

## **Productivity Commission**

### **Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave**

**Submission by the  
TEXTILE CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR  
UNION OF AUSTRALIA  
(National Office)**

## **Textile Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia Submissions to the Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave**

1. The TCFUA is an organisation of employees registered pursuant to the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* ('the Act'). Our membership consists of workers employed in the textile, clothing and footwear industry in Australia, including outworkers.
2. The TCF industry predominately employs women, particularly in the clothing sector. Unsurprisingly, therefore a vast proportion of TCFUA members are women.
3. Although there are rare examples of companies in our industry that do provide paid maternity leave, the vast majority of workers in the industry, do not receive any paid form of parental leave.
4. The TCF industry is one that can be characterised as very low paid. The formal sector is largely award reliant deriving its wage from the relevant Australian Fair Pay and Classification Scale. The highest weekly rate of pay in any relevant Pay Scale is \$657.50. There are union collective agreements in a great number of workplaces which build on and are superior to award entitlements and the wages set out in the relevant Pay Scale. However, the TCF industry is properly characterised as a low paid sector, and in the informal sector of the clothing industry, outworkers earn as little as \$3-4 an hour.
5. Due to a combined effect of the lack of paid maternity leave and low wages, many women in our industry feel pressured to return to work after having a child sooner than they would wish. They often exhaust all their other forms of leave to care for their newborn infant.
6. The TCFUA supports the submission of Unions NSW in full, and calls for the introduction of 28 weeks paid maternity leave. This entitlement must be available to all mothers or primary care givers, regardless of their employment status. Mothers or primary care givers must receive a full wage replacement (if in the paid workforce) during the leave period, as well as a right to return to work upon cessation of the leave. The right to return to work must be to his or her position prior to taking the leave.
7. Please see attached petitions signed by TCFUA members, their families and members of the public in support of this submission.

**Textile Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia**

**2 June 2008**