Paid Maternity Leave – no more pregnant pauses

Marian Baird
Justice for Women at Work
Hawke Centre Forum
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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.