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## **Exposure Draft of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme Bill 2010**

Dear Ms Bleeser

The introduction of a universal Paid Parental Leave scheme (PPL) is an important social policy initiative which UnitingCare Australia supports. UnitingCare Australia represents a national network of UnitingCare agencies which employs some 35,000 employees working across 1300 sites around Australia and delivers social services to around 2 million Australians each year.

As a major employer of community service employees any policy change which enhances the capacity of our agencies, and the sector at large, to retain its employees is a welcome initiative. For many UnitingCare agencies this scheme will supplement their current parental leave provisions. While the scheme has the potential to deliver great benefits to a range of employees we are keen that those benefits are not eroded through complex or costly administrative processes.

While supportive of the scheme some of our agencies have raised concerns around its administration and whether costs will need to be incurred in upgrading systems and processes to accommodate the scheme. This issue will be of particular concern in for small to medium size not-for-profit social services where administrative support is already stretched in meeting complex regulatory, tendering and acquittal reporting requirements. There will be a need to fully assess the implementation costs to employers and ensure an equitable and efficient approach to meeting these costs. For example, there may be a need to upgrade IT capability to accommodate the requirements of the PPL scheme.

UnitingCare Australia is very pleased to be working with the Australian Government through the Implementation Working Group to ensure equitable and efficient implementation and ongoing administration of the PPL scheme, and that the scheme will deliver benefits for parents who have previously had no access to paid parental leave and provide better long term employment outcomes for adults and a better start for their children.

Yours sincerely

Susan Helyar  
National Director  
UnitingCare Australia

12 May 2010