

NFAW response to the Productivity Commission Draft Report

Introduction

1. In October 2007 the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Kevin Rudd MP responded to a letter from the National Foundation for Australian Women, which had conveyed a request on behalf of the combined national women's organisations (representing some 2-3 million women overall); a request that the issue of a national paid maternity leave scheme be referred to the Productivity Commission.
2. In his letter of reply he undertook that in Government he would do so, and would publish the report.
3. Notwithstanding the excellent underpinning academic research on this issue, and several reports by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, the matter had by mid 2007 fallen off the national policy agenda.
4. We welcomed the promise by Mr. Rudd to the women of Australia, conscious as we are¹ of this gap in Australia's social infrastructure.
5. In the event, Mr. Rudd became Prime Minister of Australia and the matter was indeed referred to the Commission, and the policy development began.
6. Around the same time, and shortly afterwards, other policy development processes began which also had relevance.
7. A House of Representatives Committee inquiry began into pay equity and other factors affecting women's workforce participation; a Senate Committee began a review of the Sex Discrimination Act. All these bear on the relationship of Australian women to the workforce.
8. In Budget Paper No.1 of the 2008-9 Commonwealth Budget the extensive discussion on productivity canvassed Treasury's approach to real economic output (GDP), which disaggregated this into three Ps, viz., population, participation, and productivity.
9. Inter alia, there was analysis of the rate at which the size and skill base of Australia's workforce might increase, including the rate of active participation across genders and age groups and changing levels of education, training and attachment.
10. *"There is also potential for 'spillovers' stemming from education and training. Early childhood, primary and secondary school education play a critical role in social*

¹ See <http://nfaw.org/paid-maternity-leave/>

cohesion in addition to their role in giving students the skills to enter the workforce" according to Budget Paper No.1, Statement Number 4.

11. Since that time in early 2008, there has been a major turn-around in the world's economic stability, resulting in changes to the anticipated rate of economic growth for the Australian economy, as well as changes for the Budget outlook for 2009-10.
12. What has not changed, however, is the essential accuracy of the above statements in terms of the need to promote workforce participation across genders and age groups, and the importance of the early years of childhood.
13. The importance of increasing women's participation in the workforce was specifically emphasised in the November 2006 report by Access Economics Pty Ltd for the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services². This report, based on macroeconomic modelling of the impact of changes to women's workforce participation on projected economic growth, identified a clear economic benefit if the number of women in the workforce increases.
14. The Productivity Commission's Draft Recommendations on Paid Parental Leave have potential to greatly enhance infant development and well being, with all of the implications of that for future education, socialisation, and social participation.
15. Whatever the immediate state of the Budget outlook, whatever the rate of economic growth forecast, there remains the essential truth that Australia needs to enhance productivity, we need to invest in 'soft' as well as 'hard' infrastructure, and we need to invest in policy and programs which will enhance child and maternal development and well being.
16. The draft report from the Productivity Commission highlights the solid evidence base for providing for full parental care of infants under the age of six months to ensure optimal neurological and health development of the infant, with further but slightly less conclusive evidence supporting the case for a twelve month period of parental care. This is indeed significant for all early childhood policies and programs, as much as it supports the case for immediate investment in a policy to enable women to spend this crucial period of time with their infant children.
17. It is against this background that we welcome the Draft Report into Paid Parental Leave by the Productivity Commission, and we commend the proposed scheme to the Australian Government as a significant and essential component of Budget 2009-10.
18. We assure the Commission, and the Government, based on our consultations around the nation, that this is a high priority for Australian women and their partners.

² <http://www.aph.gov.au/House/committee/fhs/workandfamily/subs.htm>

The draft report

19. The NFAW welcomes the broad thrust of the draft recommendations, whilst having some reservations on a number of subsidiary points that will be documented below.
20. In our view, many of the subsidiary concerns could be managed in the planned reviews of the proposed scheme, rather than requiring further delay in design.
21. This should not, however, be taken to mean that the points raised are unimportant.
22. We particularly welcome the Commission's statement of the objectives of the proposed national scheme, and the clear linking of the policy approach to life-long workforce attachment.
23. We also endorse the workforce attachment eligibility proposals; twelve months at an average of ten hours per week seems generally reasonable (but see our comments on cadetships and traineeships) and we welcome the proviso that the worker may have had more than one employer during the period, a pattern for many casual and part-time workers.
24. We note also from oral communications that the Commission has in mind some administrative arrangements that would allow for special circumstances, and potential for Administrative Appeal processes.
25. We note the explicit generosity in relation to very low-income women; those who are casuals, or part-time workers, and self-employed women such as contractors and families in primary industry such as farming or fishing businesses. These are the groups most likely to miss out under current employer provided schemes and for whom the guarantee of support whilst on leave caring for a very young infant will be most welcome.
26. NFAW notes that a need exists in Australia for greater/increasing emphasis on the role of the father/partner in achieving optimal child development, and the 'normalisation' of shared parenting/work roles for both partners. We welcome the coverage of same sex couples.
27. NFAW sees the draft proposals as a sound start in progressing this desirable change in social values and behaviours.
28. NFAW notes and endorses the proposals in relation to non-workforce attached mothers, including continued entitlement to a re-named Baby Bonus, removal of the current means testing of the payment, and the interesting and commendable proposed introduction of two weeks paid paternity leave, on a *use-it-or-lose-it* basis for fathers whether or not the mother is workforce attached.
29. NFAW particularly welcomes the proposals for evaluations at two and five years after introduction. We see this as essential, and regard the basic schema proposed as the first step in what we envisage as a gradual program of improvements over time.

30. We also note the need for Government to provide appropriate resources for related research, which will provide a sound basis for evaluation and review.
31. We draw to attention that the Minister for Women, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP has provided to NFAW/S4W³ a grant to encourage women to participate in this second phase of policy process. We have been delighted that Commissioners Fitzgerald and MacRae have been able to participate in our consultations in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. Assistant Commissioner Lattimore has taken part in the event in Canberra.
32. In holding these events we have been given valued support by groups and government agencies in each city.
33. In Brisbane the Queensland Working Women's Centre organised the consultation, whilst the Queensland Government Women's Policy Unit provided a meeting place.
34. In Darwin the Northern Territory Working Women's Service organised the event, whilst the NT. Government Minister for Women, Malarndirri McCarthy, spoke.
35. In Perth the consultation was organised by the WA Office for Women's Policy, on behalf of the Indigenous Women's Congress and the Women's Consultative Network. It was a pleasure to have an opportunity for an extended discussion on the issue with The Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA, Minister for Women.
36. In Adelaide the event was organised by the South Australian Working Women's Service.
37. In Melbourne the consultation was assisted through the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust, the Women's Information and Referral Service, Security for Women, and the Victorian Women's Trust.
38. In Hobart the event was organised by Women Tasmania and hosted by the Tasmanian Women's Council. Senator Carol Brown (Lab. Tas) opened the meeting, and Lisa Singh MLA Parliamentary Secretary for Women also spoke.
39. The Sydney consultation was organised through the Women and Work Research Group at the University of Sydney.
40. The Canberra consultation was organised by the ACT Office for Women on behalf of the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women.
41. The diversity of the women and organisations attending has been vast.

³ Security for Women

42. This NFAW Submission also draws on experience during the consultations, whilst not purporting to be representative of or on behalf of those women whom we have encouraged to make their own individual submissions.
43. Notes from individual meetings are at *Attachment 1*⁴. In summary, we can say that there was overall a strong level of support for the Commission's proposals, and for the immediate introduction of the proposed scheme.
44. That support did recognise some specific issues that could benefit from changes at the edges- including closer attention to the 'flavour' as many saw it of the Draft Report being about a first birth.
45. Many women pointed out that pregnancies to women in the 30-40 year age group are now common, and close second and subsequent pregnancies are now commonplace, and that as currently designed, many women taking time off for a second or subsequent birth might not have re-established eligibility between pregnancies, notwithstanding a return part-time to the workforce. We understand that Commissioners are now aware of this and are re-considering the issue.
46. There was a degree of disagreement expressed by some women concerned that in their view insufficient respect is being paid by Government to recognising the role played by women who chose not to engage in the workforce.

Special issues relating to indigenous women

47. In Perth and Darwin and Sydney specific issues of concern to indigenous women were raised in consultations.
48. While we have encouraged direct contact with the Commission, and Commissioner Fitzgerald has indicated his interest in facilitating this, we will note some of those concerns.
49. Many indigenous women are not yet workforce attached, many live in conditions of extreme poverty, many have had minimal opportunity to engage in education or training.
50. The Commonwealth has recognized the importance of promoting workforce attachment of indigenous Australians by developing an Indigenous Employment Strategy
51. In the view of NFAW, further special attention should be paid by Government to measures to assist indigenous women and their families to escape poverty through education and workforce participation, including through the sympathetic design of relevant programs such as paid parental leave.

⁴ Outstanding notes will be forwarded separately when they are received.

52. We have been advised that where indigenous women are engaged in traineeships or cadetships, it seems possible that these forms of engagement with the workforce are unlikely to make them eligible for paid parental leave, as currently designed.

53. At *Attachment 2* is a statement provided to NFAW by a young woman who is on a cadetship through the DEEWR managed IEP cadetship arrangements. She outlines the facts that she would not be entitled to participate in the draft PPL scheme because of the lack of recognition of the nature of her workforce attachment.

This requires attention.

54. Indigenous women have pointed out that those who have been engaged, often for long periods of time, in CDEP programs, have no entitlement to paid parental leave or to superannuation.

This requires attention.

55. Indigenous women have pointed out that cultural values regarding child rearing may mean that a close relative becomes the actual primary carer during the first year(s) of an infant's life, and it is unclear if such an arrangement would be recognized as the PPL scheme is currently proposed.

This requires attention

56. Indigenous women have pointed out that the cultural requirements for participating in obligations such as 'Sorry Business' mean that few employed indigenous women have any accrued paid leave; many must take unpaid leave to fulfill their obligations. Thus they are unlikely to have access to periods of paid leave to supplement the minima proposed by the Commission. This is of particular relevance where a pregnancy may be of a second or subsequent child.

This requires attention.

57. Indigenous women have pointed out that many, even those employed by State and Commonwealth public service organisations, are on short-term contracts, which may not only fail to provide them with significant accrued leave, but which may adversely impact their qualifying period for the proposed national scheme

This requires attention.

Duration questions

58. Issues have been raised, not only by indigenous women, about the proposed duration of paid parental leave.

59. In many instances, some pregnant women need to leave employment some weeks before parturition for health reasons. In consequence, there is a view that the period of paid leave should be able to commence at a suitable period in advance of expected parturition, dependent on health needs.



- 60. We emphasise that this should be not compared to some provisions in existence many years ago, which obligated pregnant women to retire from work around six weeks before the due date of parturition. This should be optional.
- 61. This should be in addition to the desirable minimum of 24 weeks post parturition (on general grounds of child health and development as well as maternal health).
- 62. Again, many low-income women, especially those working as casuals, are unlikely to have sufficient (if any) accrued paid leave to extend the post-parturition period to 24 weeks.
- 63. A further point is that with second and subsequent births, most working women will have already drawn to varying degrees on their own paid leave eligibility in order to have time away from work to care for a sick child, or to be at home during a school vacation.
- 64. These women should not be disadvantaged further.
- 65. We consider provision of 24 weeks paid leave should form an element of the national scheme. We note that the anticipated cost to revenue could be in the order of \$70m p.a.

Additionality questions: employer schemes

- 66. There is considerable anxiety as to how existing employer funded schemes might fit into a new national scheme- especially in the private sector where some schemes are actually less generous in duration, and where employers may seek to transfer current costs to the national system.
- 67. The view was expressed that a 'no disadvantage' test in relation to employees whose employers might change their own schemes should be part of any transition arrangements.
- 68. There is considerable confusion about the interpretation of the draft recommendations that the proposed national scheme be for leave taken 'after all other leave'. On one interpretation this would mean that the scheme could be of negligible value to women whose employers already provide at least fourteen weeks paid maternity leave.
- 69. We understand from oral communications that this is a drafting problem, and that the Commission is seeking to achieve Additionality.
- 70. It has appeared from clarifying remarks that this should be interpreted as meaning that the national scheme would be in addition to existing parental/maternity leave, but not taken simultaneously. This requires clarification.
- 71. Attention was drawn to the inter-action with the New Employment Standards. Casual workers do not have any right to a 'return to work' after a period of paid leave. This is a difficulty across a range of industries. It exists in education, where secondary school teaching, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and university

teaching is now extensively based on short-term contracts and casual teachers, as well as in retail and hospitality.

Employer Incentives.

72. The extreme anxiety held by some employers about proposals that they should be the paymasters was noted.
73. It is probable that the reported collapse in employer confidence underpins much of the employer anxieties which we have encountered.
74. However, there are issues for some industries, and some very small employers that should be addressed.
75. NFAW considers that the Commission should review the original NFAW proposal that small employers (say, up to 25 employees) should be entitled to a lump sum payment to assist them with the costs of recruiting replacement staff, and managing continuing payroll, as a means of assuaging such anxieties.
76. We have noted anxiety also among those SMEs⁵ with a demographic of female employees who have a statistically high likelihood of having multiple instances of employees on paid parental leave. This group of SMEs includes both not for profit and for profit agencies in childcare, just as many other human service agencies will also be affected.
77. Many of these SMEs are actually reliant on direct or indirect subsidy from Governments to meet their wage bills (women's refuges, disability employment agencies, and so forth). These agencies will be likely to have sympathy with the social policy objective, but may have difficulty financing their share of employer contributions.
78. Employer anxiety about continuing superannuation contributions for employees who had been with them for twelve months was noted. In the event this is a sticking point; NFAW considers that it could be traded off against the lump sum proposed above for administrative expenses.

Fathers/partners' issues

79. There is in the view of NFAW a need for greater emphasis on the role of fathers/partners.
80. We welcome the emphasis on this in the draft recommendations, and the current provisions proposed.
81. We would prefer to see the period of parental leave available to families gradually extended over time so that, as in Norway, over a twelve month period full parental

⁵ Small and medium enterprises

primary care of the infant could be achieved through a combination of paid leave for both parents. Any such extensions could follow from reviews of the scheme from time to time, as economic circumstances permit.

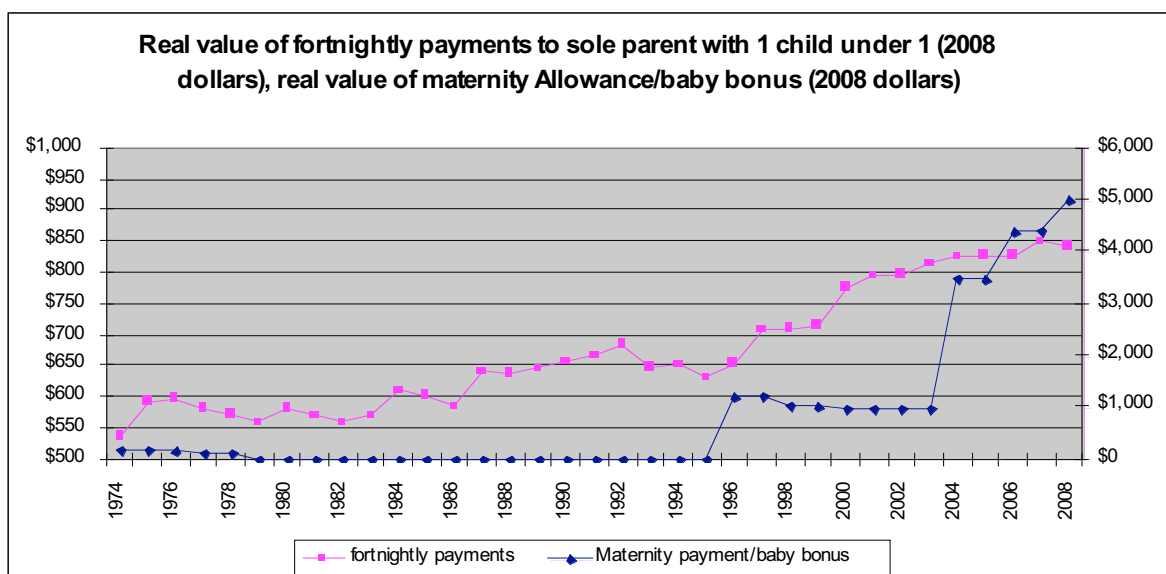
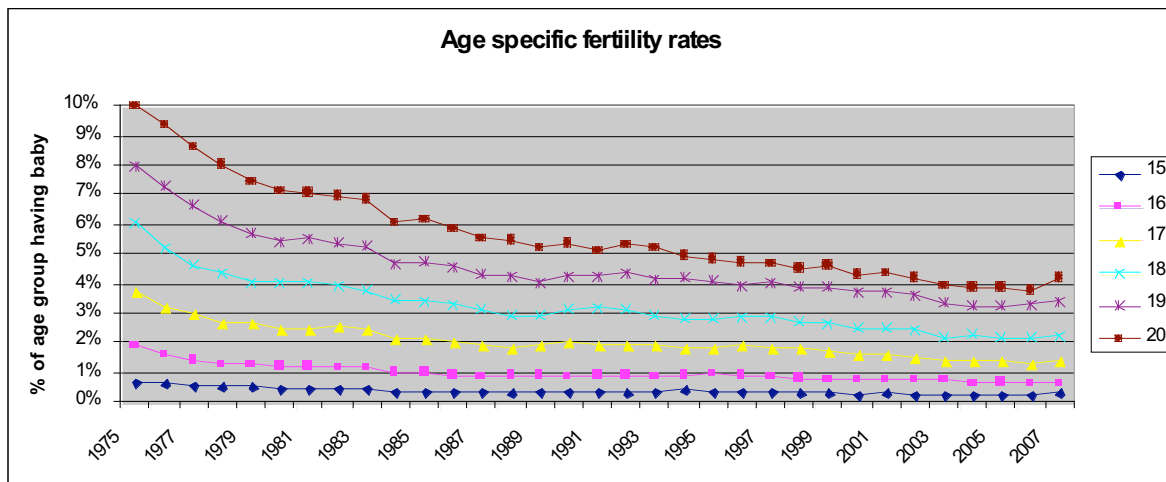
82. The initial draft recommendations are a sound start with the suggestion of two weeks partner leave on a '*take it or leave it*' basis, together with the option for some sharing of the 'maternity' (now parental) leave period with another primary carer.
83. We note and welcome the suggestion that paid paternal leave of two weeks duration could be available to families where the mother is not workforce attached, as well as in the cases of families where the mother is eligible for the proposal national paid parental leave scheme.
84. However, NFAW considers that in cases of sharing of the parental leave, a minimum period of maternal leave should be specified as mandatory, for the sake of the mother's own health. We recognise that differences of opinion do exist on this among women.
85. At some future time, we would like to see the development over time of strategies to allow for full and proportional income replacement for both working parents. This would act as an incentive for the higher-earning parent to take leave.
86. It is clear from the calculations presented by the Commission that specific employer-paid top-up proposals would prove virtually impossible for most SMEs given the impacts on their profits.
87. It is equally clear from the consultations that there is massive resistance in the community to an income contingent loan scheme for top-up arrangements.
88. At the same time, some SMEs are concerned that even with the proposed national scheme, they will find it difficult to finance additional payments and to become an employer of choice, competitive with larger firms in attracting high value employees.
89. We see merit in consideration over time of some form of optional social insurance arrangements which might provide for top-up payments for SMEs.
90. We also consider there should be scope for the initial 20 (or 24) weeks paid leave to be taken on a part-time basis to recognize differing parenting patterns.

Juniors

91. We note that there is scope for further policy development in repayment levels to juniors, in order to minimize perceived potential perverse incentives.
92. We are aware that there is some anxiety, including in the public mind, that payment at AMW level could provide a perverse incentive to some teenage women.
93. Our view is that this concept of perverse incentives is not capable of being substantiated.

94. We have explored the trends in births to teenage mothers. There has been a steady decline since 1973, notwithstanding the introduction of the Baby Bonus and access to an increasing range of other parenting benefits from the Commonwealth. The minor up-turn in 2007-8 is a minor change reflective of the baby boom in other age groups in the last twelve to twenty months.
95. Moreover, there is also evidence that many young people are in continuous and regular part-time work, and so assist their families to provide the financial support for the young people to remain in formal education.
96. Some are in cadetships and traineeships.
97. We consider that any policy that encouraged these young people to drop out of training and education and become welfare dependant would be unfortunate.
98. We note that it is a cultural norm in many groups in Australia for partnering and childbearing to occur in the late teens, after completion of part or the whole of secondary education.
99. Many young mothers will have already demonstrated continuous part-time or casual workforce attachment during their secondary student years.
100. If access to a national PPL scheme is to be based on demonstrated workforce attachment, then that should remain the criteria and payment levels ought not to be age related.
101. Costs of living and childbirth and childcare are not pro rated on the mother's age.
102. It would be entirely inappropriate to eliminate eligibility in those cases where a mature teen, say eighteen or nineteen years of age, had established a stable household with a partner.
103. It is our view that if there is real concern about some particular populations of teenage women inappropriately accessing the proposed Parental Leave Scheme, then application of the workforce attachment criteria has the capacity to more than adequately deal with the issue.
104. The Parliamentary Library has provided us with the advice in *Attachment 3* on trends in teen pregnancy and birth.
105. It would appear that the issues affecting teenage fertility are complex, making it difficult to come to any definitive conclusions. However, research suggests that women's fertility is generally not influenced by one-off government payments or government social messages. See for example: J, Crocket et al, What's behind recent fertility trends: government policy, alarms on biological clocks or lessons learned from childhood, *People and Place*, vol. 15 no. 2, 2007."

106. See also the tables below, which are expanded upon in further discussion of the relationship between parenting payments 1973-2008 and teenage fertility in *Attachment 4*.



Other Government policies and programs

107. As we have noted in the introductory comments, there are several other inquiries currently underway which have relevance to the issue of a national paid parental leave scheme.

108. The workforce attachment patterns of women with dependent children are strongly disposed towards part-time work, while children are under school-age, and may well continue so for some years.

109. The availability of accessible, good quality, affordable, interesting and stimulating care and supervision programs for school age children, which are age appropriate, are often decisive factors in decisions about continued workforce attachment.
110. Our submission to the *House of Representatives Committee on Employment and Workforce Participation* on out of school hours care develops this issue further, and is complemented by the Newspoll survey on the issue which we commissioned with support from the AHRC, WIRE, Security for Women, WomenSpeak Network and a number of non government out of school hours care groups⁶
111. A further issue lies in the inter-action with National Employment Standards: there is no 'right of return' for casual employees, yet casualisation of the workforce, especially the female workforce, appears to be increasing.
112. We see merit in further development of programs offering supports for parenting skills development, and maintaining breast-feeding. Suggestions have been made that particular programs to help treat or mitigate post-partum depression should also be established or extended.
113. We have noted in discussion above related to indigenous women the importance of clarification of inter-relations in re eligibility with Cadetship-Traineeship and comparable programs to promote workforce and education attachment. See *Attachment 2*.
114. We urge the Productivity Commission in its final report to draw these matters to the attention of Government.

Marie Coleman
Chair, Social Policy Committee

⁶ <http://nfaw.org/out-of-school-hours-care/>



Attachment 1

Sydney Forum

WWRG/NFAW/S4W Consultation Morning

Productivity Commission Inquiry: Interim Report on Paid Parental Leave 27 October 2008, Women's College, University of Sydney Summary of issues arising from group discussions

Rapporteur PPL scheme should fit with current employer conditions and not override these - apply a 'no-disadvantage test'

Methods required for educating and informing parents

Current PC recommendation that PML commences within 6 months of birth is not long enough - the commencement period should be extended.

18 weeks not sufficient - should be 6 months

Paid paternity leave should be for 4 weeks

Rapporteur As every family differs in income contributions between partners, the scheme should be more flexible to enable part-time work without losing PPL entitlements

Entitlement should apply for a period before the birth (consider plight of mothers who are ill for most of the 6 months prior to birth - they will lose entitlement)

Proposed scheme does not include a right to return to work for casuals

Rapporteur Need clarification regarding proposal that all other available leave be taken before PML entitlement commences - is this mandatory or discretionary?

Rapporteur Reiterated concerns regarding casual workers lack of RTW

Emphasized the need for all interest groups to coalesce around the broad proposal

Rapporteur More detail required about how the mandatory scheme will interact with existing PML schemes

Research shows that the 'rogue employer' may be more common than hoped for. Need compliance programs particularly re superannuation payment obligations

Eligibility gaps - proposed scheme would not cover cadetships and traineeships.

Melbourne Forum**PAID PARENTAL LEAVE CONSULTATION****Queen Victoria Women's Centre****Wednesday 5th November 2008****KEY POINTS COVERED IN DISCUSSION**

1. Parental leave can have a significant positive impact on consumer confidence and economic security (household finances and job returns). The current global financial crisis should not be used as a constraint on the introduction of a National Scheme.
2. The use of the word 'capped' with reference to superannuation is a worry because there are employers and institutions already paying a higher level contribution. Is being an employer of choice enough of an incentive to maintain existing levels of super contributions? There needs to be a 'no disadvantage' principle at work here.
3. The concept and structure of superannuation itself was challenged particularly in terms of gender inequity.
4. The proposed minimum wage level for those taking leave should be modified for people on Junior and Trainee wages.
5. People should press for the National Scheme to be introduced in the first budget possible after being adopted.
6. There needs to be some more thinking about the women who stitch together their hours of work from several sources of employment. This may require some specific research to accurately define the issue by sector and extent. Such research could then inform the periodic review function that should accompany the National Scheme.
7. There needs to be very clear information accompanying the National Scheme that clarifies all aspects of its operation, especially with regard to existing entitlements.
8. There needs to be further clarification of self-employment (including farming) and superannuation contributions.
9. NGOs could find themselves vulnerable to the extent of factoring in some further financial support from Government to meet their obligations under the National Scheme.
10. The issue was raised about drawing half pay over a longer period. This needed to be reviewed later perhaps.
11. The Productivity is also asking for other ideas for policy consideration, such as programs that assist management to handle return to work issues, more affordable child care across the broader community, and work-based flexibility to meet the unexpected parental demands – 'your child is sick, come and collect...' etc.

Hobart Forum

The Tasmanian Women's Council in partnership with the National Foundation for Australian Women and Security4Women held a forum on paid parental leave on 10 November 2008 at Women Tasmania, Hobart.

Commissioner Angela MacRae from the Productivity Commission was a guest speaker at the forum. Thirty-three participants attended.

Participants were asked a series of questions developed by the National Foundation for Australian Women. Below is a summary of issues arising from small group discussions in response to those questions.

1. Are you in favour of paid maternity leave for mothers?

All groups were overwhelmingly in favour of paid maternity leave for mothers

2. Are you in favour of paid leave for fathers? Should it be a separate entitlement or shared between parents?

All groups were in favour of paid leave for fathers. One group made the point that parenting should be shared and there were benefits in having a separate entitlement for fathers.

3. Who should be included?

a. Casual employees, permanent, self employed, contractors, mothers outside the paid workforce, other?

b. What recent employment record, if any, should be the criterion for eligibility?

c. Should adopting families be treated the same way?

a. One group responded to this by stating that the 'casualisation' of the workforce has benefited many women who are trying to juggle both work and family life. However, casual employees tend to miss out on a range of benefits and leave entitlements such as sick and annual leave. It is encouraging to see that the draft report on *Paid Parental Leave* from the Productivity Commission includes women who work ten hours or more per week, which will encompass many women who work on a casual basis. However, this definition needs to be broadened. A teachers aide, for example, doesn't get paid during the summer holidays - like their teacher colleagues. Does this mean that their eligibility is affected? Similarly, how does it affect seasonal workers? A suggestion was that one of the eligibility criterion should be how many hours a woman has worked per annum at the same workplace.

One group said that the definition of 'principal carer' should be clearer, taking into consideration indigenous communities where the 'Aunty' (i.e. extended family member) may look after the baby.



b. Another group said that consideration should be given to women who work less than 10 hours per week as many women only work one day (7-8 hours) per week.

One group said that the eligibility criterion should just be that the employee has had 'substantial connection to the workplace'. This group also thought that six months of continued employment, not twelve, should be considered as this would take into consideration mothers who may have only recently returned to the workforce after taking leave for their first child, and fall pregnant with their second.

c. All groups thought adoptive parents should be treated the same way.

4. What about those with stillborn children or those whose baby dies?

All groups thought that the parental arrangements should include those with stillborn children or those whose baby dies. One group made the comment that the mother 'needs time to recover'. Another group said that the mother needed 'appropriate time for grieving'.

5. What duration of paid leave do you think is appropriate?

It was unanimous in all group discussions that the duration of 18 weeks parental leave is a good start. However, this period should be reviewed and increased to beyond the 18 weeks. One group thought that ideally, the duration of leave should be increased to 24 weeks, in line with the European Union. This group also thought that unpaid parental leave should be extended to two years.

6. The start date – should it allow for time off before the birth? Should it be able to start later than the six months cut-off proposed by the Commission?

All groups thought that the period of paid parental leave should begin prior to the birth. Some suggested 2 weeks before.

7. Should people be able to use sick leave, recreation leave or partly accrued long service leave to extend the period of paid leave? In your experience will low income women especially have enough accrued leave to bring their period of paid leave up from the 18 weeks to the six months accepted as the desirable minimum?

All groups thought that employees should be able to accrue other leave entitlements. However, some thought that there ought to be a cap on the amount of sick leave the mother can use. The rationale for this is that when the mother returns to work (and the baby is in care) she will invariably need access to sick leave/time off.

Another group made the point that some low income women may not be able to take six months leave and some consideration should be given to these women.



8. What level of payment is appropriate, eg minimum wage, replacement, replacement capped at a certain level, other?

Most participants agreed with the Productivity Commission's proposal of using the minimum wage. One group made the point that the paid parental leave should be able to be taken by women at half pay (e.g. 36 weeks at half pay).

9. Do you think it should be means tested?

Most groups thought it should not be means tested because of the desire to keep all women in the workforce, regardless of their income. Another group stated that means testing is counter-productive to the intention of the report. Another group said that because paid parental leave is taxed, there is no need to means test.

10. How do you think the leave should be funded?

- a. Government only,
- b. Employer should pay
- c. Government with an employer top-up
- d. Government and a levy on all employers, or Government and a levy on both employers and employees
- e. HECS style loan, repaid by parent later, or special savings accounts
- f. Other and if so, what?

All groups agreed with the Productivity Commission's proposal of having a government funded scheme. One group suggested that the employer top-up should be negotiated between the employee and employer. All groups disagreed with the idea of a HECS style loan citing this would only provide a financial burden for families for later on.

11. How should 'self-employed' be defined?

All groups thought 'self-employed' should be broadly defined and that every 'citizen should have access to this income'.

12. Should the leave be able to be taken part-time? In more than one period?

One group suggested that split leave should be introduced. This group stated that women are having children at a later age and cannot afford to have the required 12 month gap between their children. This group suggested that some women may like to take half the leave for their first child and the rest for their second.

13. What would be the effect on employers of parents extending their leave?

One group thought that this should be negotiated between the employee and employer. Another group said that this isn't an issue for larger employers who are used to employees being on leave and already easily manage these processes. However, they thought it would be more of a challenge for smaller employers.

14. What other Government policy changes should be made, along with or complementing the proposed scheme?

All groups said that there should be a national review of child care. One group thought that child care should be community based. The downfall of the ABC Learning Centres is a prime example of how a community asset should not be 'owned' by global markets.

15. Should other forms of leave (sick, recreation, long service) accrue while the employee is on paid parental leave?

All groups agreed that other forms of leave should accrue.

16. Should employers be required to continue to pay super entitlements?

All agreed that employers should be required to pay super entitlements.

17. Should a Government funded scheme be paid through employers or direct by Government, eg Centrelink?

One group thought that the government should pay if there was an impost on very small businesses. Another group thought that the employer should pay. Another point was put forth that it is 'deceitful' for the employer to pay as the leave is tax payer funded and should be paid by the government in recognition of this.

18. Should small-medium employers receive a payment to compensate them for the costs of short-term replacement hiring? If so, how much?

Many participants thought that this payment shouldn't occur as it isn't done now for other forms of leave. However, one group thought consideration should be given to very small businesses.

19. What are the implications of the Commission's proposal for breastfeeding?

One group thought it would encourage provision of appropriate facilities. Most groups spoke of the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and thought this would assist in increasing the number of women breastfeeding and the length of time that they breastfeed.

20. What are the implications for the health and wellbeing of the mother and child?

All comments were positive although one comment was made that 18 weeks should be the absolute minimum and this should be increased over time – after a review.

21. Would you support the option of an income contingent loan in addition to the Commission's recommended scheme? (A loan where the parents did not have to start repaying until their income reached a certain level).

Most participants did not support this suggestion. One group thought that this may encourage further debt and discourage people from working. Another group said that if this went ahead it would need to be an interest free loan but said it is not a preferred model as debt is a significant destabilising factor for many families. However, one participant indicated that access to a Centrelink no-interest loan scheme may be useful for low income people.



Brisbane forum

Paid Parental Leave Consultation: Brisbane – 16 October 2008.

Hosted by Queensland Working Women's Service

Venue: Office for Women

Attendance:

Anna Herzog (ASU Services branch)
Tricia Rooney (Qld Dept of Employment and IR)
Shaneen Breen (Australian Breastfeeding Association)
Teresa Chase (Queensland Working Women's Service)
Jen Carman (Queensland Working Women's Service)
Dalma Jacobs (Australian Federation of University Women)
Patricia Johnson (Seroptimists International)
Selina Utting (Children by Choice)
Leah Mertens (Queensland Teachers Union)
Gloria Kirkness (National Council of Women Queensland)
Danielle Divola (Zoe Placements)

Notes:

1. It was noted that the report appeared to presume that all women would be able to 'top up' their leave to the preferred 6 months by using their own leave entitlements and/or savings. This ignored situation of casual workers without leave entitlements. It also means that women who do use other forms of leave as 'top -ups' women will have reduced amounts of precisely those forms of leave (such as sick and career's leave) that they will need more than ever with the birth of children.
2. There were concerns about clarifying how the scheme would fit with employer-provided leave. The requirement that PPL must be taken within 6 months of birth, and after any other employer-funded paid parental leave scheme (draft recommendation 2.7) means that employees who currently enjoy employer-funded schemes would not be able to take full advantage of those schemes.
3. One attendee raised the issue of what happens if the employee decides not to return to work after PPL - would there be any issue of an employer seeking repayment of superannuation contributions?
4. Attendees generally supported the idea that the government reimburse the employer an amount over 100% of the payment to the parent on leave, to cover administrative costs involved in managing PPL and reducing the risk of discriminatory backlash. (similar to the 110% reimbursement scheme in the UK.
5. Attendees expressed concern about ensuring that PPL remains on the agenda in light of current global financial concerns, and the focus on pensioner payments.



6. The issue of what is a fair measure of workforce attachment was raised. Some attendees raised the issue of whether working an average of 10 hours is too close to not working at all and could confuse the payment with a welfare scheme.
7. Discrimination on return to work from PPL: attendees generally thought that this might actually reduce due to an increase in workforce attachment by having paid leave.
8. Attendees strongly supported the 10-day 'keeping in touch' provisions. It was noted, though, that this provision must be at the request of the employee, not demanded by the employer. Furthermore, any work done during this time MUST be paid at the employee's normal rate of pay.
9. Ante-natal leave MUST be included in the leave period. The leave period should preferably be increased to allow for a reasonable period of antenatal leave.

Darwin forum

Report on Paid Parental Leave Consultations in the Northern Territory

The Paid Parental Leave consultations in the NT were organised jointly by NT Working Women's Centre (NTWWC) and the YWCA of Darwin in collaboration with Security for Women and the Australian Foundation for Australian Women. The existence of the Productivity Commission Report and request for feedback on the Scheme was promoted in Darwin as well as regional and remote Northern Territory by the following means in the month preceding the events:

- Radio and newspaper publicity (both local and regional)
- Display advertisements (in local and regional papers)
- Email lists of:
 - NT Council of Social Service
 - Unions NT
 - Office for Women's Policy
 - NTWWC

The consultations took place in Darwin on Monday 20 October. They were held at the Palms Resort in Darwin City from 10 am till 12.30 pm. An additional consultation with regional and remote women took place by teleconference on Wednesday 22 October 2008 from 10 am till 12 midday.

Attendees of the consultations

- 24 people attended the Darwin consultation on 20 October (5 other people registered to come but offered apologies at the last minute).
- 8 people participated in the tele-consultation (a further 6 registered to participate but were unable to on the day).

Some Outcomes of the Consultations

On the scheme generally

All attending were agreed that there should be a national paid parental leave scheme.

All agreed that there should be provision for a government funded PPL scheme for 6 months (24 weeks) and that parents not be required to use their Recreation Leave and Personal Leave.

A majority of poorly paid workers only get 4 weeks annual recreation leave. Sick leave is for sickness not for pregnancy which is not an illness. Use of carers leave assumes that only the recently born child needs care. Families are actually more complex than this. Parents, especially if they have other children, will need their other leave entitlements to deal with work and family responsibilities anyway prior to taking leave and upon returning to the work force.

All agreed that employers should be expected to pay the superannuation portion of the tax payer funded Paid Parental Leave.

Also agreed that a two week paternity or other parent's leave scheme be made available to highlight the importance of the partner in the life of the child. Change the word father to 'partner'.

A single mother could perhaps opt for that amount to be paid to a significant other supporter like a grandmother, aunt or other family member for the sake of her child's welfare. Discriminatory if she is not permitted this other support.

Strenuous efforts should be made to put in place measures that discourage discrimination against the employment of women of child bearing age.

Parents on CDEP should also be eligible for PPL and superannuation should be paid for CDEP workers.

Foster carers intending to take long term care of a child should also be entitled to PPL as well as adopting parents of other family members. This may need to be available to foster parents and adoptive parents of older children in order to establish and build bonds broken through birth family breakdown and removal from birth family.

Mother should be able to begin their parental leave up to a month before the birth of the child in order to prepare for the birth.

On Eligibility

Most agreed that 10 hours a week and 12 months continuous employment are good criteria.

Need to clearly define whether continuous employment would also include short breaks of less than 4 weeks between contracts, often not the requirement of the worker but the employer. Define whether any short break of even a week would break the continuous employment requirement.

Fostering parents should also be eligible as should adopting parents with a familial connection with the adopted child. Needs of the child will still require bonding and close relationship, care, etc.

Making the leave available to eligible non-birthing partners will help to discourage discrimination against women of child bearing age.

On duration of leave

Women should be able to start their leave prior to the expected delivery of their baby but this should not be mandated.

Since weight of evidence suggests that parental bonding and communication is important for the first two years of life the PPL of 6 months would be in the best



interests of the child. Furthermore parents may want to extend their leave at their own expense or on half pay. The interests of the child suggest that this ought to be made possible given sufficient notice to the workplace which could be as short as 1 month but as long as 3 months in order to cause the least disruption to productivity.

Employers need incentives to be flexible in extending leave to unpaid leave or on half pay. It is a common experience in the NT that many businesses are unwilling to hold jobs open for women on maternity leave even when they are not being paid any allowances. Many employers show an unwillingness to accommodate return to work part time as an option as well. A financial incentive would get the message across and free access to 'expertise' to give advice on building or making flexible arrangements would also help. Similarly employers should be encouraged to allow breast feeding mothers access to flexible work hours so that breast feeding can continue if the family can accommodate it. Needs to be a scheme of rewarding family friendly workplaces.

Parents of still born children should have the option to take leave to grieve and recover or return to work early if employer is able to accommodate given adequate notice.

One six month period of leave should be enough but parents ought to be given the option to share the time once the mother has recovered from birth and established a breast feeding routine.

On accrual of entitlements whilst on leave

Parents should be able to use their accrued leave to top up their paid leave but they should not be required to. Many low income families will not have a reserve of leave for such use. Parental leave should be a stand alone package. Parents already give their time 24 hours a day and seven days a week to parental responsibilities which benefit the nation including each workplace.

Long Service leave should be accrued at pro rata equivalent to paid leave period taken. No firm stand on whether Personal Leave and Annual Leave should also be accrued but many believed that such options would be good.

On the level of paid leave

Most participants considered that replacement wages was the best kind of scheme but nearly all conceded that to introduce a government/taxpayer funded national scheme is a good start to introduce paid parental leave to workplaces.

Suggest putting in place measures to discourage employers to offer reduced entitlements.

Government or Productivity Commission should put in place measures to evaluate whether employers who have had more generous entitlements are paring back their PPL offerings after the introduction of the scheme.

Other schemes such as HECS style loans

By far the majority of participants, but not all, were against HECS style loans to parents on the grounds that it would encourage taking out loans which could perhaps not be paid back and would accrue with additional children.

Some participants, but not all, were in favour of a levy like the Medicare levy or gun levy and would underline that raising families and working are both in the national interest.

Promotion

Put in place an effective marketing campaign to promote the paid parental scheme as beneficial to the nation as well as to employers using a known evidence base.

Provide incentives and recognition to employers to maintain existing PPL arrangements.

Provide supports to small businesses to make provisions for paid parental leave as a normal part of their operating costs. Such funds invested can provide significant returns to a business quite apart from the other benefits of retaining corporate knowledge, promoting worker loyalty and retaining women workers.

It will also be good to promote the benefits to children, and subsequently the nation to have close parental involvement of the non-birthing parent in addition to the birth mother.

Process outcomes

The process of inviting participants in consultations and promoting the Productivity Commission report and call for feedback was useful in raising the awareness of the public in the proposal for a scheme of National Paid Parental Leave. We expect that there will be more submissions from the NT to this round of consultations than there were to the previous round in May 2008.

Prepared by Kathy Bannister
Senior Community educator
NT Working Womens Centre
November 2008



Perth forum

Notes from meeting with Marie Coleman

Re: Paid Maternity – National Scheme Consultation

22 October 2008, 9.30am

Other state/territory issues

NT – CDEP participants on the program for years and there is no superannuation and limited entitlement cover

Marie will be writing to Minister Jenny Macklin on this issue

WA – CDEP in Perth – Peedac

OWP contributed to DOCEP submission

Issues

- Voice of the regions and organisations
- Diversity in the metropolitan region in terms of the different groups and organisations where women are employed
- Who will it affect?
- What is affecting Indigenous women?
- Cultural practices and the differences (NT & WA)
- Grandparents and aunties as the principal carers
- DCD community education program on support for carers including grandparents
- Community education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities
- Available leave for Aboriginal employees to cover last month of the six month entitlement is an issue because of the lack of annual leave due to having to take more than the bereavement leave available to cover the time needed under cultural obligations.
- Contract and casual employment – covered in the Productivity Commissions report – 12 months continuous work; is it possible to extend the six months to 12 months possibly at half pay?
- What happens if a baby is found to have a medical condition that may require an extension of the paid maternity leave? No cover and would have to apply for carers leave. This may fit into the question that relates to when the payment starts.
- Should there be any other policy changes parallel to the paid maternity leave?
Indigenous health – systematic initiatives that are coordinated in terms of programs and services
- Childcare related issues - lack of regional childcare providers; whether mothers feel comfortable with a provider that their child will be taken care of.
- Childcare agencies in WA

Community agencies and paid maternity

- Non-government sector
- Collect data
- Minco agenda
- Who is entitled and what is the wage limit? For many working in aged care and refuges they won't be eligible

Action - MISO may help with info and data

Other information

- Norwegian - provide 12 months shared leave which replaces the subsidy for childcare
- Pay Equity workshops by ABS - there should be data and information available if people were not able to attend; Minister Broderick has recommended an annual report is produced on where women are at, similar to the HREOC Social Justice report for Indigenous people
- MINCO - would like to see a national report card
- Economic security for women
- Input from the early childhood development sector has been invisible
- The ADLI supermarket chain has the best offer for people in retail
- Marie was responsible for the Frazer government childcare policy

Actions

- Copies of Indigenous women and women's report cards for Marie
- Denese and Lorraine to do a summary of the issues for the IWC and WANWA
- IWC and WANWA members encouraged to make individual submissions
- Other organizations encouraged to make a submission - Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Service; Aboriginal Health Council of WA; Mamba Aboriginal Corporation; Yorgum; Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service; Telethon Child Health Institute (Colleen Hayward); Marr Mooditj Foundation; SNAICC;
- See Phillipa to add the link for How to Make a Submission link for the Paid Maternity National Scheme to the OWP and DfC website and intranet and make copies for the 23 October 08
- Look at the Chamber of Commerce Report

The program for the 23 Oct 2008 was amended.

Adelaide forum**PPL Consultation Adelaide****7 November 2008****Women's Health Statewide**

- 21 participants from government agencies, trade unions, NGO's, community members.
- Questions on the proposal centred around the length of paid leave, how this would interact with other leave especially for low paid workers. Breastfeeding, brain development etc
- Concerns about how the scheme can be best implemented without disadvantaging low paid women
- Strong feeling that CDEP workers should qualify for paid parental leave
- Concern about trainees and apprentices working less than 10 hours
- Concern expressed about media commentary on the global financial position and how this would impact on government's ability to fund a scheme.
- Discussion on whether the government should separate the payments for leave (workforce attachment) from a payment which recognises the costs of having a baby (baby bonus or old child endowment). Working mothers better off financially under proposed scheme. May be best to get the scheme in and tweak it later?
- Support for the proposal - more important to get it in at this point and refine the model with time
- Discussion about the position of other organisations eg ACTU, Trade union movement, NFAW, WWC's
- Strong support for review periods, with properly resourced research on the impact of the scheme.
- Question about the accrual of sick leave, annual leave and LSL whilst women are on paid parental leave. - Feeling was that all leave should be accrued.
- Concern raised about women on 457 visas - their eligibility and their capacity to meet the requirements of their visas which deem they can only take 3 months off and that they must earn a set amount.
- Concern about the impact on families where the mother is the primary breadwinner and not the primary carer therefore not eligible for FTB B.

- Concern about employers who currently pay maternity leave subsuming this into the government paid scheme over time – perhaps a no -disadvantage clause to be added.
- Discussion on the impact on small businesses and community organisations on limited funds – pressure on back filling positions and how to pay for this.
- Question about the best course for mothers of still born babies.

Attachment 2

Indigenous Cadetship: Problem of recognition of work-study

The National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP)⁷ helps students by providing money to cover living costs while you are studying, as well as paid work experience in the holidays or throughout the year. This assistance aims to ensure that you do the best you can throughout your studies and have strong job opportunities when you complete them. The National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP) is an Australian Government initiative that improves the professional employment prospects of Indigenous Australians.

The NICP forms part of the Australian Government's Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP). The IEP recognises the particular disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians in the labour market and that special measures are required to secure improved outcomes primarily ongoing engagement within the labour market.

This aim mirrors one of the three key aims of the Paid Maternity Leave Scheme proposed by the Productivity Commission, i.e., labour market attachment, yet ironically the conditions attached to the proposed PML Scheme would disqualify participants in the NICP from receiving paid maternity leave.

My personal situation highlights why this is the case.

Under the NICP scheme I am studying Bachelor of Science, full-time at the University of Sydney and work as a Research Assistant in the Faculty of Economics and Business for eight hours a week. I am also pregnant and will give birth to my baby in December. I am entitled to 6 weeks paid maternity leave under The University of Sydney paid maternity leave policy for casuals (this is around \$60 per week, and excludes the government supplement I normally receive under the NICP arrangements). I have no financial entitlements under the cadetship. This would not change under the proposed Paid Maternity Leave scheme which stipulates 10 hours per week and 12 months employment, rendering me ineligible. A majority, if not all, first year cadets will not commence their cadetship until semester begins or during mid year break (depending on individual arrangements and when the cadetship in question was made available).

In my situation there is no scope for me to do ten hours work because of my time table and although my employer would not discourage extra hours, 10 hours is an odd number to be worked (i.e. a day and a half). I consider myself an employee and feel that although I may not work 10 hours I do study full time either side the 8 hours I work. My timetable in conjunction with work has me in work or study from 9am to 3pm on average per day, almost the hours worked by most full time employees (35 hours). I want in every respect to be able to return to this cadetship but if I can not receive maternity payments I will be forced to terminate the cadetship and take up

⁷ The program is administered by the Indigenous Employment Programme Branch of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

other welfare assistance simply to be able to pay rent and survive. From the NICP statements of practice it is clear they wish to promote 'work place attachment' and this, as I am sure is the case with a majority of cadets, has been achieved, but the need to be financially stable has much more of an attachment.

This means that if the proposed scheme was in place I would still only be eligible for the baby bonus because I have not worked for 10 hours a week in the previous 12 months. The baby bonus is clearly a welfare type payment and does not encourage engagement with the labour market.

I would suggest that in relation to traineeships *all work* (both paid and unpaid (study) be counted in the 10 hours. This would make trainees eligible for PML and help to ensure their ongoing attachment to the labour market.

As it currently stands there is no incentive, actually financial disincentive for me to return to my position as a Research Assistant after the birth of my child in December. These disincentives would remain until the new scheme proposed by the Productivity Commission.



Attachment 3

Teen pregnancy

You asked if there is a link between teen pregnancy rates and the Baby Bonus. This is not an easy question to answer. Although there is some anecdotal evidence that the Baby Bonus, introduced in July 2004, may have encouraged some Indigenous teenagers to become pregnant, there is no real evidence to support the claim that teenagers generally have been encouraged to become pregnant by the introduction of this payment.

While births to teenage mothers at the national level increased very slightly in 2007, teenage fertility has been steadily declining since the 1980s. According to ABS data, teenage fertility was 16.0 babies per 1000 women in 2007, slightly higher than in 2006 (15.3 babies per 1,000 women). However, over the period 1980 to 2007, teenage fertility (women aged 15-19 years) decreased by 42 per cent (from 27.6 babies per 1000 women to 16.0 babies per 1000 women).⁸

At the state and territory level the patterns vary. While the Northern Territory recorded the highest teenage fertility rate of all the states and territories in 2007, this rate was actually a decrease from the previous year (from 63.5 babies per 1000 teenage women in 2006 to 58.6 in 2007). Queensland recorded an increase, New South Wales continued to record decreases and the remaining states and territories recorded small increases.⁹

⁸. ABS, [Births 2007](#), October 2008.

⁹. *ibid.*

2.11 BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS—2006 and 2007

	BIRTHS			TEENAGE FERTILITY RATES (a)		
	2006	2007	% change	2006	2007	% change
	no.	no.	%	no.	no.	%
New South Wales	2 949	2 788	-5.5	13.2	12.3	-6.6
Victoria	1 652	1 731	4.8	9.7	10.1	3.4
Queensland	2 723	3 289	20.8	19.7	23.0	17.1
South Australia	848	902	6.4	16.7	17.5	5.1
Western Australia	1 392	1 485	6.7	19.6	20.6	4.7
Tasmania	405	437	7.9	26.5	27.5	3.4
Northern Territory	471	449	-4.7	63.5	58.6	-7.8
Australian Capital Territory	108	123	13.9	9.1	10.3	13.0
Australia(b)	10 552	11 204	6.2	15.3	16.0	4.3

(a) Births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years. Includes births to women aged less than 15 years.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Source: ABS, [Births 2007](#), October 2008, p. 17.

With regard to Indigenous teenagers there is anecdotal evidence that some teenagers may have been encouraged to become pregnant:

The 'Baby Bonus' has been extremely damaging for dysfunctional Cape York communities in anecdotally increasing the number of teenage pregnancies, increasing substance abuse in young parents, and increasing domestic violence with some men assaulting their partners to force them into going off contraception or handing over their baby bonus, or becoming intoxicated on the proceeds.¹⁰

The Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse 2007 found:

Some community people suggested that many girls were deliberately having a child at a young age, and many people in communities across the Territory saw the Australian Government's

¹⁰. R. Heazlewood and L. Wieland, [Addressing Indigenous disadvantage in Cape York: 'fight for life'](#), submission to the first report of the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities, 1 May 2008.

“baby bonus” payment as providing further encouragement for teenage girls to get pregnant so they could receive a significant amount of money.¹¹

However, the inquiry pointed out that there could be other factors at play with Indigenous teenage pregnancies in some communities:

This could also be a strategic decision as it gave the young women an important role to play within the community and enabled them to avoid other riskier behaviours (i.e. having a baby was a protective strategy). Further supporting this view was the suggestion that girls “hooked up” early because “kangaroo marriages” gave them some protection against the rest of the boys in the community. Unlike “traditional marriages”, these marriages were often short-lived.¹²

Some have also suggested that the Baby Bonus may be having an effect on teenage abortion rates, although decreasing teenage abortion rates could also be due to better awareness of contraceptive options. See R. Switzer, [‘Extra baby bonus? Teen abortions fall’](#), *Sunday Age*, 21 October 2007.

¹¹. Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse, **‘Little children are sacred’**, [Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse](#), 2007, p. 66.

¹². *ibid.*

Attachment 4

Changes to entitlements for parents with babies 1973-2008

1. Legislative changes

- Pre 1973: Widow Pension Class A, introduced in 1942, was payable to a woman with a dependent child who was widowed by the death of a husband or de facto partner of at least 3 years, divorced, deserted by a husband, or whose husband was institutionalised for insanity. Additional pension was paid for each child, and a mothers/guardian allowance was also paid.
Maternity Allowance was a lump sum payment to a woman on the birth of a child, introduced in 1912.
Family Allowance/Child Endowment, introduced in 1941
- 1973:** Supporting mother's benefit introduced – payable to a woman who was unmarried, deserted de facto, husbands or de facto in prison. Payable after 6 months from the birth of a child or the event that made her a sole parent.
- 1977:** Supporting mothers benefit replaced by supporting parents benefit to include fathers.
- 1978:** **Maternity Allowance abolished**
- 1980:** **The 6 months qualifying period abolished**
- 1981:** Family Allowance was increased
- 1982** **Family Income Supplement introduced for low income families not on pensions at the same rate as additional pension for children.**
- 1987** Family Allowance Supplement replaced Family Income Supplement and increased rates. But not payable to sole parents on pensions, who still received additional pension.
- 1993** Family Allowance Supplement renamed Additional Family Payment. GA and Additional Pension paid as part of Additional Family Payment.
- 1995:** **Parenting Payment introduced for partnered parents (mothers) whose husband or partner was receiving pension or benefit or had very low income.**
- 1996** Family Payment renamed Family Allowance. Maternity Allowance re-introduced – an indexed non-taxable lump sum of \$857.40
- 1997** Family Tax Allowance Part A and Part B introduced.
- 1998:** **Maternity Allowance split into two parts – Maternity Allowance of \$750 and Maternity Immunisation Allowance of \$200 payable at 18 months if the child had been immunised.**
- 2000:** Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B replace Family Allowances and Family Tax Allowance.
- 2004:** **Maternity Allowance increased from \$843 to \$3,000.**
- 2006** **Maternity Allowance increased to \$4,000**
- 2007:** Maternity Allowance renamed Baby Bonus
- 2008:** **Maternity Allowance increased to \$5,000**



2 Graphs

