

From: Kate Ravenscroft
To: [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Stop PPL Cuts
Date: Sunday, 20 November 2016 7:33:11 PM

I am vehemently opposed to any cuts to Australia's current paid parental leave scheme and call upon all members of Australia's parliament to protect and support the paid parental leave scheme.

I am a first time mother currently on maternity leave. I relied on the paid parental leave provided by the Australian government in order to spend the vital first year of my daughter's life at home with her. I was only entitled to 5 weeks of paid leave through my employer. Being able to combine this leave with the 18 weeks of paid government leave meant I could financially afford to spend the first year of my daughter's life at home with her as her primary carer. Without the possibility of combining these two forms of leave I would not have been able to afford to stay at home for the first year of my daughter's life.

My daughter was exclusively breast fed until almost her first 6 months of life and continues to be breast fed now as she approaches 10 months old. The World Health Organisation is unequivocal in its recommendations that exclusive breast feeding for the first six months of life provides the best start to life for babies and contributes to health and wellbeing for mothers (http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/exclusive_breastfeeding/en/). Paid parental leave made continued breast feeding possible for my daughter and I. A return to work would have interrupted breast feeding as I would have found it extremely difficult to continue breast feeding while reentering the work force.

The first year of life is a time of rapid developmental change and a time when infants are best served by consistent – and exclusive, where possible – care from a parent. The Australian Productivity Commission have explored this in their research into paid parental leave and its benefits and stated that support for a parent to stay at home to care for a newborn for at least the first 6 months and up to the first 12 months is optimal. In my experience this time at home caring for my daughter has been invaluable. It has allowed me to provide her with the care she needs and facilitated the establishment of a strong mother-child bond. I firmly believe paid parental leave has enabled me to provide my daughter with the best possible start to life.

I believe that in Australia we should be prioritising social policy which provides the best start for the next generation. The current paid parental leave scheme is a vital piece of social policy which we should be supporting and protecting. Paid parental leave provides Australian families with vital financial support at time when they need it. Paid parental leave ensures that parents are able to take time away from the work force to provide care for their newborn children. In my experience paid parental leave has been absolutely invaluable and I hate to think that future parents may not have access to this vital support.

I urge all members of the Australian parliament to vote to support Australian families, to vote for the provision of the best start to life for Australian children and therefore to vote to protect paid parental leave.

Yours sincerely, Kate Ravenscroft