


Paid Maternity Leave – no more pregnant pauses


Marian Baird

Justice for Women at Work
Hawke Centre Forum

17 March 2009




No justice for working women



- 45% of the workforce are women
- 70% of women in prime child bearing age at work
- **> 60% working women have no Paid Maternity Leave**
- Australia is one of only 2 developed countries without PML


Politician-speak: 'bite the bullet' and 'the barbeque stopper'



The Productivity Commission's draft recommendations

- 18 weeks paid maternity leave
- 2 weeks paid paternity leave
- At federal min. wage (\$544 pw)
- Paid by government
- Eligible to employees with av. 10 hrs pw over 12 months before birth


The Campaign Builds



- Unions (President ACTU Sharan Burrow)
- Sex Discrimination Commissioner (Liz Broderick)
- AiG (Heather Ridout)
- Women's groups
- Child advocacy groups
- Politicians across the parties
- GetUp!
- **Huge support for PML**

6 Good Reasons for PML

1. Good for babies
2. Good for working families
3. Good for grandparents
4. Good for business
5. Good for the economy
6. **Good for WOMEN – continuity of income; work attachment; superannuation; self esteem.**



Other Options?

Bargaining outcomes

- 22% EBs have PML
- But 60% in public sector, only 16% in private sector
- 14 weeks PML most common
- Industry patterns --- 26 weeks in the higher education sector.

We Need Paid Maternity Leave

- To achieve equity in policy.
- To achieve greater equity at work and at home.
- To meet international standards.
- To achieve justice for all women.



Put a smile on all our faces...

Introduce paid maternity and parental leave.

