



Dear Kevin Rudd and the Productivity Commission

We believe that all Australian mothers should have access to **six months paid maternity leave**.

Six months paid maternity leave is essential to helping families achieve a work/life balance. Health experts agree. The World Health Organisation says that breast feeding exclusively for 6 months (provided the mother can) achieves optimal health results for babies. Six months paid maternity leave provides women with more options.

We ask for a legislated, government funded system of six months universal paid maternity leave, **available to all mothers** irrespective of whether they are casual, full time, contractors or stay at home mums. It should also be **able to be accessed by parents who are assuming the primary carer role**.

The system needs to match the changes demanded of the contemporary workforce whom experts say may have five career changes in their life time. This means that full wage replacement is needed through a system of collectively pooled contributions by employers, similar to the long service leave model that operates in the construction industry. This would involve employers paying a levy into a central fund to then be distributed as needed, much like superannuation.

This leave should include a base rate of pay, provided for by the government with full wage replacement to be aided by employers.

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