

MEDIA STATEMENT

17 August 2015

FIRST WORLD TALK, THIRD RATE DELIVERY: PAID PARENTAL LEAVE CHANGES

“First World” Parents were bemused (again) by the latest comments disregarding the importance of Paid Parental Leave (PPL).

The comments delivered by Minister Scott Morrison in response to the Human Rights Commission’s concerns that the government’s changes to PPL could breach Australia’s human rights obligations suggested that Australian mums and dads are simply complaining about a “first world problem”.

Executive Director of The Parenthood Jo Briskey said the comments yet again demonstrated that the Abbott Government’s talk on PPL didn’t match its delivery on the policy.

“At the last two elections, Australian parents were promised a world where they could get time off at their rate of pay when they have children – that’s not the world they got,” Ms Briskey said.

“This government is “first world” in its talk about PPL but third rate when it comes to delivery.”

“The Minister has basically told Australian parents that maximizing the amount of time they spend with their newborn children is not a priority for this government.

“The Minister’s outright dismissal and mockery of the concerns raised by the Human Rights Commission in relation to the proposed cuts to Paid Parental Leave are very concerning for parents, mums in particular.”

“Australia is already lagging well behind much of the developed world when it comes to levels of female workforce participation and Paid Parental Leave policy.

“The 18 weeks provided is the lowest level of parental leave support to families of any OECD country outside the USA.”

“The stripping back of our already inadequate scheme will no doubt take Australia backwards in terms of female workforce participation, maternal and infant health and wellbeing and the long-term productivity and prosperity of our nation.

“The Minister’s comments around Paid Parental Leave being a “safety net” also fly in the face of moves to improve gender equality.

“This is not about welfare it’s about providing proactive measures to ensure women, and men, can take time off work to have and raise their children without their careers or finances suffering.

“The original PPL scheme needed improvement but it laid the foundation to create the incentives for employers who do not currently offer PPL to make a start – even if it’s only one or two weeks.

“This incremental approach to increasing overall entitlements to PPL is efficient and effective in sharing the responsibility for PPL between employers, employees and the government.

END.

Contact: 0423 262 449

THE PARENTHOOD “HAVE YOUR SAY ON PPL” SURVEY

In response to the Federal Government’s announced changes to PPL The Parenthood launched a national survey to gather the parent response to these changes.

The survey was conducted online via The Parenthood’s website (www.theparenthood.org.au) in June-July 2015 – **a total of 1431 responses were collected.**

Key findings -

- There was overwhelming rejection of the Government’s position and proposed changes to Paid Parental Leave, 94 per cent of respondents did not support the changes.
- Of the total respondents who had accessed the Paid Parental Leave scheme 86 per cent had also accessed employer-funded entitlements.
- When asked what best described their use of their combined Government and Employer Paid Leave entitlements 84 per cent responded with - ‘...to extend the time of paid leave I was able to take’. Of which 62 per cent indicated it was so they could afford to stay home longer with their newborn.