

Submission to Parliament of Australia Senate Committees Community
Affairs Inquiry into Welfare to Work Amendment

I call on you to support families and children by ensuring that no single parent will suffer a drop in their income or have to transfer to newstart.

Being a parent is THE most important job in the world today. The children are our future and we must care for them with support and respect. Parents need support and assistance to raise healthy happy children.

The proposed changes to the Welfare Bill will cause increased hardship and difficulty to people who are already vulnerable. I urge you to change this bill before it passes the senate.

I consider my son the most important factor in my life. Our financial situation is already precarious, even though I do some part time work. If our income was reduced by even \$20 per fortnight, we would be struggling even more, and we would find it difficult to pay rent. Where would we live then? I know of many other sole parent families in similar circumstances. I constantly hear friends saying that they can never go out for dinner or do a class because their budget is so tight.

Rent is the single highest expense facing sole parents today. The prices are already high, and they are rising. I know of several friends who share a bedroom with their child because high rental costs mean that this is all they can afford. This is unacceptable, especially as children become older and have needs for increased space. If the government passes this bill without amendments more children will be living in poverty AND that poverty will be more grinding and difficult to escape.

I also struggle to find enough time to give my son the love and attention he needs. I am grateful for the joy that my son brings me... he is a beautiful, caring and intelligent child, which is partly because of the conscious and aware parenting that I provide. If I were forced to look for work, above and beyond the part-time work I already do I would find it very difficult to balance my care of my son. Children in sole parent families need MORE time with that one parent, not less... Mothers (or fathers) forced to work a required amount of hours would have LESS time and energy to give their children. When children only have one parent, they have a greater need for care and support. The sole parent needs to fulfill the role of both parents - their children need them more.

I demand that the government show sole-parents the respect that they deserve for caretaking and nurturing our children. Parents should be able to choose their own hours of work and conditions that are appropriate for their family.

No reductions in Parenting Payment! No transfers to NewStart! No forced work requirements!

Please care for our children, they need time with their parents and a supportive and abundant environment in which to grow up.

Sally Guildford on Wednesday 16th November 2005