



**Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry
Draft Report on Paid Parental Leave Scheme
November 2008**

EMILY's List

EMILY's List is a national organisation which provides financial, political and personal support network for progressive Labor women candidates and Members of Parliament. It is the only network of its kind in Australian politics. EMILY's List campaigns for and with women on issues related to our principles of choice, equity, equal pay, child care and diversity. We have over 3500 members nationally.

EMILY's List support for Paid Parental Leave as recommended by the Productivity Commission

EMILY's List Australia applauds the Productivity Commission's (PC) recommendation as outlined in its draft report of September 2008 that the Federal Government introduce 18 weeks of government funded paid postnatal parental leave to be shared between parents, an additional two weeks paid leave exclusively for fathers or same sex partners, plus employer-funded nine percent superannuation contributions calculated on the minimum wage for the 18 week period.

Providing parental leave to all employees with a "reasonable attachment" to the workforce and extending it to casuals, contractors and the self-employed, as recommended by the PC, would ensure that as many women as possible can access the scheme.

In addition, as outlined its September 2008 submission to the PC, EMILY's List recommends that the PC in its final report to Government recommend that employers be required to top up this payment to fully replace the income of working women earning more than the minimum wage.

Introducing a Federal Government funded paid parental leave scheme would help to address some of the disadvantages women experience in the workplace and would also decrease the level of sex and maternity discrimination that women continue to experience in employment.

Implementing the PC's recommendations would benefit women's financial security immediately after the birth of a child, as well as promote women's workforce attachment, reducing negative impacts on lifetime earnings and superannuation associated with time away from work for child-bearing and rearing responsibilities.

A Federal Government funded paid parental leave scheme would assist to safeguard the health of mothers and babies, allowing breastfeeding routines to be established and ensuring an adequate opportunity for mothers and babies to bond.

Including two weeks paid leave exclusively for fathers or same sex partners would also assist with parental and child bonding.



Individual employers would benefit from retaining experienced staff members, and this would result in savings in recruitment and retraining costs. In the current climate of skill shortages, a Federal Government paid parental leave scheme, as recommended by the PC, would assist employers in attracting and retaining staff. More general economic benefits include attracting and maintaining a high quality and competitive workforce in a global market, as well as deriving maximum returns on education and training costs.

In conclusion, EMILY's List strongly supports the PC in its draft report recommendations, looking forward to a final report to Government, and the implementation of a national scheme of paid parental leave as a priority.