



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 June 2005 8:44 PM  
**To:** Committee, FHS (REPS)  
**Subject:** Inquiry into Work and Family

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Work and Family

Please accept the following brief submission to the above inquiry. I am currently in London and will not be returning to Australia until 24 August, and as a result have no access to most of my work in this area. However, I would like to submit the attached paper 'Even Keel ...', prepared for the MRC and also to draw attention to my monograph 'Taxing the Family', available from the Centre for Independent Studies (Sydney). The latter now provides largely a background history to current conditions, but could be of assistance in assessing where we now stand as regards family income assistance, as compared with 40 to 50 years ago.

There are two points I would like to make briefly as regards the current situation:

(1) I believe that the current lump sum payment on the birth of a baby, introduced in the last budget, was a move in the wrong direction, instigated by election panic (quite unnecessary) in response to a similar promise floated by Labor. This proposal, while in keeping with Labor's feminist policies which would have all women in the workforce, is quite out of keeping with the overriding Liberal policy of creating stable families. It implies either that babies cease to be a material reality 3 months after birth, or that all women will be back in the workforce by that date.

By contrast, the approaches of Family Allowance throughout childhood dependency and tax relief for families, of the last two budgets, recognise the reality of the continuing burden of cost and care if families are to raise children effectively. The lump sum payment is regarded here in the UK (with good reason) as paying women to have babies, and is likely to exacerbate the current problem of a higher birthrate in welfare dependent families, rather than raising it across the income spectrum.

(2) It is wasteful of revenue and inequitable to subsidize both family income and childcare across the board, for this means that double income families who put their children into childcare receive a double benefit. It would clearly not be politic to withdraw childcare funding precipitately, but I believe that the movement of family welfare monies from childcare to direct family income support should be a long term goal, to be introduced with the wisdom and subtlety the present government has shown in reversing the a number of other socially harmful welfare policies introduced in the 1970s and '80s.

Apart from the work mentioned above, I have a body of unpublished statistics and analyses of the changes in work participation of men and women, single, married, and with children, over the period 1969-1999, which is revealing of the influence of patterns of welfare support on population behaviour. However, this will not be accessible until I return to Australia.

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