

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020

National Council of Women Australia (NCWA) welcomes the opportunity to make a very short submission regarding the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020.

NCWA is a non-government umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives. NCWA has an extensive membership of Affiliate organisations (all with significant membership numbers) from all the Australian States and the ACT. NCWA membership also includes a large number of Associate members (women who join as an individual). All members of NCWA are volunteers and no government funding (State or Federal) is received for the operation of NCWA.

NCWA supports the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020 which aims to increase the flexibility of the Australian Government Paid Parental Leave Scheme. Unfortunately the Bill does not provide for superannuation being included in the paid parental leave payment. Other leave entitlements include superannuation and it should be included in any Australian Government Paid Parental Leave Scheme.

Currently the Paid Parental Leave Scheme provides the primary carer an eighteen (18) week payment at the national minimum wage for eligible primary carers of newborn and recently adopted children. There is also a two week payment at the rate of the national minimum wage for eligible partners caring for newborn or recently adopted children.

The Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020 makes amendments to the Paid Parental Leave Act (2010) to increase the flexibility of paid parental leave for primary carers proposed to be introduced later this year.

NCWA notes that the Bill proposes changes to a:

- a non-flexible paid parental leave period of up to twelve (12) weeks (60 week days) which must be taken in the twelve (12) months following the birth or adoption of a child.
- A flexible paid parental leave period of a maximum of six (6) weeks (30 days) which can be taken anytime after the initial period and within twenty four (24) months of the birth or adoption of a child.

NCWA is supportive of the view that these amendments will help new parents especially self-employed parents and small business owners who return to work before exhausting all of their paid

parental leave. Many small business owners are not able to leave their business for eighteen consecutive weeks. For some families the amendments will make it easier to transfer the paid parental leave entitlement to eligible partners who take on the role of primary carer.

NCWA also notes the Bill does not interfere with the existing rights under the Fair Work Act 2009, including access to twelve (12) months of unpaid parental leave. The Bill also does not decrease the current length of time of eighteen weeks paid parental leave entitlements. However, it does increase the options available to eligible families.

In conclusion

- **NCWA supports the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020**
- **NCWA requests an additional amendment be recommended to have superannuation included in the paid parental leave payment for eligible recipients of paid parental leave.**

Robyn Nolan
President NCWA