



23 January 2023

Dear Standing Committee members,

We welcome the opportunity to review the provisions of the Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill 2022. The amendment is an important step in progressing paid parental leave in Australia, including expanding the inclusiveness of entitlements. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Submission to the Standing Committee on Community Affairs

January 2023

This submission has been prepared by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at the Australian National University (ANU). Our submission is informed by our reading of the amendment bill and review of October 2022-23 budget commitments on paid parental leave.

About us

Chaired and founded by the Hon. Julia Gillard AC, the vision of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) brings together rigorous research, practice and advocacy to better understand and address the causes of gender inequality and women's underrepresentation in leadership positions. We work across sectors and countries to connect current activity in gender equality with what research evidence shows to be truly effective.

As internationally recognised experts within a world-leading knowledge institution, the Australian National University, GIWL is experienced in shaping policy development on issues of gender equality. We comprise a team of established scholars with deep knowledge of women's leadership, public policy interventions around gender, sexuality, and cultural diversity, and practical experience working with government and industry at all levels around gender equality and systems change.

Your sincerely,

Dr Miriam Glennie on behalf of GIWL ANU.

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We accept the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Bill 2022 as the first stage in the implementation of the October 2022-23 Federal budget commitments for parental leave and support the Amendment Bill. All core amendments are evidence backed and will support improvement in social and economic outcomes for Australian families. Research confirms the benefits of shared paid parental leave arrangements (Lárusdóttir et al 2022; Banister 2022), and the expansion of paid parental leave to 26 weeks will bring Australia closer in line with international leading practice (European Parliament 2020).

We recommend the Amendment Bill be accepted in its entirety, with minor adjustments to wording to remove gender binary language, which will not change the essence of the amendment or amended eligibility to entitlements, both of which are already gender inclusive. In particular, we recommend removing gender binary language, including to the stated objectives of the Act (3A.2b) from “promote equality between men and women” to “promote equality between all genders”. This adjustment will further support the aim for gender inclusiveness expressed by the Minister (first reading speech to Parliament).

As future amendments are developed to implement October 2022-23 Federal budget commitments, we propose considering options for implementing an accelerated pathway to 26 weeks paid parental leave for low income earners before implementing the full increase to family income threshold. Both parents and children in households with low income and precarious parental employment are particularly at risk of adverse economic consequences stemming from interruptions to employment; these circumstances warrant particularly urgent attention.

References:

Banister, E., & Kerrane, B. (2022). Glimpses of change? UK fathers navigating work and care within the context of Shared Parental Leave. Gender, Work & Organization.

European Parliament (2020). Maternity and paternity leave in the EU.
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698892/EPRS_ATA\(2022\)698892_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698892/EPRS_ATA(2022)698892_EN.pdf)

Lárusdóttir, Í. D., Eydal, G. B., & Arnalds, Á. A. (2022). The influence of shared parental leave and care on lone mothers' financial resources: the case of Iceland. Community, Work & Family, 1-18.