



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bishop Launches New Inquiry into Balancing Work & Family

Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family & Human Services, Bronwyn Bishop, today announced a Parliamentary Inquiry into the balancing of work and family.

Mrs Bishop said that the public inquiry would examine a range of issues relevant to many Australians and the choices they make in relation to having children and raising families.

“Australia’s fertility rate is currently at 1.7 births per couple which is below that required to replace our population. This has been a major contributing factor to an ageing Australia and one that will see our population shrink over time”, Mrs Bishop said.

“It is worth noting that despite Australia’s declining birth rate, recent studies have shown that most young Australian adults want to have children and most parents with one child want to have another”.

“However many are delaying childbearing and are having smaller families than they originally desired,” Mrs Bishop said.

“It has been estimated that around one quarter of Australian women in their reproductive years will never have children and we need to look at why that is.”

Many Australian parents are faced with financial and other family and social difficulties when attempting to return to the paid workforce. In Australia, only 43 per cent of women with two or more children are in the workforce, compared with 82 per cent in Sweden and 62 per cent in the UK. This illustrates a need for enhanced family-friendly policies and workplace arrangements.

Mrs Bishop said that the Committee will explore how the Australian Government can better help families balance their employment and family responsibilities. The Committee invites public submissions on:

- the financial, career and social disincentives to starting families;
- making it easier for parents who so wish to return to the paid workforce; and
- the impact of taxation and other matters on families in the choices they make in balancing work and family life.

For media interview: Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee chairman the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information on making a submission: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs