



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

30 May 2006

Commonwealth department's views on balancing work and family

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) will give evidence in Canberra tomorrow (31 May) to the House Family Committee's inquiry into balancing work and family.

The Committee is investigating how the Government can make it easier for parents to return to the paid work force, and the Department is responsible for monitoring workforce participation in Australia and administering a range of initiatives to support working parents.

The Department is expected to brief the Committee on the Welfare to Work and Work Choices legislation packages introduced since it made its submission to the Committee last year. Committee Chairman, Bronwyn Bishop, said that, "There will always be some parents who want to stay at home with their children and not go to work".

"Evidence suggests, however, that there are many others who would like the extra income and sense of engagement that work brings, together with keeping their skills updated in the marketplace," Mrs Bishop said.

"Many, overwhelmingly mothers, would like to work but cannot access adequate child care, training, or the part-time work that they are looking for.

"Second earners and single parents at the lower end of the income scale also face high effective marginal tax rates that are a powerful disincentive to work.

"Higher fertility and higher workforce participation are not mutually exclusive. Families do need financial and structural support from Government, however, to enable them to contribute to the paid work force.

"Given the demographic challenges and skill shortages our economy is facing, we also need to be encouraging employers to respond with flexibility and initiative to family circumstances."

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Date: Wednesday 31 May 2006
Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
Time: 10.15 am – 11.30 am

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 the public hearing: 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