

Opening the black box of child support

- Yes [I wanted to apply for child support]- in a sense. The non custodial parent should absolutely contribute to the cost of raising the children they make. The exemption *might* have prevented or minimised 6 years of ongoing legal abuse and the use of technology to stalk and harass me (still current). However, it is not a guarantee that the abuser would/will leave us alone. The loss of FTB against child support assessments assumes the paying parent will pay and the provision for FTB to be distributed according to what is received leaves the weekly budget in ruins if a long-standing CS debt is eventually paid via tax return garnishment.
- Due to highly volatile situation with my ex, I waited to apply for child support after months of him not paying anything as he [insisted] on a private arrangement, and was psychologically abusing me if I brought the subject up. When I finally applied for child support, I was subjected to ongoing verbal abuse and intimidation.
- The violence my children and I were experiencing wasn't worth it to apply for child support, I still haven't applied and I pay for all expenses, nothing from their father.
- It was a chaotic and dangerous time. We were fleeing. Services Australia were unsupervised, obstructive and increased the danger we were in. Child support frankly didn't give a shit. I've concluded that dead women and children are not a burden on the state, so it's the state's preferred outcome.

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K. Cook, A. Byrt, R. Edwards and A. Coen (2024), *Opening the black box of child support: Shining a light on how financial abuse is perpetrated*, Swinburne University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.25916/sut.26983363>

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■ ■ It's a lot easier to get him exempt from paying than to get him to pay. Whether or not a parent receives cs [child support] should not dictate if they receive family tax benefits, as having Services Australia threaten to reduce or cut it off, is triggering for victims of domestic violence, who have been repeatedly threatened by their ex to stop paying child support or to pay less, to take the children if they claim child support, to take your own benefits, to kill you and the kids if you claim child support. Services Australia aren't often sensitive enough to what some parents face from their ex partners and the stress, risk and effort placed on us, to receive and continue receiving cs. I was given an exception [sic] but my ex only paid when he saw the children, and thinks he doesn't have to pay to see them. My ex sexually assaulted our children so I will never attempt to claim [child support] again because he thinks payment of child support means he has a right to see them.

■ ■ I still don't understand this system! I had no idea I could have received more FTB. I've at times been living on as little as \$72 a week of FTB as my sole income to feed, house, clothe and educate myself and 2 children. I don't understand how that is possible.

■ ■ He wanted private collect so I couldn't see his true income, after his financial abuse I applied to Child Support and copped even more financial abuse as this then exposed this true income and increased his payments. He has a sick greed for wealth, status and admiration from others trying to show off his wealth to others, while trying to make me homeless and put me on the streets.

■ ■ To reduce the risk of violence by my ex, I knew he wouldn't pay and more so he would choose WHEN to pay to further control me so I chose family tax benefit [at the base rate] so I had a stable source of income without conditions.

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■ ■ When the child support application was lodged he quit his job and declared \$0 per year in earnings. He had accrued a debt from his job and not paying and he asked for a reduction due to financial hardship as he was not earning an income. This continued for about 4 years when evidence surfaced that he was working cash in hand. The [Australian Tax Office] ATO intercepted and as a result a tax return was done. Since then CSA have calculated child support off those earnings but he has not lodged a return since and continues to work cash in hand. So his actual income has always been unknown.

■ ■ Has told me now they plan to put the new business in a trust so I'll get nothing at all, threatening me if I do another Change if Assessment I'll get nothing.

■ ■ Told me he would do whatever he could to ensure I received nothing.

■ ■ [I moved to Agency Collect] because my ex under paid me \$4000 and I could not recoup that because I had chosen private collect. It made me so angry that he was still enabled to commit financial abuse against me and my children.

■ ■ I can't deal directly with him. It is not safe. I leave everything up to the Child support agency. I'm genuinely so tired and defeated. It is so disappointing, more so when you have evidence of their misconduct and absolutely nothing is done about it. These abusive people are protected and supported by these systems.

■ ■ More needs to be done to investigate parents who dodge child support. Whether or not a parent receives cs should not dictate if they receive family tax benefits, as having services Australia threaten to reduce or cut it off, is triggering for victims of domestic violence, who have been repeatedly threatened by their ex to stop paying cs or to pay less, to take the children if they claim cs, to take your own benefits, to kill you and the kids if you claim cs. Services Australia aren't often sensitive enough to what some parents face from their ex partners and the stress, risk and effort placed on us, to receive and continue receiving cs.

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