



MEDIA RELEASE

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Parents appear before senate committee to fight paid parental leave

The Parenthood is appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs public hearing this morning to give evidence on behalf of the 94 per cent of Australian parents who reject the Government's plans to tear down Australia's Paid Parental Leave (PPL) Scheme.

Jo Briskey Executive Director of Australia's leading parent advocacy body The Parenthood said the main objective today was to show the Senate Committee members why they must reject the *Fairer Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill 2015* in its entirety.

"It's vital that this Committee hear first hand from parents about how the tearing down of Australia's Paid Parental Leave Scheme will have far reaching negative consequences on mums, on dads and on their kids" Ms. Briskey said.

"Today I will share the stories of close to 1500 Australian parents who participated in our national survey - 94 per cent of whom firmly rejected the Government's proposed changes to PPL.

"I'll be joined by four other parents, three mums and a dad, who have given up their time to share their concerns about the Government's attack on PPL with Senate Committee members."

"Australia's current PPL scheme is already one of the least generous in the developed world, only better than the USA who don't have a national scheme

"It amazes me that a Prime Minister who only a year ago said women should be paid 6 months at their wage is now saying to these same women you are unfairly 'double dipping' PPL entitlements and so must be stopped.

"Mr. Abbott is prepared to take Australia backwards on PPL when the rest of the developed world is moving forwards – so we're imploring the Senate Committee not to let this happen."

Rachel Green, new mother of one has joined The Parenthood in Canberra today to give evidence about what these changes mean to her and her family.

"When I heard the announcement about the proposed changes to paid parental leave, on my first Mother's Day, I was shocked, hurt and angry." Ms. Green said.

"Those first few months are critical for bonding, breastfeeding, early development and health for mums and babies.

"Nowadays, unlike in our mothers or our grandmothers day, a woman's income is more likely to be a significant proportion of the household income, so taking the time out of work to care for an infant leaves a big hole in the family budget.

"I am the primary income earner for our family so we rely on paid parental leave, if these changes go ahead it would make it impossible for someone like me to stay home with a new baby.

"It was the great promise for women of my generation, encouraged to build a career, but when we get here the system is still set up for the 1950's."

Jo Briskey said today was about ensuring the parent voice was heard.

"Today we stand up for the close to 80,000 Australian mums and dads who will be affected by these changes – the mums and dads who have been unfairly labelled "double dippers" and fraudsters" Ms. Briskey said.

"On their behalf we call on the Senate Committee Members to reject this Bill and recommend to Government that they work to improve Paid Parental Leave not tear it down"

END

Background -

The Parenthood together with four parents are scheduled to appear before the Committee first and have been given an hour to present evidence and be questioned by Committee Members.

Executive Director Jo Briskey will deliver an opening statement and summarise the results and evidence contained in The Parenthood's written submission (Submission 27).

Jo Briskey, Rachel Green and Natalie and Ben Williams will be available for interview directly following their appearance before the Senate Committee at Parliament House Canberra

To organise interview please call Jo Briskey on 0423 262 449 or Pat McDermott 0419 173 217.