

Justice & Change

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE RESEARCH (SJSC)

Would like to invite you to a

Public Seminar on

Family Violence, Family Law & Child Support: What's Happening to Mothers and Children

Presented by:

Dr. Elspeth McInnes
Ms. Marie Hume
Ms. Kathryn Rendell
Ms. Beth Tinning
Ms. Terese Edwards

On

Tuesday, 1 December 2009

At 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Room 23.G.41 (Conf. 02), Building 23
UWS Bankstown Campus
Bullecourt Ave, Milperra

Light refreshments will be provided

RSVP: sjsc@uws.edu.au

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July 1 2006 heralded three major policy changes impacting on single parents. The family law changes promoting shared parental responsibility took effect. The child support system began a series of changes towards a new formula which has reduced child support payments to many households. Thirdly, the Welfare to Work changes tipped single parents of school age children into compulsory workfare and lower Newstart payments.

The family law and child support changes worked together to increase children's time with their other parent. Family law changes provided a legal framework for children to be ordered to spend more time with their other parent, and child support changes increased financial incentives for paying parents to seek more time with their child.

Victims of domestic violence and child abuse are offered protection under the family law changes but many mothers and children are highly critical and complain that they are being failed by policies which reduce their financial circumstances and promote father-child contact ahead of their safety.

The panel will provide a range of views on their work with women and children who have been caught up in these policy changes.

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Dr. Elspeth McInnes will be presenting her most recent work on consequences of recent changes to Child Support and Family Law. Dr. McInnes has been a strong advocate for single mothers and their children and currently is Principle Policy Advisor for National Council of Single Mothers and their Children and has researched and written extensively on family law, child support and the impact on single mothers and their children.

She is Senior Lecturer and Research Degrees Coordinator Early Childhood Doctoral Program, Director de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies Research Group at the University of South Australia.

Ms. Marie Hume is convenor of the National Abuse Free Contact Campaign, a *national (and international) Feminist coalition of organisations who have formed to advocate on behalf of women and children going through the Family Court system with concerns about domestic violence and child abuse.* Marie is a former family court counsellor and conducted research into child sexual abuse allegations in the family court for her Masters degree.

Ms. Kathryn Rendell is co-author of "An Unacceptable Risk" which highlighted the significant problems women and children face within the family law system when attempting to escape from violence and abuse. She is currently undertaking her PhD research into how family law professional operationalise 'children's best interests'.

Ms. Beth Tinning is currently at the James Cook University and has just completed her doctorate on family law issues. Beth has extensive experience in the field of domestic violence.

Ms. Terese Edwards is the CEO of the National Council for Single Mothers and their Children and is also vice president of Australian Council of Social Services.