



## Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

### Position on Paid Parental Leave

Paid parental leave (PPL) is recognised globally as providing significant benefits to mothers and babies, fathers and partners, and families and communities. These benefits are physical, psychological, social and economic. PPL has also been shown to contribute to reducing inequality both between lower and higher income earners and between men and women.

Research has shown that the provision of PPL, most particularly when it is government subsidised, does not negatively impact on productivity but rather, brings substantial benefits to employers. It has been shown to be affordable even in lower income countries and to contribute to countries' social and economic development.

As nurses and midwives, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) members know the health benefits for both mothers and their babies if new mums can stay at home longer. They can bond with their babies, breastfeed for longer and not be stressed about returning to work.

For these reasons, the ANMF has campaigned for extensions to Paid Parental Leave (PPL) for many years. Understandably, nurses and midwives who participated in these campaigns welcomed Tony Abbott's promised 26 week scheme in line with World Health Organisation recommendations, when it was announced in 2013.

But on Mother's Day 2015, reneging on their initial promise the Abbott Government announced they would deny access to Government funded paid parental leave for Australian women who have some paid parental leave provided by their employer through an enterprise agreement.

As a result many thousands of nurses and midwives may lose the Government PPL entitlement if they were planning to have a baby after **1 July 2016**.

The Government scheme was designed to complement paid and unpaid leave arrangements negotiated by workers and their unions to give new mums and babies as close to 26 weeks at home with their baby.

Now, some new mums will be forced to return to work earlier than planned, family budgets will be placed under pressure, and stressful decisions may be forced on families after 18 weeks or even less.

Nurses and midwives strongly support government and workplace policies which support women, families and communities and which ultimately assist us to build a better society; PPL is a key component of this policy structure.

The ANMF therefore is strongly opposed to the changes proposed by the Fairer Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill 2015 and requesting the Senate to reject this Bill.

Once the Bill is defeated, the ANMF will continue to campaign for improvements to PPL. To nurses and midwives it is straightforward, maximising PPL for Australian families means bringing out the best in our community, it simply makes sense.



At the August 2015 meeting of the ANMF's Federal Council, the following Resolution was passed unanimously by members of the Council:

*The Federal Council endorses the ANMF national position on paid parental leave, that is, 26 weeks' paid parental leave paid by the Federal Government at a primary care-giver's current wage including superannuation and that any entitlement under an industrial instrument would be additional. The Branches and Federal Office will continue to promulgate this position widely.*

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