

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this email to express my pleasure at the initial report that has been released through the media today for Paid Maternity Leave. I am a female self employed chiropractor who has a small clinic which provides employment for 2 staff members directly and 3 others indirectly. I am writing to express my desire to have my position, and many other womens, in the work force considered when you are finalising your submission for consideration by parliament.

I recently had my first child and was very grateful for the availability of the baby bonus. This bonus allowed me to take 10 weeks away from my clinic to be with my new child. As a self employed person I have no employer who will pay me leave so whenever I am not working I do not receive a wage. Secondly, as mentioned previously I am a chiropractor with my own practice. As I make my income from a service providing profession it is necessary for me to provide that service so that I can generate an income which allows me to keep my staff employed and provide them with an income. The baby bonus granted me the ability to step away from these responsibilities with the knowledge that not only did I have some income to support my own household but I was not required to try and draw anything from my practice and therefore my staff were protected as well. It allowed me to wallow in the joys, trials, apprehensions and exhilarations of new motherhood for the first few months of my baby daughters life.

I am writing to ask that you include the needs of women like myself when you are formulating your final submission. I, like any other new mother, need time with my child in their first few weeks of life and that time needs to be totally focused on their needs. Because I am self employed or because I earn a greater than average income I should not be disadvantaged or discriminated against. My child needs me as much as any newborn needs their mother. I pay my taxes and I support other members of the community by providing them with a place of work and an income. I ask that the government not exclude myself or other women in my position from the paid maternity leave programme. I am proud of what I have achieved in my work life and my home life but I am not sure that this would have been possible if the previous government had not provided a bonus system to every woman regardless of age or income. That bonus provided me with income that other women would have received with their normal leave allowance and it made a significant difference to our ability to parent a child.

Every mother has concerns about their ability to be a good mother and provide for their child. Every father has these same concerns. These concerns are not lessened because we earn more or we provide our own place of employment. Please maintain the policy of the previous government and don't discriminate. Allow for every mother to spend those initial crucial weeks caring for her baby not being forced back into the workforce because she is the employer not the employee or because she may have earnt too much in the last financial year. Allow her to be just a mother for a little time, a very precious time.

Thank you for allowing me to express my requests and I hope that you will take my needs, and other professional women's needs, seriously.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lorraine Scarr B.Sc, M.Chiro