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**To:** Committee, FHS (REPS)

Are we getting the balance right between work and family? I would say NO. It's one thing to make available more money for child minding centres, this is the easy way. However it is only a small part and one aspect of the solution. It is most important to recognize and realize the importance of a stable, secure and loving home environment for our families. Instead of the mindset that most Australians are of a two income family, whether the source of income is by one or two parents, that most like it this way, and that total income would exceed \$80000. This mindset seems to be held by some politicians, some beaucrats. some 'well-healed' individuals, it is NOT the mindset or the reality that many people hold or experience.

**FACTS:** Majority are flat out earning \$40000 combined income.

- . Most parents would prefer to have one parent home to care for the family, and this is also true when children go to school. It is well documented that the level of involvement of parents in their children schooling and schools makes for a better behaved, well adjusted child.
- . People on low incomes cannot afford child care.
- . Federal Government is making a lot of money.
- . Decisions by Government are made and based on people on high incomes, generally city based.

So how can the federal government help parents balance their work and family responsibilities?

1. Change the thinking and the need that both parents have to work. Wages are monitored and controlled to a great degree, prices also need controlling, we pay far too much for EVERYTHING.
2. Redistribute some of the large amount of money that the government has, in making it more viable and worthwhile for one parent to be at home.
3. Educate employers on the benefits of employees job sharing.
4. In larger organisations, the benefits of child care provided at the work place.
5. Recognize that just because children go to school, it doesn't mean that the role of an involved, supportive parent is not necessary. It is even more necessary, right up to when they leave secondary school. This means that the work place needs to support those parents in a myriad of ways. Communicate with the worker, know the employees situation, work out suitable work hours, allow for children getting ill, allow for school activities that involve the parents, train up the staff, so the work place is not entirely reliant on the work that that worker does etc etc. This work place ethic applies to all government and non government organisations, and from the CEO to the tea person, anyone that has children and/or elderly people to care for.