

## Recommendation

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In response to the

Productivity Commission paid parental leave draft report.

Members at the Brookvale Bus Depot of the RTBU broadly support the model proposed by the Productivity Commission, however we feel that it falls short in the key area of health of Australian families and newborn babies.

We strongly recommend that the government implement a model of a paid maternity leave scheme as a priority in the 2009 budget.

### Draft recommendation 2.1

The paid parental leave should not be capped to a minimum wage but full wage replacement based on prior year annual income.

The financial duress on families with a newborn has been recognised with women having to return to work early to support their families which also means that breastfeeding is not an option, therefore to lessen the income to a household would not only create added burden and stress but would impede the health and wellbeing of the mother and baby.

Superannuation payments should be calculated on the full wage entitlement so as not to create further disparity on the retirement income of men and women, with the employer bearing this expense.

### Draft recommendation 2.2

Funding of the paid parental leave scheme from family tax benefit B and the baby bonus should be supplemented by an employer contribution scheme similar to WorkCover, whereby the size and turnover of the organization determines premiums which is pooled and distributed via total parental leave taken.

### Draft recommendation 2.5

Paid parental leave should be available to both partners for 4 weeks. The birth and initial introduction of a newborn into the family should include the entire family with no financial burden determining consequences of sharing this time.

It is recommended the implementation of this would be to allow eligible mothers to transfer parental leave entitlement to a partner which could be used concurrently.

### Draft recommendation 2.6

This recommendation should be extended to include a supplement by employers mentioned in 2.1

### Draft recommendation 2.7

We recommend that the statutory paid parental leave should be 28 weeks as acknowledged by the Australian Breastfeeding Association and the World Health Organisation as the minimal amount of time a newborn should be breastfed to ensure optimal health. To achieve the 28 weeks we recommend that a staged increase to full wage replacement and an increase to 4 weeks paid paternity leave be introduced over a 5 year period. That is, by 2013 Australian families would have a decent parental leave scheme that all citizens deserve and can be proud of.

### Draft recommendation 2.8

The recommendation on notice for extended leave should be flexible and take into consideration the wellness of the family as a priority.

### Draft recommendation 2.9

Working men and women at the Brookvale bus depot of the RTBU support extensive publicity and advice to employers and employees on a statutory parental leave scheme.

### Draft recommendation 2.10

We support the 'keeping in touch' provision where the employee is paid at full rate and penalties so as to provide workers on parental leave an opportunity to attend training sessions to maintain skills. The

“keeping in touch” provision would allow workers to not be disadvantaged if, for example, a promotional opportunity arose while on parental leave.

Draft recommendation 2.11

We support that resources should be made available and would extend that to early childhood education and support groups.

Draft recommendation 2.12

Ongoing assessment and evaluation is essential particularly with a staged implementation and we support that an independent body undertake this very important review on the social, health and financial impact on the workforce.

### **Unintended Consequences**

As general feedback from members of the Brookvale bus division of the RTBU we feel that a paid parental leave scheme should not undermine entitlements already achieved or achieved in future workplace bargaining but should be the minimum requirement.

### **Part Time access**

Paid parental leave should be available to be taken at half pay to allow for transition and/or additional expenses as a consequence of child birth. This provision for flexibility would not be onerous on employers.

### **Paternity Leave**

As mentioned in recommendation 2.5 members of Brookvale bus division of the RTBU feel strongly that fathers and/or primary carers should be paid a minimum of 4 weeks paternity leave. We recommend that the parents of the baby be able to take parental leave concurrently. Australian families and Australian society recognises the very important and increasing role that fathers/primary carers have with the birth of a baby. Fathers/primary carers need to be encouraged to stay at home with their new families without any financial pressures.

### **Leave accrual**

The accrual of all leave entitlements should continue during the parental leave period. Our current Award provisions allow for the accrual of leave whilst taking any paid leave entitlements.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion the members of the Brookvale bus division of the RTBU wish to reiterate that paid parental leave scheme must be implemented as a matter of urgency in the 2009 budget. It is unacceptable that a wealthy and affluent nation like Australia has absolutely no national paid parental leave scheme and it is time to start supporting our parents/carers and giving our kids a fair go from the beginning.

A staged full pay 28 week parental leave entitlement be implemented by 2013.

That paternity leave be paid at minimum 4 weeks by 2013.

Full superannuation to be paid as per Award/Enterprise Agreement but at 9% minimum while on parental leave.

