

Parental Leave Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428,  
Canberra City, ACT 2601

13 November 2008

Dear Productivity Commissioner

RE: SUBMISSION TO PARENTAL LEAVE INQUIRY

I am writing a personal submission to the Parental Leave Inquiry, with reference to the draft inquiry report released 29<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

I am supportive of the statutory scheme providing for eighteen weeks paid parental leave, applying to people working at least ten hours per week with government funding the leave payments at the rate of the current minimum wage.

The proposition, however, that those on junior, trainee or apprentice rates are to receive lower rates of payment whilst on parental leave is very concerning.

The assertion that having those on junior, trainee or apprentice wages earning the minimum wage whilst on parental leave would create a *“bigger incentive for having a baby than the current baby bonus and might trigger some short-sighted decisions by some young people”* is both incorrect and inequitable.

As a young person I would argue that very few on junior, trainee or apprentice rates would be choosing to have a child on the basis of receiving the adult minimum wage for eighteen weeks.

I do not believe such a report has the ability to make assumptions of this nature, and I am certain that the point of such an enquiry is to look at the optimal way of providing parental leave assistance rather than ways of reducing the rate of young women opting to have children. In problematising this issue, the Commission loses sight of its aims and starts valuing some forms of parenthood over others.

It is also significant to note that those on apprentice or trainee wages are not necessarily ‘young people’, and thus assumptions about ‘young people’ and their choices in regards to parenthood are again invalid.

Those who are on junior, apprentice and trainee rates do not face lower costs in raising a child than other workers. People on junior, trainee and apprentice wages are in fact more likely to face financial difficulties in looking after a baby – and should not be further disadvantaged by being paid a lower rate.

**I urge the Productivity Commission to reconsider its position in regards to junior, apprentice and trainee workers. Such workers should be treated no differently, and receive no less, than other workers.**

Regards,

Claire Stimpson