

FAIR AGENDA

PRESS RELEASE
13 January 2016

New expert report shows MYEFO PPL cuts savage – will hit nurses, ambos, teachers and retail workers hard

The government's proposed MYEFO cuts to paid time at home for new parents would affect nearly 80,000 families and hit nurses, ambulance service workers, teachers and retail workers hard.

New analysis conducted by the Women and Work Research Group at the University of Sydney, commissioned by Fair Agenda, models the impact of the Government's proposed paid parental leave cuts on key workers and their families.

The report's authors show that the government's new proposal would mean new mums and dads in the case studies modelled would face cuts equal to 4 to 6 weeks of their family's average living costs, and be left with only enough income to cover just 7 – 13 weeks of living costs while caring for their new baby. That's less than half the 26 weeks experts recommend for both a mother and newborn's health and welfare outcomes.

"Experts and families agree: paid time at home is vital to making sure working parents can afford to give their baby the best start in life in those precious early months." says Renee Carr, Executive Director of community campaigning group Fair Agenda.

"The government want to drastically cut the paid time at home available to 80,000 new parents, leaving many without support after their baby's first 18 weeks -- that's in the period before a baby can even crawl, and when having the option to breast feed and nurture your baby is critically important."

"This report shows women on low incomes will be hit particularly hard by the government's attack on the paid time parents have at home with their newborns -- and we expect it will prove just as unpopular with the community and the cross-bench as the proposed cuts Mr Hockey announced last Mother's Day."

The report details the impact of the changes on a retail worker in Tasmania, a part-time teacher in South Australia, an ambulance driver in Queensland and a part-time nurse in Victoria - and shows how many weeks worth of living expenses their families will lose if the government's cuts are passed by the Senate.

"Given the important and positive role the current system is playing, we can expect that if the government makes this cut it will force new mothers to either

drop out of the workforce entirely; or leave their babies earlier than experts say is good for health and welfare outcomes. That's assuming they can find childcare – which is already unable to meet demand for infant care” says Marian Baird, co-author of the report and one of the independent experts tasked with reviewing the current paid parental scheme.

“Access to good paid parental leave is not only critical for ensuring the next generation has a bright future; but also for tackling financial inequality faced by women.”

“We know economic disparities in women and men’s working lives often start at motherhood; and right now 99% of those accessing paid parental leave are women. That means we can expect this cut would disproportionately disadvantage women.”

So far more than 16,000 have signed the Fair Agenda petition against any cuts to paid parental leave. www.fairagenda.org/ppl

A full copy of the report can be accessed at www.fairagenda.org/ppl_report.

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About Fair Agenda

Fair Agenda is a movement of Australians campaigning for a fair and equal future for women. www.fairagenda.org/about