

2nd July 2021

Dear Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights,

Re: Additional responses for the inquiry into ParentsNext: examination of Social Security (Parenting payment participation requirements - class of persons) instrument 2021

Please find additional responses to questions asked by Senator Thorpe and Senator Dodson.

1. Senator THORPE: *Can you speak of any international examples of welfare programs similar to ParentsNext?*

In addition to my comments made to this question at the hearing, I also wanted to point out that it is concerning that various documentation and explanatory statements put out by the Department in defence of ParentsNext does not engage with the vast international and national peer-reviewed research examining workfare policies such as the UK Conditionality Project. Instead, the department seems to cherry pick isolated studies to support their views, and in the case of the Green and Hasluck (2009) study cited in their submission to this inquiry, misinterprets their findings to fit their own views.

2. Senator DODSON: *This is a question to both of you. In your studies, have you found any cohort or group of people from different cultures of Australian society who have found the compulsory nature of the onus a beneficial factor to enable them to pursue the objectives of the program?*

In addition to my comments made to this question, and in reflection to Senator Dodson's observation that some providers have suggested the compulsory nature a beneficial factor regarding domestic violence situations, I want to add one more comment. As I said in my submission, ParentsNext has been described by some interviewees as an abusive relationship just like a DV relationship, so I can only think what a sad situation it is when we have these punitive conditionality programs being poised as an out for women trying to get away from DV. If some participants have mentioned ParentsNext as an out from such a situation, it doesn't necessarily show support for ParentsNext, but rather shows the gaping hole in public policy that has failed to provide adequate support for ending violence against women.

Thank you,

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