



**Media Release
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Paid Parental Leave cuts: Australia's worst baby shower gift.

Women who are today just falling pregnant will be among the first hit by the reduction in Paid Parental Leave (PPL) if the Turnbull Government's proposed changes to PPL pass the Senate.

Today marks exactly eight months until 1 July 2016, the date when the cuts to PPL are expected to start, removing access to government paid leave for those who have employer-based entitlements.

"This is the kind of baby shower gift that working Mums could do without," Jo Briskey, Executive Director of parent advocacy group The Parenthood said.

"Nine months' from now mums who will have just given birth will be the first to have their paid parental leave cut short."

Results from The Parenthood's national survey on PPL of nearly 1500 Australian parents revealed that the vast majority of parents who have accessed government leave and their employer leave have done so in order to be able to afford to extend the time they are able to spend with their newborns.

"Women who have just fallen pregnant or who are planning to get pregnant soon won't be able to extend their paid leave and will miss out on precious time they may have otherwise have had with their newborns," Ms. Briskey said.

"The consequences of this attack on PPL will be profound and long lasting.

"It will force mums back to work before they're ready, inhibit the benefits of continuous breastfeeding that help bub develop and force more families to find childcare sooner increasing the cost burden on both families and the government in childcare subsidies.

"And it will halt and in fact reverse our progress towards greater gender equality in the paid workforce.

"Prime Minister Turnbull has spoken about a need for economic vision so it doesn't make sense, when Australia already has the least generous PPL scheme in the developed world (bar the USA who don't have a national PPL scheme yet), that he would want Australia to go backwards.

"Our current PPL scheme was designed to create an incentive for employers who didn't offer PPL to make a start sharing the responsibility of PPL between employer, employee and government.

"And it's been working – 50 per cent of employers in Australia now offer paid parental leave to their employees. This is a significant increase from 2002 when only 39 per cent of employers provided paid leave.

"Mr. Turnbull, the parents of Australia are saying loud and clear – do not proceed with these cuts to PPL - this is about gender equality in the workplace, improving the long-term financial security and independence for women and fundamentally this is about helping Australian parents give their children the very best start in life.

END

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