

**Australians clearly want Paid Parental Leave in next budget**

A new poll to be released today has found very strong and broad community support for a national paid parental leave scheme to be funded by the Federal government in their next budget, due in May.

The national Auspoll survey has found that two out of three Australians clearly want the Federal government to use the next federal budget to fund the scheme.

The strongest support for a national government funded paid parental leave scheme was most widespread among the women and younger people who were surveyed. However, most men and those aged 45-54 were also strongly in favour of funding a scheme.

An overwhelming four out of five people who were surveyed also believed the government should fund paid parental leave instead of funding tax cuts to high salaries earners, such as those earning more than \$180,000 a year.

There was also overwhelming support (four out of five respondents) for reducing the rate of tax for Australians with children who re-enter the workforce, regardless of age, gender or family status. This is particularly relevant to many female parents who lose their government benefits and get taxed on their earnings when they re-enter the workforce. It's a combination that means, in some cases, they are only 50c better off for every dollar they earn. In effect, they are being taxed at a rate of 50%, which can be a major disincentive for re-entering the paid workforce.

The Auspoll survey was commissioned by the National Foundation for Australian Women, UnionsNSW, the Commission for Children and Young People, the Young Women's Christian Association and Catalyst Australia Incorporated. These organisations have been working together to help to raise awareness about broad support for a paid parental leave scheme.

"The findings show the depth of community support for paid parental leave. This is not surprising as families clearly want to balance time off to care for babies in those crucial early months of their development but with job and income security in the longer term," said a spokesperson for the group.

The full findings of the newly commissioned Auspoll will be released this morning and will include support for paid parental leave in the upcoming Budget, preferences for spending in the Budget, and tax simplification for mothers returning to work. Speakers at the media conference in **Committee Room S21 at Parliament House, Canberra on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 10am** will include Marie Coleman, NFAW; Roslyn Dundas, YWCA Australia; and Dr Richard Denniss, The Australia Institute.

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