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Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To the Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Re: Exposure Draft of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme Bill 2010

The Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) is the peak union body in Queensland with 35 affiliated unions covering around 350 000 Queensland workers. The QCU is the State branch of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

The ACTU has made a number of submissions and recommendations in respect to the exposure draft of the Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010 (the proposed Bill). The QCU endorses those submissions and recommendations.

The QCU and its Affiliates have long recognised the benefit of paid parental leave to workers and more generally, the community. It is on this basis that the QCU regards the proposed Bill as a vital step in supporting parents and properly recognising women in their roles as workers and mothers.

It is critical that the paid maternity leave scheme is fully operational by 1 January 2011, as many Australian families are relying on receiving these entitlements. As such, the QCU calls on the Senate to pass the proposed Bill to ensure parents will be able to access their entitlements from 1 January 2011.

Despite the fact that the QCU provides general support for the proposed Bill, the QCU will continue to seek a number of further improvements to the paid parental leave scheme after the proposed Bill is made. The QCU raised a number of issues regarding the paid parental leave scheme on 14 November 2008, in its response to the Productivity Commission draft inquiry report - *Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn Children* (the report). The improvements sought will be in line with the QCU's response to the report and the ACTU's submissions and recommendations regarding the proposed Bill.



As a side note, it needs to be made clear to employers that the new payment is to be made in addition to any paid parental leave entitlements currently provided by employers. Paid parental leave entitlements arising from existing workplace agreements cannot be replaced by the Government payment. This needs to be clearly articulated to employers, to ensure that current employee entitlements are not jeopardised as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme.

The QCU congratulates the Government on this Bill.

Yours sincerely

Ron Monaghan
General Secretary