



INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION OF AUSTRALIA

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**Senate Inquiry
The Exposure Draft of the Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010**

The IEUA submits the following in relation to the Exposure Draft of the Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010.

The IEU is the federally registered union representing over 70000 education professionals (teachers and other education staff) in the non-government education sector, over 70 per cent of whom are women. The IEU is responsible for negotiating agreements which include the provision of entitlements such as parental leave, family leave, carers' leave and maternity leave. These are entitlements which are central to a worker's capacity to balance their work and family commitments.

While IEUA members have had many successes in negotiating paid maternity leave, these successes have been achieved through high union membership activity when negotiating working conditions.

However, access to paid maternity leave varies in terms of length of leave entitlement and eligibility criteria. More problematic is the reality that there remains a substantial number of staff in non-government schools who do not have access to any paid maternity leave.

The IEUA welcomes the Federal Government Paid Parental Leave scheme as it will provide some financial security to those working parents who are unable to access employer funded paid maternity leave.

The IEUA notes the ACTU submission to the Inquiry and supports its contents. In addition, we wish to place emphasis on the following matters.

1. Superannuation

The IEUA acknowledges the existing statistics which demonstrate that while women live longer than men, their retirement savings are half that of men.

The IEUA strongly believes that payment of the statutory superannuation guarantee levy on the paid parental leave is a necessary step towards redressing the inequity in retirement savings for women.

2. Eligibility

(a) 330 hours over 10 months

The IEUA notes that the underlying principles of the eligibility test of "*worked less than 330 hours over 10 months*" sets out to reflect the averaging of one day worked per week over 10 months.

However, the IEUA identifies that this does not reflect the working realities within the education sector.

In fact it represents more than a one day full time equivalent per week over 10 months under the various non-government education sector agreements.

It is very much a common occurrence for working mothers to be employed in schools for one day (or equivalent hours) per week basis.

The IEUA recommends some amendment to the eligibility test to reflect the education industry definitions of "one day or the equivalent " to ensure that the mothers working one day per week (or equivalent) in a school setting are not denied access to the paid leave scheme.

It is recommended that the proposed Bill makes explicit that eligibility reflects the averaging of one day ,full time equivalent as described within an industry, per week over a 10 months

In the case of the education sector, this would be approximately 264 hours.

(b) Break in Service

The IEUA notes the provision for recognition of break in service during the work eligibility test and welcomes the concept as a positive step.

However, the IEUA identifies concerns over the quantum of 8 weeks.

This provision fails to recognise the working realities of those engaged as casual or contract employees within the non-government education sector. Such employees can be stood down for any period up to 12 weeks in length due to school term breaks

The IEUA calls for an extension to this provision in order guarantee that employees within the Non –Government sector are not denied access to the paid parental leave scheme due to the scheduling of term breaks.

Conclusion

The IEUA welcomes the Paid Parental Leave Bill and views it as a positive and significant foundational change in defining what constitutes parenting and what is essential for support of parents and their newborn.

The IEUA believes that it is critical for the Paid Parental Leave scheme to be fully operational from 1 January 2011.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Yours Sincerely

Christine Cooper
Assistant Federal Secretary.