**Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review**

Submissions from women and men who have experienced discrimination at work while pregnant, or while on or on return to work after taking parental leave

**Submission Number 262**

**Part C Submission Response**

Tony Abbott's plan for 6 months fully paid maternity leave is discriminatory against low waged or unemployed mothers.  
  
Big business will transfer any costs straight onto the general public in a defacto tax as effective as the GST.   
  
So the question not asked is "Is this the most equitable way to distribute help for women to have equal opportunities for work/parenting life balance?" Under this scheme, if two mothers are pregnant, one unemployed, the other an executive, the richer mother will get paid by far the most for the contribution of having a child. Both government and business will pay them more, at the direct expense of the other poorer mothers, who will pay through the businesses shifting the cost onto consumers.  
  
Maternity leave should be provided and compulsory options should be provided for part-time re-entry without loss of superannuation and rank. Maternity insurance should be an option for women who want to be covered for time off. But the general community should not have to pay the cost of meeting the high wages of wealthier women.  
  
All mothers should receive a parenting allowance on the level of a modest wage, which could be used to live separately if need be and be a full-time mother or shared with co-carers, including fathers. Childcare, maternity leave and all other family payments (save a fortune! especially with forms about income no longer needed) could be rolled into this one equitably distributed payment - a Parenting Wage - then a better work/life balance would be possible for everybody.