

## **SUBMISSION on the Paid Parental Leave Bill 2010**

### **1. Paid Parental Leave is discriminatory "childcare funding"**

It funds "short term parental childcare" but discriminates against families that use parent care long term. For example families where mum cares for a baby beyond 6 months of age or between pregnancies, risk missing out on Mr Rudd's Paid Parental Leave for their 2nd or subsequent child. Paid Parental Leave is really a Bonding Time Reduction Scheme. The only way to increase bonding is to give the same funding to support mother bonding for every newborn.

Surely we should be assisting mothers who choose to stay at home and effectively provide their own child care. Children are able to bond with their mother, rather than with a stranger. The long term benefits to our society are obvious, as studies clearly show the advantages of children that are raised by their own mothers over those left in long term child care.

Having raised 8 children myself, and being forced to place 2 young children in child care for a period of about 12 months, I can attest to the heartbreak attached to these children who don't want to be separated from their mother, even for a few hours at a time. **Young children need to be with their mother in the formative years.**

An added bonus if mothers are encouraged to stay at home to raise their children is the increased availability of employment to others, the unemployed, the first job seeker, the uni student, the mature worker etc. Productivity will not be lost if more mothers choose to stay at home, as employment positions will be taken up by others, others that some could argue are more in need of employment. There is also evidence that new mothers returning to the workforce work in a much reduced capacity anyway, part time, job share or casual etc, and whilst these roles are important it is not the most efficient form of employment available. If part time/ job share positions are taken up by full time workers it is highly probable productivity per position will improve.

Rudd's PPL would give 148,000 families an average of \$7,342 after tax and 161,000 families the \$5,340 Baby Bonus. A solution would be to instead of this discriminatory funding, all families referred to in the 2011 Budget Estimates (those earning under \$150,000) could receive around \$6,300 each to help ALL mums afford bonding time.

Equal funding for all mums would be simple to calculate and administer. Amend the Bill to deliver this funding via the Government (similar to the current Baby Bonus payment means) and **save taxpayers and business the unnecessary, high costs** of using businesses as the "government paymaster".

### **2. Amend the Bill to remove the "work test" and the "income test" from the Bill**

These tests unfairly exclude unwaged mums doing their own childcare work between pregnancies. **This is unfair!** All families reduce income to pay for childcare - whether parent care or outsourced care (eg. daycare).

Why should federal government funding punish families for their long term choice of "parent care", which as I have stated provides more well rounded families, greater contribution to society, less social problems and greater employment options to those more in need. **Amend the Bill to remove the "work test" (sections 32 to 36 of draft Bill) and the "income test" (sections 37 to 41 of draft Bill).**

The Paid Parental Leave will not "pay for itself". The Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill says *"It is expected that the cost of the scheme will be offset by increases in tax revenue and by reductions in baby bonus and family tax benefit Part B outlays and tax offsets for people receiving parental leave pay."* **In reality what is happening is stay at home mums are effectively being penalized to stay at home and do the most important job on our planet, raising their own children.** They are subsidizing the increase in social problems associated with young children being forced away from their mother and into child care. Let's support and even encourage our mothers to raise their own children, and let our future generations reap the benefits.

### **3. And finally, we MUST exclude abortion funding**

The Bill gives Paid Parental Leave for stillborn babies. In many cases aborted babies reaching 20 weeks gestation or 400g in weight, who are born dead or alive (to die subsequently) are recognised and recorded in Birth Registries as "stillborns". Stillborn babies are a tragedy but clearly should not be included in this bill, which is designed to provide child care, ie to a living child. To include aborted babies in this definition is simply wrong on so many levels and sadly, there will be many who will take advantage of this and, knowing that they will receive financial benefits, abortions will be encouraged. **To avoid any doubt, amend the Bill to ensure Paid Parental Leave funding does not go to babies who are stillborn or die after birth as a result of elective terminations.**

Thankyou,