

HEAR OUR VOICE POLICY STATEMENTS

FAMILY

Hear Our Voice acknowledges and respects the diversity of family units in Australia, which include: married heterosexual couples with or without children; unmarried heterosexual couples with or without children; same sex couples with or without children; couples or single adults with adopted or fostered children; single/ divorced men and women with children; grandparent(s)/uncle/aunt looking after children in the absence of parents, and adult brothers or sisters taking care of younger siblings in the absence of parents.

As 25 per cent of all marriages end in divorce Hear Our Voice supports programs and services that support family members in the break-up of the family unit, which is often traumatic to all parties.

Hear Our Voice believes the Family Law Court is under-resourced, backlogged with cases, and does not meet the needs of the community and we therefore support increased funding to improve its capacity and procedures.

Hear Our Voice condemns lengthy legal procedures in regard to the settlement of property and assets, and we are opposed to the substantial costs of legal advice and assistance associated with this process.

Hear Our Voice condemns lengthy legal procedures in regard to child custody matters, and we support programs that help parents understand the damage done to children if a fair and amicable custody arrangement is not reached. In circumstances of irretrievable relationship breakdown, these support services should work toward ensuring suitable arrangements between the distressed parents that are in the best interests of the children.

Hear Our Voice believes that it is important for children to have access to both parents and that appropriate action, including counseling and mediation, should be taken against parents who breach custody / access orders.

Although women are usually the primary care giver to children, Hear Our Voice believes that men are also good parents and should be afforded equal opportunity in gaining custody of, or reasonable access to, their children.

Hear Our Voice believes that children who have been abused, whether psychologically, sexually or physically, by a parent or parents or other family members should receive appropriate counseling, and the perpetrator should be dealt with swiftly and appropriately - eg they should be charged and if convicted

made to participate in a rehabilitation program whether through a prison program or a community based program.

Hear Our Voice believes children should be removed from unlawfully neglectful, harmful and abusive environments but we understand it is important for children to still have contact with their parents and other family members so we support programs that work with the entire family to change the behaviors of the perpetrator(s) and help heal the victims.

Hear Our Voice condemns abusive and violent behaviour within the family and we support programs and initiatives that effectively help reduce the harm and incidence of domestic violence in society.

Hear Our Voice believes that people committing domestic violence should attend mandatory rehabilitative and anger management programs and their behaviour should be monitored to ensure the abuse ceases.