

**From:**  
**To:** [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)  
**Subject:** Submission on Paid Parental Leave  
**Date:** Monday, 20 July 2015 10:31:12 AM

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1. Endeavour Forum Inc. is a women's pro-life, pro-family national organisation which has special consultative status with the Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. I am the National & Overseas Co-ordinator, I have eight children, 20 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Our editor has nine children, our Victorian Co-ordinator has 6 children and 30 grandchildren. Those of our supporters who are married tend to have larger than average-size families, so they tend to remain out of the paid workforce for longer after marriage, and many are full-time homemakers. Also many of our supporters homeschool their children.

2. We support the Amendment to the Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill 2015 as it eliminates the "double dipping" that presently occurs with mothers accessing both their employers maternity leave benefits as well as the Government's paid parental leave, and we commend the Government on this initiative.

3. We would further add that any taxpayer-funded maternity leave should be completely equitable between mothers in the paid workforce and mothers at home. This should also apply to child care subsidies. Countries such as Norway and Sweden give economic recognition to mothers who remain out of the paid workforce to care for pre-school children.

4. It is not clear why the Government and Treasurer Hockey wants incentives for mothers of young children to re-enter the paid workforce. The government should be neutral on whether mothers are in paid work or not. There is a major flaw in the GDP accounts which ignores production in the home - this is one reason why the world is in an economic mess because the national accounts are deeply flawed, e.g. if a mother makes her lunch at home, only the ingredients are counted in the GDP, but if she buys the identical lunch (a chicken sandwich) at work, both the ingredients and the labour of whoever made the sandwich is included in the GDP, thus giving a completely false estimate of a country's GDP. Home production is valuable and is decreased if mothers are "incentivated" to re-enter the paid workforce. While it would be difficult to calculate the value of domestic production, one simple and partial calculation would be an estimate of the cost of providing child care based on the number and ages of the children.

5. If the Government extended its paid parental leave to all mothers irrespective of their workforce status it would help to promote breastfeeding and would pay for itself in reduced health costs because breastfeeding reduces the incidence of both minor and major illnesses in babies WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued with other family foods for 2 years, and Australia is falling well below this standard. I have an Honours degree in science: microbiology and chemistry, and I also trained as a counsellor with La Leche League in the USA, the premier breast-feeding counselling organisation in the world. The Australian Breastfeeding Association, formerly Nursing Mothers Association, derived its inspiration from La Leche League.

Children are at risk of gastro and respiratory infections in long day care and many mothers who for reasons of financial hardship have to return to paid work, agonise over having to leave their children. Give them a genuine choice by extending government PPL to all

mothers. It won't be an economic loss to the country - the chicken sandwich can be made at home and is less likely to spread gastro than a commercial one.

6. The Amendment to the PPL Bill 2015 is to be commended as a first step in eliminating double-dipping. However, we recommend that the PPL Bill also be amended to provide PPL to all mothers irrespective of workforce status. This is specially desirable at the current time as there is high youth unemployment and under-employment of men and women who DO want to enter the paid workforce. Therefore mothers who wish to remain out of the paid workforce while their children are pre-school should not be "incentivised" into paid work solely because they need the benefit of paid parental leave.

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