

ADR~~AA~~

Alternative Dispute Resolution Association of Australia

The Hon. Lionel Bowen
Attorney General & Deputy
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

C/- Community Justice Centre
17 Randle Street,
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Phone No: 212-2526

19th October 1988

Dear Minister,

Family Mediation Centre, Noble Park, Victoria

At a Committee Meeting of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Association of Australia Inc., held on 28 September 1988, it was resolved to bring to your attention the Association's concern and disappointment at the funding withdrawal for the very successful pilot project at the above Centre.

Under its terms of reference the Centre has successfully addressed the limitations in Family Court and counselling services and provided relief from the increasing cost of legal aid in Family Law matters.

The 1986 Federal Government commissioned evaluation confirmed that the Centre was fulfilling the rigorous objectives set. The evaluation particularly stressed that the Centre had developed a potential prototype model for alternative family dispute resolution and that its excellence of service and administration had exceeded any reasonable expectations.

The abandonment of this project is particularly disappointing in view of the expanding alternative justice movement through Australia. ADR practitioners are providing successful and efficient services which, among other things, are offsetting the increasingly clogged courts, the escalating costs of litigation to all involved and the traumas of the formal system to users. It is the Association's belief, based on experience, that informal mediation is a process which particularly lends itself to the resolution of family disputes, not the least advantage being to provide opportunities for separating partners to forge their own arrangements which best meet the needs of their children and themselves, thus minimising the resurrection risk of the dispute.

2.

If the cessation of the funding for the pilot project is a cost cutting measure, we believe this measure will prove to be counter-productive. Programmes such as the Family Mediation Centre can offer real relief from the spiralling costs of the existing system.

Yours faithfully,



WENDY FAULKES
PRESIDENT