

13 June 2008

Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601
Email: parentalsupport@pc.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission into the Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry. Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) is a national group of community legal centres specialising in women's legal issues. We provide advice to women on a range of matters including on issues relating to pregnancy, maternity leave and discrimination.

WLSA supports a parental leave scheme that:

- is government funded;
- is available to all employed women, including those employed on a part-time, contract, casual or self-employed basis and regardless of their length of service;
- has payments matched to individuals' normal weekly payments, capped at the full-time federal minimum wage, with a review of the impact of this cap after three years with a view to increasing the amount above minimum wage;
- provides payment for a minimum of 26 weeks at full pay, or 52 weeks at half pay;
- includes an option to return to work part time or with flexible work conditions;
- encourages the employer to top up the government payments to the person's full salary;
- retains the baby bonus for those not eligible for government funded parental leave scheme;
- provides an additional period of paid parental leave for a partner, or other carer.

WLSA endorses the submission made to the Productivity Commission by Kingsford Legal Centre.

Yours faithfully,

Edwina MacDonald
Law Reform Coordinator