

Dear Sir/Madam,

Whilst I realise that the closing date for submissions was June 2, 2008, I hope that you may be able to consider my submission.

I recently returned to full-time work after having my first child.

I am fortunate to have an employer who offers 14 weeks paid maternity leave and this together with a significant accrual of annual leave (accumulated over many years in anticipation of having a child!) enabled me to take almost 7 months of leave. I am still breastfeeding and intend to do so until my child is at least 12 months old. Whilst my employer is incredibly supportive and there are no issues with expressing breastmilk at work there are some days when my work commitments dictate that this is not possible (eg. When travelling interstate etc). Our financial situation meant that I had to return to work when my paid leave was exhausted. Ideally (particularly with my desire to continue breastfeeding) I would have liked to have 12 months at home with my child. But our financial situation did not allow this.

There are two components to my submission:

1. I have worked with my employer for 9 years and accumulated a significant amount of sick leave (14 weeks in total). I'm sure there are many other mothers who are in similar positions and I would like to suggest that some consideration be made to allowing women to take some part of any sick leave they have accrued to extend their period of paid maternity leave. I understand that this would have to be an arrangement with individual employers however it is this type of lateral thinking that need to be raised and floated with the wider business community both public and private with a view to gaining general acceptance of the concept.

Whilst I realise that the women may not be 'sick', my suggestion is looking at an alternative way for mothers to extend their period of paid leave and utilising leave that has already been accrued by the employer.

2. The superannuation legislation in relation to calculating the superannuation guarantee liability will change from 1 July 2008 whereby it will be a requirement for all employers to calculate their superannuation guarantee liability against an employee's ordinary time earnings (OTE). The definition of OTE excludes maternity leave payments and as a result for women on maternity leave their employer is not permitted by the legislation to pay superannuation in relation to these earnings.

It should not be a case of not being permitted. In fact, OTE should included maternity leave payments just as it includes annual leave.

This new legislation is unfair and discriminatory.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. Apologies for not meeting the deadline but with working fulltime and looking after a nine month old life is very busy!