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Productivity Commission

Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity
and Parental Leave
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

I write on behalf of the Association of Consulting Engineers Australia (ACEA) to convey our views on the options for an Australian paid maternity leave system.

ACEA supports a model which allows employers and employees to be able to voluntarily agree arrangements for work and family balance, including arrangements for paid and unpaid parental leave.

Our views are consistent with those of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the views of the New South Wales Business Chamber (NSWBC).

We wish to convey our support for the following principles. If compulsory paid maternity leave is implemented the scheme should:

- Be funded, and paid to the employee by the Government.
- Be administered wholly by Government agencies.
- Not expose employers to any mandatory obligation (legislative or arbitral) to top up claims, or to incur additional on-costs.
- Not have any unintended consequences for employers.
- Allow payments to be made to the employee directly by the government, not through the employer, and should be paid to the mother except in circumstances where she is not the primary care giver.

Any national paid parental leave scheme should not provide a benefit greater than the Federal Minimum Wage and be paid for no more than 14 weeks.

If it introduces a national scheme, the government should consider linking it to the parent returning to the workforce. If so, these "participation" payments should be directed towards the parent returning to the workforce, not restricted to the parent returning to the former employer.

In addition to voicing our support of the above mentioned principles we see the need for a range of accessible, affordable and quality child care facilities.





The focus on child care accessibility and capacity to meet parent demand is important in keeping and attracting parents to the Australian workforce and we ask that the Government consider the impact of the lack of accessibility of the childcare system on work family balance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan Motto'.

Megan Motto
Chief Executive