept of a 'rebuttable presumption' of equal time to be spent by children with each parent in the event of family separation, the child support formula, and grandparents' and others' contact rights. The complete terms of reference appear below.

"This subject is both important and highly emotional," Mr Windsor said.

"People and organisations with an interest in this matter are asked to make concise written **submissions to the Committee by Friday 8 August**, after which it is likely the Committee will undertake a series of public hearings."

The inquiry is to report **by 31 December 2003**. Given the tight reporting time, those making submissions are asked to keep their submissions concise. Contributors making submissions are advised to obtain the guidelines for making a submission from the inquiry website ([www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca/childcustody/)), or from the committee secretariat (tel: (02) 6277 4566, fax 02 6277 4844, or email: [fca.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:fca.reps@aph.gov.au)).

Submissions should be directed to the following postal address or via email (above):

**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**

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

Having regard to the Government's recent response to the Report of the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group, the Committee should inquire into, report on and make recommendations for action:

- (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; and
  - (ii) in what circumstances a court should order that children of separated parents have contact with other persons, including their grandparents.
- (b) Whether the existing child support formula works fairly for both parents in relation to their care of, and contact with, their children.
- (c) With the Committee to report to the Parliament by 31 December 2003.

The Committee has been asked to have regard to the Government's recent response to the report of the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group. A link to this report is available on the inquiry website.

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***For Further Information contact Tony Windsor, Ph 6761 3080***