

MEDIA RELEASE
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Mums and dads unveil giant reminder of Xenophon's promise on paid parental leave

The Parenthood and Fair Agenda have today launched a joint campaign calling on The Nick Xenophon Team (NXT) not to renege on their election commitment to Aussie mums and dads to "vote to protect the current Paid Parental Leave system".

As NXT finalise their position on the Turnbull Government's changes to PPL, The Parenthood and Fair Agenda have teamed together to crowdfund a huge billboard to send a clear message to the Xenophon team 'not to *nick* our Paid Parental Leave'.

Unveiled today, the billboard which is located at the corner of busy Rundle St & Dequetteville Tce in Kent Town, is just minutes from Mr Xenophon's Adelaide office.

The groups are concerned NXT will suggest to government that eligibility for PPL be changed to be based on a means test on household income rather than on individual income as is currently the case.

Jo Briskey, Executive Director of The Parenthood, Australia's leading parents advocacy group, representing over 55,000 mums and dads said the billboard is a giant reminder to Mr Xenophon of the promise he made to parents before the last election.

"We're extremely worried that NXT might suggest significant changes to our paid parental leave system that would completely alter its design and purpose and leave thousands of parents being denied access to PPL" Ms Briskey said.

Jem Bamford, Senior Campaigner from independent community campaigning organisation Fair Agenda, representing more than 35,000 members, said the Xenophon Team made a commitment to Fair Agenda members that they wouldn't touch the current PPL system.

"Prior to the election the NXT pledged that they would *"vote to protect the current paid parental leave system."* said Ms Bamford, Senior Campaigner with Fair Agenda. "That means voting against cuts in any form - including eligibility."

Ms Briskey added: "We thought NXT would remain committed to protecting our paid parental leave, instead they have left us very worried by a suggestion to turn the system from a work and productivity payment to just another social welfare payment.

"Changing access to the government's PPL from an individual's income to a means test on household income would effectively mean a woman's access to paid parental leave would become dependent on her husband's income.

"PPL would then be like a new big baby bonus paid to the family to help with the baby rather than a recognition a parent (i.e. mum) is taking leave from work to be with their newborn in those first precious months"

The Productivity Commission who were responsible for designing the current system recognised both business and government had a responsibility in responding to a parent's need to take a period of time away from work to care for a newborn.

"The Productivity Commission determined access to a paid parental leave system that both employer and government contributed to would be based on the income of the individual taking the leave and this is what we must protect." Ms Briskey said.

“The Nick Xenophon Team’s vote on this issue will determine whether or not thousands of working parents have the time they can afford to care for their newborns cut. Fair Agenda members were thrilled by the NXT’s election commitment to protect paid parental leave. As they head into negotiations with the Government this week, our community is urging the NXT to continue doing right by working families on this issue.” Ms Bamford said.

END

Contact: Jo Briskey, Executive Director, The Parenthood - 0423 262 449
Jem Bamford, Senior Campaigner, Fair Agenda – 0466 347 109

The NXT’s election pledge to Fair Agenda [available here](#).

