MEDIA RELEASE
10 July 2015

Just 6 per cent of parents happy with Paid Parental Leave (PPL) changes

Aussie parents have given the Abbott Government’s Paid Parental Leave (PPL) plans a resounding “thumbs down” in the latest survey released by leading parent advocacy group, The Parenthood, today.

The results, from a survey of over 1400 parents, reveal a staggering 94 per cent of parents firmly reject the Abbott Government’s plan to strip away access to 18 weeks of government funded parental leave for close to 79,000 parents.

Executive Director of The Parenthood, Jo Briskey, said that 86 per cent of survey respondents who had accessed PPL had been able to extend their parental leave by combining their employer and government entitlements.

“Parents aren’t trying to rort the system or exploit a legal loophole – they’re simply accessing paid parental leave as it was designed to be accessed so they can spend as much time as possible with their newborn child,” Ms. Briskey said.

“The message from parents is clear: Mr. Abbott needs to stop his attack on government PPL and recognise its purpose is to complement, not substitute, any paid leave funded by an employer.

“The government’s constant tinkering with PPL policy is also having a serious affect on the emotional wellbeing of parents with a significant proportion of respondents characterising themselves as ‘anxious’ (49%) or ‘angry’ (45%) with the proposed changes.”

Ms. Briskey said parents had also overwhelmingly rejected the “double dipper” label they had been branded with because they had been able to extend their employer funded leave with the government’s, with survey results showing that:

• 40 per cent of parents found the label “misrepresents what the government’s PPL scheme is designed to do”;
• 30 per cent of parents found the label “offensive”; and
• 26 per cent of parents found the label “implied that they or their partner had done something wrong or rorted the system.”

“The government is way off the mark claiming it needs to stop Australian parents from doing the “wrong thing” by accessing co-funded employer-government PPL” Ms. Briskey said.

“It’s wrong in fact, it’s wrong on any measure, and it’s the wrong message to send to new parents, especially mums, who just want to spend the most time they can with their newborns in those vital first six months of life without it breaking the family budget.”

“The Prime Minister has put on the record his admirable commitment to increasing PPL – it’s time that his actions lived up to his words.

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Contact – Pat McDermott 0419 173 217
For access to summary of results go to - www.theparenthood.org.au/blog