

## **Post-separation Parenting Research : In support of future directions policy.**

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Recommendations set out in the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group (FLPAG) Report 2001, *Out of the Maze*, that the various services encompassed under the umbrella of the family law system be fully co-ordinated to facilitate appropriate client assessment and referral, will be appraised in light of recent qualitative research on post-separation parenting.

This paper will present the conclusions drawn from qualitative research that investigates the ways in which parents cope with many issues engendered by the transition from parenting together to parenting apart. The research sought to compare lived experience with family law reform objects and principles, with particular focus on the notions of shared parenting. In addition, the research sought to evaluate the impact of "law" in post-separation lives, from the perspective of parents who had interaction with conciliation, counselling or mediation services. Participants in the study generally expressed dissatisfaction in relation to their experiences with these services. The FLPAG report implies that the current, somewhat disjointed service delivery 'system' fails many parents because their needs at any point in time may not be matched with the appropriate service. The research findings suggest that this may indeed be the case, as the emotional, social and legal needs of separated parents are complex and frequently intertwined and would be better accommodated by the new service delivery model proposed by the Family Law Pathways Advisory Group.