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5 October 2017

Right Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy
Governor-General of New Zealand
Government House
Private Bag 39-995
Wellington Mail Centre
LOWER HUTT 5045

Dear Dame Patsy Reddy

**RE: SUPPORTING THE CALL BY THE BACKBONE COLLECTIVE
FOR A ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE
FAMILY COURT**

I write to you as a former, now retired, educational and child psychologist and father's rights advocate who has taken a longstanding interest in the Family Court since it was established in 1981. This was an outcome of a recommendation from a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Courts a decade earlier.

Thirty-six years further on the Backbone Collective as you may establish from their website, is organising an online petition and is again asking for a Royal Commission of Inquiry. They have also presented a number of case-histories to Principal Family Court Judge Laurence Ryan.

Our own smaller, less well organised and less influential lobby group has, over the years, done the same.

Our most recent case **I.P.** is enclosed. Identifying details of the mother and her two children have been redacted to protect their identity.

I have endeavoured to contact the Collective to advise them of our support but to no avail so far.

While there have been a number of reports into the Family Court calling for reform none, in my opinion have been implemented thanks to the powerful legal

fraternity who have obstructed reform with the end result that little has changed to the adversarial model of dispute resolution and the more limited use of counselling offered by the Independent Family Mediation Services.

Further details of the 'history' of the Family Court is to be found in the enclosures, particularly the North and South's well-balanced articles which cover both gender perspectives.

One of the most serious shortcomings are the delays experienced by many parents contesting custody and access and the financial stresses both parents are placed under although many women are legally aided whereas men are not and more commonly, are now choosing to self-represent further clogging up the system. Some males commit suicide. Most recently a father set himself alight outside Parliament in protest as his treatment by the Family Court. Men are more likely to end their lives following a relationship breakdown, nine times more frequently than at other periods in their lives.

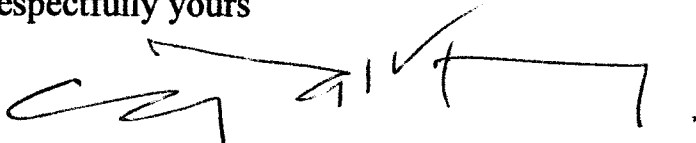
The dysfunctional Family Court and its detrimental impact on the children involved is now becoming a widespread issue of public concern and importance.

Since both mothers and fathers regard themselves as equally disadvantaged, I urge you to invoke your '*reserve powers*' to instigate an Inquiry. It is unlikely, in my opinion, that the Executive itself would otherwise do so. Please, on this point, refer to my letter to Principal Judge Laurence Ryan of 29 June 2013.

I understand that you have the powers to reject the advice of your Ministers if you see sufficient cause for you to dissent from their opinion that an Inquiry is not necessary.

Please consider doing so to ensure that the wellbeing of the children involved is the first and paramount consideration and not the interests of the family law legal fraternity.

Respectfully yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig C Jackson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig C Jackson
Fathers Rights Advocate
(1978–2017)
LEVIN