

**Submission
No 118**

INQUIRY INTO CHILD PROTECTION

Organisation: East Maitland Pine Tree "GAPS" Support Group
Date received: 04 August 2016



East Maitland Pine Tree "GAPS" Support Group

Bev Steggles
Voluntary Co-Ordinator
33 Kilkenny Circuit
Ashtonfield NSW 2323

Submission

Re Child Protection – NSW Enquiry Complaints concerning FACS from Grandparents,

Specifically GAPS (Grandparents as Parents Support Group)

East Maitland. Voluntary Co-ordinator – Beverly Steggles

Discussions were held on Tuesday 2.8.2016 at our venue, Bruce Street Community Hall, 22 Bruce Street, East Maitland 2323.

The Following issues were brought up by grandparents attending (20)

- 1) When grandparents ring FACS and complain about the neglect of their grandchildren by their parents FACS disregard these complaints.
- 2) Discrimination against grandparents by FACS staff (many of the grandparents felt intimidated).
- 3) Grandparents & grandchildren are often put at risk at parent visits which have been organised by FACS (one grandparent was chased by a parent with a chainsaw).

- 4) FACS do not always adhere to court orders handed down to grandparents. Their comment "that is Family Court not Children's Court.
- 5) Grandparents are not given the same assistance as Foster Carers. e.g supervised parental visits and respite!!
- 6) Grandparents are having multiple case workers. Staff keep leaving and there are gaps between when one leaves and another commences
- 7) Supportive grandparents allowance withheld for 8 years, and still not paid. (1 couple).
- 8) There should be one court, or at least 2 courts (Federal & State) should work together.
- 9) FACS are under resourced.
- 10) Conflicting advice given to grandparents by different FACS workers
- 11) No follow up after parenting courses.
- 12) 1 member of our GAPS group lost their home & used all their superannuation before they received any assistance form FACS. (they are raising 4 grandchildren)
- 13) Another member lost their farm to finance the rearing & education of their 2 young granddaughters.

These are a few of the many complaints we received and it should also be noted some grandparents are not computer literate and this also creates problem for them.

Regards

Bev Steggles

