

South Australian Premier's Council for Women

Submission to the Federal Government's Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family

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(listed under the Inquiry's Terms of Reference)

1. Background

The South Australian Premier's Council for Women¹ notes the terms of reference of the Inquiry and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the critical debate on balancing work and family. We would request that if public or private hearings are to take place, that delegated members of the Council be invited to speak directly with the Committee about the issues raised in this submission.

The views expressed in this submission are the views of the Premier's Council for Women and not necessarily the views of the South Australian State Government.

2. The challenges

The modern family operates within a context that has changed considerably over the last few decades. More women are in the workforce. These women are also wives, partners, daughters, mothers and carers. Due to their work commitments, they are not able to carry out the unpaid carer responsibilities that traditionally have fallen to them. Yet at various stages in the lives of all families, whether due to sickness, ageing, childhood or relationship crises, care of others will be needed in families. Supporting and responding to the needs of family members is part and parcel of ensuring strong and well functioning families with all the societal benefits that result.

Balancing work and family is an industrial and social issue for government and communities, not just for individual families and not just women. Given that Australia has some of the longest working hours of any OECD country, this issue is of greater importance to many Australian workers and is likely to increase in importance as our population ages. With the restructuring of the workforce, problems are now emerging which require a concerted response from the community, government and employers.

The 2002 OECD report² which focused on Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands and the balancing of work and family life, summarises why this debate is important to government: *"The reason why the reconciliation of work and family is increasingly important to so many governments is that it is hoped that getting the right balance will promote all sorts of other goals of society. Increasingly aggregate labour supply and employment (so increasing national income); families with more stable and secure sources of income, families better able to stand the stresses of modern life, and if relationships do break down, better able to move on in their lives, better child development outcomes, less public expenditure, higher fertility (or at least, enabling families to have their*

¹ The SA Premier's Council for Women was established in 2002 as a high level advisory body to the SA Premier and the Minister. The Council provides leadership and high quality, independent advice to government to ensure that the interests and needs of women are at the forefront of government policies and strategies.

² OECD Report 2002 "Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands" Vol 1

desired number of children) and more gender equity, are often primary government objectives”

The Federal Government must play a leadership role in setting the national benchmarks for work conditions to support families in achieving a work - life balance and in providing incentives to employers to be creative in the flexible work - family options they offer their employees. Benchmarked against other countries, Australia is not currently doing so well in this regard. *“Australia’s performance in terms of employers providing family friendly workplaces is currently below world best practice levels, as is demonstrated by the comparison of Australian and the US workplaces... this data suggests that organisations in the US offer more family friendly work practices than do their counterparts in Australia, especially by offering compressed working weeks, employee assistance, on site or near site child care facilities, and information and referral services.”*³

The challenges we now face in Australian society include:

- A continuing low birth rate: The current rate (1998 – 2003) of between 1.73 and 1.76 children per woman is generally lower than for any period since 1923⁴. In contrast, the indigenous birth rate in 2003 was 2.15 children per woman;
- An ageing population with smaller families meaning less carers available to assist them;
- More women now in the work force (51.8% 1990 to 54.5% 2001⁵), including women with family responsibilities, but with less earnings than men;
- While likely to live longer than men, women have less superannuation entitlements i.e. median superannuation savings in 2000 were \$6,400 for women, compared to \$13,400 for men.⁶ Low superannuation for women is due to
 - Occupation linked superannuation schemes which disadvantages female employees and women who are not in the paid workforce⁷.
 - Compulsory employer contributions to superannuation being linked to wage levels which are low for women;
 - Less hours spent by women in the paid workforce;
 - Interruptions to women’s work history due to child bearing, the care of children and extended family members;
 - Difficulties experienced by women in making additional voluntary payments into superannuation funds;

³ Mulvenca (1999) and Bankert and Linchfield (1998) as quoted p12 Austen S and Birch ER ‘ Family Responsibilities and Working Women’s Lives’ Discussion Paper No 1/02 Feb 2002; Institute for Research into International Competitiveness Curtin Business, School Curtin University of Technology

⁴ ABS Births Australia 2003 Cat 3301.0

⁵ ABS Australian Social Trends 2001 Work: National Survey Tables

⁶ ABS 2000 Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Cat 6361.0

⁷ Olsberg D. Women, Superannuation and retirement: Grim Prospects Despite Policy Changes Just Policy No 35 March 2005

- Less traditional sources of unpaid carers available (previously women);
- More workers (particularly women) employed on a casual basis with no leave entitlements;
- More part time workers, with women making up 73.1% of persons employed part time (including those without leave entitlements)⁸;
- Increasing numbers of sole parent and double income families;
- Women tending to be clustered in a small group of occupations, particularly in, *clerical, sales and service areas*⁹ that attract lower rates of pay. They are also employed in a narrow group of professions such as nursing and teaching;
- Changing patterns of work with employees working longer hours, without overtime payment;
- More irregular hours worked by employees without financial compensation;
- Greater stress on relationships within families as parents take separate holidays to ensure one parent is home to care for the children during school holidays, resulting in less opportunity to holiday together and less quality time spent as a family unit;
- More employees feeling stressed by conflicting priorities of work and family and pressured by time¹⁰; More than half of Australian couples with dependent children always or often feel pressed for time,¹¹
- A growing proportion of Australian women and their partners choosing not to have children¹²;
 - The short and long term economic cost of having children has been more widely publicised over recent years and may influence the decision not to have children;
 - Since families tend to support the elderly, childless couples will have greater reliance on formal care arrangements in old age and costs of this care are likely to increase.¹³
- Smaller families, resulting in more pressure on fewer individuals to care for family members;
- Women are having children at a later age than previously. (In 2003, the highest fertility rate was women in the 30 –34 year age group with a mean age of 30.5 years. However, for Indigenous women, the mean age was 6 years younger at 24.6 years¹⁴);
- More use of child care and after school care, the hours of which are not always compatible with work hours or irregular work schedules;
- More time spent by employees in travel to and from work due to urban sprawl;
- The traditional pattern of sole male breadwinner with female carer at home now describes only a minority of families;

⁸ Source ABS Labour FORCE survey: Data available on request. Reference: p20 "Statistical Profile Women in South Australia" Premier's Council for Women

⁹ p 3 Austen S and Birch ER ' Family Responsibilities and Working Women's Lives' Discussion Paper No 1/02 Feb 2002; Institute for Research into International Competitiveness Curtin Business, School Curtin University of Technology

¹⁰ ABS Time Use survey 1997 Cat No 4153.0

¹¹ p3 OECD Report 2004 "Babies and Bosses: Recommendations to Help Families Balance Work and Family Life"

¹² ABS Australian Social Trends 2002: Family and Family Formation: Trends in Childlessness

¹³ ABS Australian Social Trends 2002: Fertility rates

¹⁴ ABS Family and Family Formation: Trends in Childlessness

- In 2003, "over two-thirds (70%) of families used mothers' working arrangements to care for children, and a third (33%) used fathers' working arrangements. This suggests that even when both parents are working, women still tend to be the primary givers of care, and are more likely than their partners to organise their work around child care responsibilities"¹⁵
- Greater mobility of families resulting in less access to support from extended family members;
- Women still carrying more of the load of domestic, household and child care responsibilities than men and do this in addition to working. "*Domestic activities accounted for the largest proportion of household work (an average of 191 minutes per day devoted to these activities by women and an average of 124 minutes by men)*"¹⁶;
- Women in Australia are also the primary carers of parents.¹⁷

Challenges in Indigenous communities require additional focus. An ABS analysis of Indigenous persons based on the 2001 census, indicates that by income quintiles, estimates for 2005 of the "mean gross household income of Indigenous people aged 18 years and over was \$394 per week, equal to 59% of the corresponding income of non-Indigenous people (\$665 per week)"¹⁸.

Reduced income inevitably leads to risks of poverty and its impact on Aboriginal communities has been widely documented: "*By almost all socio-economic indicators, Indigenous persons are the most disadvantaged group in Australia. Indigenous persons experience much higher unemployment rates, lower average incomes, lower participation and achievement in the education system, much higher rates of incarceration, higher infant mortality rates, and poorer health and housing situations than non-Indigenous persons. Suicide rates are also higher, and many in Indigenous communities suffer major alcohol and other substance abuse problems.....For those living in remote locations, access to employment, education and training opportunities, to health and welfare services, to adequate housing, and to essential facilities such as banking and communications are often problematic. In urban areas, Indigenous people often face difficulties accessing mainstream services and facilities, and private sector jobs*"¹⁹.

Unaddressed the impact on developing children living in these communities will carry into subsequent generations with poor future projections. Investment early in the life to break these cycles will not only alleviate suffering of individuals and communities but in hard economic terms will also reduce public expenditure on tertiary health, social and other services. Investment therefore in culturally appropriate, home based support services to young Aboriginal families in the first few years of their child's life will not only assist young infants and their parents to have the best start to life, but such strategies also make sound economic sense.

¹⁵ ABS Australian Social Trends Family and Community - Family functioning: Balancing family and work.

¹⁶ ABS Australia Now Australian Social Trends 2001 Work - Unpaid Work: Time spent on unpaid household work

¹⁷ ABS CAT No 4430.0 April 1998

¹⁸ ABS 2005 Year Book Australia: Population Article - Selected findings from the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

¹⁹ ABS 2004 Year Book Australia: Income and welfare Article - Strengthening Indigenous families and communities

In 2001, the unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians was 20% (the number unemployed as a proportion of the total labour force) compared to 7% for non-Indigenous Australians²⁰. With unemployment rates of 32% of 15-17 year olds and 27% of 18-24 year old Indigenous young people being roughly double that of non-Indigenous Australians²¹, strong efforts must be made to break generational cycles of unemployment in Indigenous communities. Supports to increase school retention rates of young Aboriginal students and access to education and training will have spin offs through enhancing work opportunities and income levels. Subsidised, high quality, accessible, child care and after school care will also provide opportunities for parents to gain part or full time employment when their children are of school age.

Challenges to assist vulnerable women require greater focus on additional supports to enable those who have the capacity to work to gain assistance in preparing for job readiness. Not everyone is able to work and this must be respected, but the following supports may assist some eg:

- Migrant women may initially require access to childcare, interpreter and language classes to help them in their adjustment to Australian life and culture before or while working.
- Refugee women who have suffered trauma and torture will require additional services such as debriefing and counselling to help them deal with loss, grief and trauma.
- Some women with physical, intellectual an/or mental health disabilities may require skill training, flexible work practices so that they can participate in the workforce. Enticements for employers to provide work opportunities to persons with disabilities to ensure they are inclusive of their needs, may enable some of these women to gain employment.
- Women who have been unable to access work due to imprisonment, the impact of domestic violence, chronic health or other problems have particular needs that may require long-term support services.
- Financial compensation is needed for those who care for the elderly, young children or those with disabilities to enable them to continue to undertake these responsibilities, without being disadvantaged by loss of income. It is short sighted and false economy for those who prefer to care for their families to be financially forced to undertake paid work and then have to employ others to take on this carer role.

These combined challenges require a new trajectory for employees to balance their work and family lives. As Pocock states *"our institutions lag behind changes in our patterns of work and our households, and our communities and families are bearing the costs of this dissonance between institutions, cultures and preferences"*²²

²⁰ ABS 2004 Year Book Labour: Article - Labour Force Status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

²¹ ABS 2004 Year Book Labour: Article - Labour Force Status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

²² Pocock Barbara Labour Studies, University of Adelaide. Excerpt from her keynote address 'The Work/Life Collision' Premier's Council for Women Forum, Adelaide 2003

3. THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Without workplace flexibility we not only risk discouraging women and couples from choosing to have children, but place greater stress on families and on workers trying to balance work and family responsibilities. The impact of family stress on child development, capacity to learn and the wellbeing of children needs to be evaluated to prevent further increases in depression and poor mental in childhood and into adult life. The World Health organisation's projections indicate a global burden of depression. *"Depression is currently the highest medical cause of disability worldwide and predicted to be the second highest medical cause of death and disability worldwide by 2020"*²³

Worker stress ricochets into reduced productivity in the workplace and increased pressure on an already overloaded mental health and social security system. Further, a robust Australian economy and the safety net of a well-resourced social security system both require the back up of a higher fertility rate than we have at present and strong workforce participation. So finding solutions to balancing work and family is in the interests of individuals, families and employees, but also of employers, Australian society and our future economy. In this context, it is worth noting that *'Countries with policies that facilitate regular female employment... by offering public support for child care for 0-3 year olds, flexible working hours and individual tax systems, are also those countries with the highest fertility rates'*²⁴

Benchmarked against the rest of the world, Australia has not kept pace with progress of other developed nations and the Federal government has a key role in ensuring we remain progressive in our response to changes in work and family culture. The following quote from IRIC's Discussion paper on Family responsibilities and Working Women's Lives, outlines the challenge. *"Australia still lags behind some Western industrialised countries in the support offered to working women with child care needs. For instance, the study by Prince – Cook (2001), found that Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Finland, the United States (US) and Canada all had effective government policies aimed at assisting working women with children. Australia, on the other hand, was found to have policies that were less effective at assisting mothers to re – enter the workplace after giving birth to their child. Another study, by Bittman (1999), found that the government financial assistance available to mothers wishing to enter the labour market in Australia paled in comparison to assistance available in countries with highly progressive family friendly policies such as Finland."*²⁵

²³ Beyond Blue website: http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=2.22

²⁴ OECD Report 2004 "Babies and Bosses: Recommendations to Help Families Balance Work and Family Life"

²⁵ Austen S and Birch ER 'Family Responsibilities and Working Women's Lives' Discussion Paper No 1/02 Feb 2002; Institute for Research into International Competitiveness Curtin Business, School Curtin University of Technology

4. The solutions: the broad approach

In her presentation to the Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in 2003, Dempster²⁶ suggests a life course approach to balancing work and families. The OECD's report focusing on work place practices for families focuses on the beginning of the life cycle and proposes a similar solution to Dempster. It *"advocates providing a continuum of support for working families with infants and children in their early school years. Policies contributing to gender equity and child development include: low effective tax rates which ensure that being in work is financially rewarding for all parents; and public investment in child- and out-of-school-hours care to make it easier for mothers to take paid jobs"*²⁷. The life course approach to improving work place practice is also supported by Pocock²⁸ who recommends *"better transition points and vehicles for transition over the life cycle."*

The life course approach to work family balance clearly has many merits. Since individuals form relationships, make decisions about whether or not to have children, participate in the work force, respond to the needs of family members, have ageing parents and in turn age themselves, family friendly work place policies become vital for all employees in their life journey. But flexible workplace practices also benefit employers and corporations. Through providing broader choice of skilled workers, reduced staff absenteeism and staff turnover, greater work satisfaction and employee loyalty, flexible workplace practices also improve company profits and productivity.

The ABS 2005 Report on Pregnancy and Work Experiences,²⁹ which is about to begin the design and testing phase, will record information on

- o Experiences of women with young children
- o Women working while pregnant and after returning to paid work
- o Leave by women and men following birth.

Data sets from this report will produce valuable information to support policy directions in the balancing work and family debate.

5. The solutions: recommendations for specific workplace measures

Since families are diverse, a 'one size fits all' approach will not suffice. A multi dimensional range of workplace options throughout the lifecycle will enable families to choose their own solutions. Starting with measures that assist families

²⁶ Dempster Fiona "Family and Work: Issues and Risks across the Life Course" Paper presented to the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference: Steps forward for families: research, policy and practice, Melbourne Feb 2003

²⁷ p2 OECD Report 2004 "Babies and Bosses: Recommendations to Help Families Balance Work and Family Life"

²⁸ Pocock Barbara Labour Studies, University of Adelaide. Excerpt from her keynote address 'The Work/Life Collision' Premier's Council for Women Forum, Adelaide 2003

²⁹ ABS 22 March 2005 "What's New?" Family and Community Statistics.

at the beginning of the lifecycle, the SA Premier's Council for Women supports the implementation of the following workplace measures, listed under the relevant terms of reference of the Inquiry.

Inquiry's 1st Term of reference:
The financial, career and social disincentives to starting families

Overview:

Disincentives to starting a family include:

• **Financial:**

- community awareness of the high cost of raising children,
- The loss of salary and wages in caring for children,
- The loss of employee input into superannuation schemes due to absence from the work place,
- The lack of opportunity to off set costs through taxation,
- Competing priorities of home ownership, education, HECS and other debts,
- Difficulties experienced by women in being sandwiched between responsibilities for caring for children as well as ageing parents,
- High community expectations of what should be provided for financially leading to greater pressure on women eg some school expenses previously covered by government must now be covered by families.

• **Career:**

- Interruptions to career progression resulting in loss of earnings and promotional opportunities for women,
- Loss of access to work place training, combined with
- Lack of employer recognition and value of multi tasking skills involved in raising families, setting priorities, managing relationships, households and domestic budgets.

• **Social:**

- Couples postponing having children until they are older and financially better established, resulting in smaller families,
- General lack of familiarity with children due to low birth rate resulting in less community tolerance of children and a devaluing of parenting,
- Social isolation for mothers, lack of support, particularly for women in rural communities,
- Extra pressure with smaller families on fewer children to care for others, impacting particularly on female children,
- Conflict for many men who want to be involved with their growing families but experience work hours which conflict with achieving this.

Recommendations:

1. Adoption of a national paid 12 months maternity leave scheme

Reason:

- To provide incentives for potential parents to have the option of having children when balancing this decision with the financial constraints of mortgage commitments, possibly HECS or other education debts and reduced earning capacity due to age of younger workers.
- To financially assist parents to have real choices and paid time to establish their families as they wish and to have the option of caring for their children if they so choose in the early years.
- Paid maternity leave enables time to establish breast-feeding where this is possible, with its recognised positive health benefits. It also supports international research on time needed for attachment formation in the early years to subsequent infant, child and adult mental health development.

2. An increase in federally funded, high quality, accredited, childcare places to ensure child care is both affordable and accessible to all who require it.

Reason:

- Such subsidies not only reduce the cost of child care but also lift some of the financial barriers faced by parents, particularly mothers, returning to the workforce.³⁰
- Affordable, accessible, high quality child care can assist families to move out of the poverty cycle through enabling them to take up opportunities for skill training and work. There are consequential benefits for individual families as well as the community through reduced impact on social supports.
- Improve the pay, status and conditions of early childhood workers to match the duties and level of responsibility their work involves without transferring these costs to families. Currently the younger the child cared for, the lower the pay of their carer, although this is not commensurate with the greater responsibility of dependent infants. Given widely accepted international research on early childhood which highlights the importance of the early (particularly the first three) years in a child's development, high quality and well remunerated carers need to be attracted into the workforce.

³⁰ Studies support this, as referred to in Austen S and Birch ER 'Family Responsibilities and Working Women's Lives' Discussion Paper No 1/02 Feb 2002; Institute for Research into International Competitiveness Curtin Business, School Curtin University of Technology

**Inquiry's 2nd Term of reference:
Making it easier for parents who so wish to return to the paid workforce.**

Overview:

The two previous recommendations also apply to this term of reference. To enable employees to respond to family commitments, they require a reduction in work hours and workplace flexibility and leave. Employers need to be informed about the benefits to their organisations of family friendly work-practices and the cost savings of retaining skilled and experienced staff.

Recommendations:

3. Flexible work practices, including optional leave arrangements and access to carer's leave.

Reason:

- Modern families are diverse and require flexibility to care for children, elderly parents, sick family members and their own health and other needs. Parental leave for either parent, rostered days off, paid emergency leave for carers, options to move between full and part time work within the same job, flexible start and finish work times, access to phones to make contact with family members and options for new work schedules such as job sharing over the working week or over the year (half time work between 2 employees on 6 month on, 6 month off basis) are all options that must be considered.
- Education campaigns to inform employers of the researched benefits of family friendly work practices to productivity and of retaining employees, by enabling parents to return to work on a part time basis.
- Information campaigns to inform employees about work place options to ensure these are accessed.

4. A general reduction in working hours and overtime.

Reason:

- Australians are spending more time at work than occurs in other OECD countries. Long working days reduce family and rest time and cause greater stress on individuals and families. The culture where employees are now expected to work longer hours often in unpaid work must be addressed.

5. Offering employer incentives and accreditation awards to encourage implementation of family friendly practices in the work place

Overview

The Premier's Council for Women notes and applauds the ACCI/BCA National Work & Family Awards³¹ and suggests that these incentives be extended by further federal government incentives.

Reason:

- Businesses need encouragement to embrace change and make the cultural shift to flexible work place practices and the development of resources and tools to establish such practices.
- Family friendly work practices are more likely to be available in larger organisations, the public sector, or where there is a concentration of professional employees. Employers of unskilled or shift workers may therefore need incentives to offer family friendly work practices. Costs of replacing unskilled staff, who leave for example, to have children, may be less than the real costs of offering such practices and inducements could assist such workers.
- Since small businesses are major employers, incentives and awards would also encourage them to work together to improve workplace policies for employees.

Inquiry's 3rd Term of reference:

The impact of taxation and other matters on families in the choices they make in balancing work and family life.

Overview:

- **Taxation:** Fringe benefit tax impediments to workplaces establishing child care facilities for their employees, need to be removed.
- **Other matters:**
 - The increasing trend to employment of casual staff on a long-term basis, without leave entitlements or other provisions, few negotiating powers or rights, particularly impact on women and must be addressed.
 - A culture now pervades many Australian work places that operates against employees feeling they can use existing family friendly entitlements without negative impact on career prospects and perceptions by employers and colleagues.
 - Balancing work and family also involves care of ageing parents as well as children. Many women over the age of 45 permanently leave the workforce for family responsibility reasons, particularly to care for elderly relatives.

³¹ Awarded by ACCI (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and BCI (The Business Council of Australia).

- o Gender remains a real issue in the work place: women are still paid less for equal work. In addition to working, women shoulder the greater burden of domestic and family responsibilities. They have reduced promotional opportunities due to interruptions in their work history and, despite living longer than men, have less superannuation to access.

Recommendations:

6. Review of taxation benefits and financial incentives to work

Reason

- Enabling costs of child care and after school care to be claimed as tax deductions, offset against costs of working would greatly assist parents and would be an incentive to encouraging their participation in the workforce.
- Changing taxation arrangements to enable parents to pay tax individually, would also remove disincentives of the existing tax system where combined family income i.e. of both parents, is taxed.
- Introduce tax incentives to encourage particularly female employees, to increase their voluntary contributions to superannuation so that they have independent means of support in retirement.

7. Defining as a national issue, the new culture of work and family and the sharing of these roles and responsibilities.

Reason:

- Caring has always been part of what women have done: without pay, without status and often diminished in regard by others for doing it. The true value of caring and supporting others in the development of children, in supporting schools, in building well functioning communities, in volunteer work and in supporting the frail, sick and elderly has gone unrecognised until now. It is simply an impossible task for women to continue to carry the dual role of worker and primary carer/domestic duties by themselves. Yet what constitutes the core of our humanity is our capacity to support and respond to each other. Since the stability of our society requires care of others, we must find new solutions to this national issue in order to encourage and support men to take up family and domestic care responsibilities.
- Incentives, such as paternity leave, which enable fathers to take on carer responsibilities, need close consideration to change the culture of caring being regarded as the sole responsibility of women. Also to assist men who feel they cannot take on carer duties because they will be looked down upon by colleagues or not seen as "manly," or not seen as dedicated to their career by their employer.
- There is a need for an education and awareness raising campaign re a new culture of gender equity in caring.
- What is needed is a *"Renovation of the societal vision of who should care, how care is valued, and the proper role of the distribution of all*

forms of work between women and men, between fathers and mothers, between sons and daughters”³²

8. Reduction in numbers of casual workers.

Reason:

- Increasing numbers of workers, (men and women, but particularly women) are being employed on a casual basis
- Casual workers are often employed on a fulltime basis for extended periods of time. Because of their casual status they do not have access to leave entitlements to attend to family responsibilities. Since they work full time, they also do not have the time, hence the need for casual employees to have leave entitlements.
- A range of strategies need to be developed to reduce the casualisation of the workforce including:
 - Restricting the definition of a casual employee to apply to short term, irregular work only;
 - Providing for the conversion of casual workers to permanent status to prevent the long term, regular employment of casual workers;
 - Improving the conditions of casual workers by providing access for casual workers to increased pay to compensate for casual status and access to leave and other entitlements.

9. Gender equity in pay and work place practice.

Reason:

- Where both parents work, women tend to earn lower wages than men. They are employed in lower paid jobs and experience difficulty in accessing work at higher levels of management.
- Many women have work in occupations and professions that are service or care oriented, often regarded as the feminised industries, and professions such as nursing and teaching. In Australian culture, despite the level of responsibility and training these jobs might require, there appears to be an undervaluing of them, since they do not attract the financial remuneration of often less skilled areas where men are typically employed.
- There is a genuine need for specific programs directed toward helping women to achieve equal pay for equal work and access to promotional opportunities beyond low paid employment.
- Women currently take more leave to care for children than men, so greater flexibility is needed for both parents to respond to children's needs.

³² Pocock Barbara Labour Studies, University of Adelaide. Excerpt from her keynote address 'The Work/Life Collision' Premier's Council for Women Forum, Adelaide 2003

10. Analysis of employment and work place data by gender.

Reason

- Currently some work benefits are not taken up whereas others are. Since a detailed analysis of work patterns by gender is not carried out, the reasons for accessing benefits are not always understood. This needs to be addressed to ensure that in creating work family balance we also enable gender balance.

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8th April 2005**

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