

From:
To: [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Stop PPL Cuts
Date: Sunday, 20 November 2016 2:05:07 PM

I am a university student (in my late twenties) delaying starting a family that I desperately want until I have completed my degree and worked long enough in my field to secure a future for my career for two reasons: so that I can afford to provide for a family and I want to work for the rest of my life in a career that I am passionate about. I don't believe that in 2016 in Australia, being a mother and having a meaningful career should be mutually exclusive.

As such, I strongly oppose the government's current proposal to remove or reduce the government provided 18 weeks paid parental leave for parents who also receive employer paid parental leave.

The issue is not about how much money the parent will receive in 18 weeks, it is about being able to have access to this universal safety net to extend the amount of time a mother can stay home with their baby before being forced back to work due to lack of income. The World Health Organisation recommends a minimum of 6 months. 18 weeks is already too short. By combining employer offered leave with the 18 weeks at minimum wage, women can stretch the time out closer to the recommended 26 weeks.

Australia already falls behind in OECD rankings in paid parental leave. Recently, a report showed we are also behind in the gender pay gap. See: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-27/australia-falling-behind-other-oecd-countries-in-gender-pay-gap/7969122>. The pay gap can only widen when women in lower income jobs are financially stressed but hindered from re-entering the workforce by prohibitive childcare costs, especially commercial care for young infants.

If the government really wants to address gender inequality in this country, the parental leave scheme would be extended, not reduced, paternal leave would be significantly more than 2 weeks, and childcare would be as accessible as public schooling. As it stands we are fighting to retain minimum parental paid leave entitlements that we only gained five years ago, many years behind other nations.

Until a scheme that covers all working mothers for the recommended 26 weeks is introduced, combining employer provided and government supported maternity leave is essential for mothers to be financially secure for an appropriate amount of time to care for a new baby and recover from birth, then return to their jobs in good mental and physical health to continue building careers and financial independence.

Please send the message to women in this country that our health, our lives, our careers matter. It isn't just unfair on women who are currently pregnant to have parental leave entitlements weakened, it's unfair on any family planning for children in the future. As a country it would be a major step backwards where we need to be going forwards.

Yours sincerely,
