



**wacoss**

Western Australian  
Council of Social Service Inc

*Ways to make  
a difference*

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Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City  
ACT 2601

**RE: Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave**

To Whom it May Concern,

WACOSS thanks the Productivity Commission for the opportunity to make a submission into this inquiry. In the place of a formal submission, please accept this letter as an articulation of our position on this matter, and also of our support for the submission made by Unions WA.

WACOSS shares the view that it is unacceptable that Australia remains one of only two OECD developed nations not to have a universal, federally funded maternity leave scheme. We are therefore in full support of providing 14 weeks paid maternity leave. This should be paid as *a minimum* and reviewed, as it still falls short of the level of many other maternity leave schemes in OECD countries.

In addition to this, we support the need for any universal scheme to sit alongside and be in addition to any previous entitlements and existing rights of employees. Similar comments have been made by Valued Independent People Inc, and WACOSS is also in support of these recommendations.

As recommended in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) (2007) submission *It's about Time*, WACOSS asserts that this payment be made at the level of the federal minimum wage at the time, and also supports Unions WA's claim of an additional 9% superannuation contribution.

Women continue to face unique and complex barriers fitting into and participating in public life in Western Australia. A universally paid maternity leave scheme as a minimum safety-net would be one way of easing the hardship faced by many women who seek to maintain a work-life balance.

To discuss this submission further, please do not hesitate to contact Irina Cattalini, Director Social Policy on 08 9420 7222.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Baker  
Executive Director  
WACOSS

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