

PRESS RELEASE
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Nurses, teachers, ambos and retail workers to be hit hard by paid parental leave cuts – new report shows

Nurses, ambulance service workers, teachers and retail workers will be hit hard by proposed cuts to paid parental leave – a new report commissioned by YWCA Australia and Fair Agenda has revealed.

The analysis from the Women and Work Group at University of Sydney shows that workers in these jobs can expect to lose between \$4,329 and \$11,826 – and the equivalent of more than 4 weeks of average household living costs for a single mum in Burnie or couple and newborn living in Sale.

The families in the four scenarios modelled in the report would be left with just 7 - 12 weeks of family costs by their parental leave payments under the government's proposed new plan.

The report's authors say the cuts will have negative impacts on income and may force mothers to return to work earlier than is recommended for health and welfare outcomes, or push them to drop out of the workforce entirely.

"You don't get a baby break on your mortgage, rent, utilities or food." says Dr Caroline Lambert, Executive Officer of YWCA Australia. "By tearing away this support the government will be hurting new families, and women – because we know women are 99% of those accessing paid parental leave at the moment."

"We're facing an 18.8% pay gap nationally, and we know that economic disparities in women and men's working lives often start at motherhood." says Professor Marian Baird, co-author of the report. "This cut will reduce the support available to women who work, and we can expect it will also force many new mums to leave their babies earlier than experts say is good for health and welfare outcomes."

"This modelling shows that under the proposed changes the government would take away the equivalent of 4 weeks of average living expenses from a new parent who had been working full time at Woolies in Burnie, or part time as a nurse in Sale. That will leave them well short of the leave payments reasonably expected to support a primary carer to stay home with a new baby in the first 26 weeks – the leave period experts say is needed for health and welfare outcomes." says Renee Carr, Executive Director of community campaigning group Fair Agenda.

"We've heard from thousands of new mothers who are concerned about the devastating impact these cuts would have – including many who voted for Prime Minister Abbott because of his proposal to *extend* paid parental leave. Instead cuts will tear leave rights away from those who do the hard work of teaching the young and caring for the sick in our communities." Added Ms Carr.

More than 16,000 have signed the Fair Agenda petition against the cuts so far.

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Fair Agenda is an independent community campaigning group made up of Australians who want to see a fair and equal future for women.

YWCA Australia is a women's not for profit community based organisation that provides advocacy, programs and services for women, families and communities.