

From: Mulder, Elizabeth LCDR
Sent: Monday, 11 April 2005 12:17 PM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Subject: Work and Family Government Inquiry

Dear Sir / Madam,

I have only just been made aware of the intent of the 'Balancing Work and Family Inquiry' and the request for input.

From my perspective as a Defence Employee and the mother of two young children, it is essential that families be provided with the option of 'Salary Sacrificing' their Childcare Expenses. Our childcare costs total \$26K each year. After tax, superand childcare I am effectively taking home only \$700.00 per fortnight which I dont believe to be a fair and equitable return for me and my children given the stress of getting to work each day, children out of their home environment, the stress of work, etc.

Economically, there is no way that we can consider a third without significant financial hardship as we also have a mortgage. There would be no reason for me to return to work at all as I have estimated that my take home pay after childcare, tax, and super would only be around \$100.00 per fortnight.

The balance does not appear to be in the favour of family and increasing family size. The decision to award \$3000.00 at birth by no means provides an incentive given that a majority of women receive no maternity benefits and there are no tax incentives (in the form of Salary Sacrifice) to allieviate some of the Financial Burden. This is especially the case for 'higher' income earners who are only entitled to minimum CCB and no family allowances. I have had several employees who have made the decision to resign and stay at home because it was financially in their interests two receive govt. subsidy in lieu of paying childcare, before and after school care fees. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones in terms of having received two periods of paid Maternity Leave.

Hoping this input can be included. I apologise for the brevity of this email and I would have liked to have had the opportunity the opportunity to address this email in much greater detail as I believe this to be an issue that can no longer be ignored - especially in light of the significantly falling birthrate in Australia.

Yours faithfully,
Elizabeth Mulder