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Ms R Bausch  
Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and  
Parental Leave  
Productivity Commission  
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10 SEP 2008

Dear Ms Bausch

I refer to your letter of 28 February 2008 inviting the Tasmanian Government to provide a submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave and have pleasure in attaching my Government's contribution.

The Tasmanian Government supports the introduction of a paid maternity leave scheme as a key strategy in supporting parents with newborn children. A paid scheme will also assist in encouraging workforce attachment, relieve the stress of financial burden and assist families to balance work and family responsibilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry

Yours sincerely

David Bartlett MP  
Premier

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# Productivity Commission Issues Paper – Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave

August 2008



**Tasmania**  
Explore the possibilities

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# TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S INQUIRY INTO PAID MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

## INTRODUCTION

The Tasmanian Government supports the introduction of a paid maternity leave scheme. Paid maternity leave is a key strategy to improving the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies. It assists in encouraging workforce attachment, particularly in times of acute labour shortages, and ensures that parents can choose when to have a child without the added stress of financial pressures.

As one of the largest employers in the State, the Tasmanian Government 'leads by example' in terms of being a fair and equitable employer and providing a flexible, safe and rewarding workplace. State Service employees can access up to 12 weeks paid leave for new mothers; up to two years unpaid leave for new parents, adoption leave and the right to request part time work until the child goes to school. (See part 2)

Tasmania Together – the State's long term social, economic and environmental plan - has been developed by the community and sets out what Tasmanians want for themselves and their children by the year 2020. A universal paid maternity leave scheme would contribute to the achievement of *Increased work opportunities for all Tasmanians* (Goal 9) and the associated Standards – *Increase the number of secure, flexible and well-paid jobs and promote fair workplaces*.

At the Ministerial Council on the Status of Women in June 2002, the Tasmanian Government endorsed the principle of paid maternity leave for women. The Tasmanian Government also endorsed the position that Australia should work towards withdrawing its reservation in relation to paid maternity leave under the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and implement the Convention in full<sup>1</sup>.

Also, in 2002, two documents were released proposing options for a nationally paid maternity leave scheme for women. The Tasmanian Government's submission in response to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's interim paper *Valuing Parenthood: Options for Paid Maternity Leave 2002* supported, in principle, a national paid maternity leave scheme for women. The support for such a scheme was conditional on further assessment of the funding mechanism and how it would be aligned with existing government assistance and support for families.

The second document to be released was the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HEROC) report *A Time to Value: Proposal for a national scheme of paid maternity leave*. It represented the culmination of a considerable body of research and extensive public consultation which should be used to inform this Inquiry. The HREOC report proposed, as a minimum standard, a national scheme of government-funded paid maternity leave of 14 weeks.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11(2)(b) states that "State parties shall take appropriate measures ... to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances."

A paid maternity scheme also needs to be supported by business focussed policies, such as awards and enterprise agreements and other incentives (both suasive and regulatory) that encourage firms to adopt family friendly work arrangements and integrate them with any proposed paid maternity leave scheme.

Recent research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies supports the notion of family friendly business policies:

If Australia is to boost its fertility rate – or at least maintain the current level – the message that raising children has an intrinsic richness and is an enjoyable a part of life needs to be conveyed widely. To be effective, however, such a message must reflect reality. Couples need to have personal resources such as a secure income stream, a loving and stable relationship, and the skills and confidence to be parents. They also require access to community resources, including family friendly workplaces and the confidence that they have strong, continuing commitment from the community.<sup>2</sup>

The Tasmanian Government supports a universal paid parental leave scheme. This submission will focus on the benefits that will accrue from universal paid maternity leave as the corner stone of any future scheme.

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<sup>2</sup> *Fertility and family Policy in Australia*, M Gray, L Qu and R Weston, Research paper No 41, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2008, p.35

## PART I – Potential Benefits of a Paid Maternity Leave Scheme

### Objectives

A paid maternity leave scheme should:

- Be the beginning of more family friendly workplace practices;
- Provide better health and wellbeing for mothers and babies;
- Improve female labour force participation and superannuation benefits;
- Assist employers, particularly small business to attract and retain skilled staff; and
- Allow working mothers more choice in the timing of starting or extending their family.

### Family Health and Wellbeing

#### *Potential Impact on Early Childhood Development (0-2 years)*

Research indicates that children cultivate 85 per cent of their intellect, personality and skills by the age of five. The experiences children have in the early years of life set neurological and biological pathways that affect their health, learning and behaviour throughout their life.

The relationships parents have with their young children can also be a crucial determinant of later wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> The family environment is most important because young children develop through their relationships with others which, in the early years, means parents and caregivers.

#### *Health of Mother and Child*

Biomedical literature suggests there can be significant health benefits for both mothers and children from breastfeeding for a substantial period (for example, six months). Breastfeeding can be beneficial in reducing the risks of breast, cervical and ovarian cancer and also assists babies in building up their immune systems. In addition, establishing a breastfeeding regime takes time, so if maternity leave is shorter than six months, there is a need to facilitate workplace arrangements for working mothers with young children.<sup>4</sup>

A minimum period of 14 weeks leave will allow women to recover physically, psychologically and emotionally from pregnancy and birth. Australia has the highest incidence of birth by caesarean section in the world.<sup>5</sup> Women who deliver by caesarean section usually require a longer recovery period. Medical advice suggests that such women should not drive a vehicle or lift heavy objects for six weeks after giving birth.

Fatigue is also a major health concern for many new mothers.<sup>6</sup> This can be caused by repeated baby night time awakenings and a lack of physical energy.

Paid maternity leave will also allow mothers to recover and establish care and breastfeeding routines without the added stress of family budgets.

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<sup>3</sup> National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000, *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, Washington DC National Academy Press

<sup>4</sup> *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life* OECD publications p. 108

<sup>5</sup> *Paid Maternity Leave: everyone benefits*, Lisa Heap, ASU National Industrial Officer

<sup>6</sup> *A Time to Value: Proposal for a National Paid Maternity Leave Scheme*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2002 p. 54



Social policy that provides opportunities for parental support and for early childhood development provides long term benefits for society. Adverse developmental outcomes for children contribute to lifelong diminished productivity, poor mental health and crime rates. Maternity leave enhances opportunities for attachment which is critical for infant development as it underpins a secure, caring and affectionate relationship that promotes healthy development.

However, a paid maternity scheme should only be the corner stone on which to build broader family assistance and family friendly work arrangement initiatives.

### **Family Income and Parental Employment**

In Australia, most families are dependent on two incomes. The birth of a child is a time of great expense and the loss of a woman's income has a major impact on family life. Women are having babies later because the cost of child birth (including unpaid leave from work) is significant.<sup>7</sup> Providing for paid maternity leave will assist families to make the decision to have children at a time of their choosing.

Recent research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies indicates that for those employed prior to having a child, the availability of parental leave is relevant to the process of decision making about the timing of return to work. Parental leave assists in maintaining a connection to a job and, when paid, addresses financial needs. Access to leave, whether paid or unpaid, is expected to have a positive effect on the likelihood of returning to work after a birth, since it guarantees a job at the end of the period of leave.<sup>8</sup>

### **Broader Labour Market Impacts of Parental Leave**

#### *Demographic Change<sup>9</sup>*

Currently the Tasmanian population is ageing at a faster rate than any other Australian state or territory. Significant demographic change in Tasmania in recent decades – declining birth rates, increasing life expectancy and interstate migration – have resulted in an increase in both the number and proportion of people in older age groups.

The total fertility rate and the total number of births in Tasmania have been decreasing since the 1960s. Between 1972 and 2006 the number of births fell from 7 900 to 6 300 per annum. In 1971, the total fertility rate in Tasmania was 2.9 children per woman. However this rate reduced to an average 1.9 children per woman in the period 2000-2004. Total fertility rates increased in 2005 to 2.1. This compares to the Australian average of 2.9 children per woman in 1971 reducing to an average of 1.75 by 2000. By 2005, the total Australian fertility rate had risen to 1.8.

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<sup>7</sup> *Paid Maternity Leave: everyone benefits*, Lisa Heap, ASU National Industrial Officer

<sup>8</sup> *Timing of mothers' return to work after childbearing: Variations by job characteristics and leave use*, Jennifer Baxter, Research Paper No 42, Australian Institute of Family Studies July 08 p. 3

<sup>9</sup> *Demographic Change in Tasmania: challenges and opportunities*, Issues Paper, Demographic Change Advisory Council, October 2007, p.1



The Baby Bonus introduced in July 2004 has been acknowledged as having had an impact in 'nudging up slightly the birth rate' in Australia.<sup>10</sup> By enhancing financial and workforce security for women of child-bearing age, it can be expected that a paid maternity leave scheme could have a similar 'nudge' effect – by encouraging working women to start a family sooner or to extend their family. A recent study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies found that governments need to use a combination of approaches, recognising that a low fertility rate is not due to a 'lack of wanting children'.<sup>11</sup>

### *Tasmanian Perspective*

Management of staff absence and/or changes to workload does have an impact on business continuity. However, there are other factors in support of paid maternity leave that should be recognised.

For example, the current workforce demographic for the Tasmanian Department of Education reflects that there is an ageing workforce with a significant proportion of current employees aged over 45 years.

Over the next ten years the Department will actively recruit, competing with all other education jurisdictions within Tasmania, nationally and internationally. In order to successfully recruit in this environment, employment conditions must be contemporary and supportive of the needs of the workforce.

As younger employees are recruited, the provision of family friendly employment options such as paid maternity leave, the option of extended parental leave and capacity to vary workload to meet family and personal circumstances, will be a key to success in the employment market place.

### *Improving Female Workforce Participation*

Tasmania's labour force participation is currently around 60 per cent (ABS Labour Force 6202.0 April 2008). It is suggested that, because of the ageing Tasmanian population, the participation rate could fall to under 50 per cent by 2046, as compared to around 55 per cent for Australia. A similar result was obtained by the Productivity Commission in 2005, when it examined the potential impacts of Australia's ageing population<sup>12</sup>.

Of the 20 800 'persons with marginal attachment to the labour force' in Tasmania, 63 per cent were females in 2007.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, child-bearing women, those aged between 25 and 44 years, comprise more than 80 per cent of persons with marginal attachment to the workforce.

An improvement in female labour force participation would contribute over time to improved retirement incomes for women and a consequent reduction in the need to supplement income from social security.

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<sup>10</sup> Prime Minister Kevin Rudd quoted in *Pay the baby bonus as maternity leave, urge economists*, by Stephen Lunn, *Weekend Australian* 15 March 2008, p. 9

<sup>11</sup> *Fertility and Family Policy in Australia* M Gray, L Qu and R Weston, Research paper No 41, Australian Institute of Family Studies 2008

<sup>12</sup> *Demographic Change in Tasmania: challenges and opportunities, Issues Paper*, Demographic Change Advisory Council, October 2007

<sup>13</sup> ABS *Persons not in the labour Force*, 6660.0, September 2007

HEROC acknowledged the link between maintaining women's connection to the workforce and better incomes for women in retirement.

Currently Australian women workers have substantially poorer retirement incomes than men. ... Superannuation accumulations are maximised for individuals when they remain in the workforce for long, ongoing periods of time at high wages. Paid maternity leave can contribute to improving women's superannuation savings in an indirect manner by assisting women to maintain their labour force attachment and making it easier for women to combine work and family.<sup>14</sup>

While there are a variety of reasons why people do not participate in the labour force, it is suggested that a period of paid maternity leave, and to a lesser extent paid paternity leave, would maintain mothers' long-term attachment to the labour force. If mothers received a period of paid leave, followed by entitlement to access a period of unpaid leave and the right to return to their previous position on either a full-time or part-time basis, their connections to the workforce would be stronger, they would retain their skills and knowledge, their productivity would be maintained and their workforce participation would continue.

#### *Impacts on Employers*

Anecdotal evidence indicates that, at present, most private sector employers in Tasmania do not provide a formal paid maternity scheme for female employees (see Part 3).

Small to medium sized organisations find it more difficult than larger organisations to offer significant periods of paid maternity and parental leave as they have more difficulty meeting or passing on the associated costs. Consequently, in a tight labour market small to medium organisations are likely to have problems attracting and retaining skilled staff.

Large companies find it easier to manage flexibility in hours than do, for example, many small and medium sized enterprises without the financial and organisational capacity to implement family friendly workplace practices.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, many women graduate towards working for family friendly enterprises and/or sectors, particularly the public sector. However, doing so may reduce maternal career advancement and earnings.

There is no doubt that paid maternity leave increases the likelihood of new mothers returning to work. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in March 2008 showed that two thirds of those not in the labour force who want to work are women, most of whom are mothers. Paid maternity leave is an essential part of holding on to staff and avoiding the high costs of recruitment and replacement. Since introducing paid maternity leave schemes, General Motors Holden and Westpac have had return to work rates of nearly 90 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *A Time to Value: Proposal for a National Paid Maternity Leave Scheme*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2002, pp 67-68

<sup>15</sup> *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life* – OECD 2007 p. 186

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.theage.com.au/news/opinion/maternity-scheme-is-overdue/2008>

### *Tasmanian Perspective*

Within the Tasmanian Department of Education offering paid maternity leave to current employees has resulted in significant benefits to eligible staff. Previously, women wishing to take maternity leave could do so without pay, or by utilising accrued paid leave – sick leave, long service leave and recreation leave. Many teachers, who could not use recreation leave unless the maternity leave coincided with school holiday periods, used most if not all of their accrued sick leave to access paid leave. As a result, these women were often unable to accrue useful amounts of sick leave into the future as the majority would return to work on a part time basis and/or would find that the needs of young children resulted in them using their annual allocation of sick leave each year.

For this reason, female teachers taking paid sick leave to fund maternity leave were often disadvantaged over a long period of time in comparison to other teachers able to continue to accrue sick leave throughout their careers.

With the introduction of paid maternity leave, female employees now do not have to choose between using existing leave options or going without pay. They are able to continue to accrue and access sick, recreation and long service leave.

### *Improving Employed Parents' Welfare*

Some businesses, in an attempt to attract and retain skilled staff, are offering employment conditions that allow parents to better balance their work and family responsibilities. While it is appropriate that individual businesses and employers accept primary responsibility for attracting and retaining skilled staff, government can play a significant role in building and maintaining skills in the labour market. The Tasmanian Government's Employer of Choice Awards encourage, celebrate and reward workplaces that adopt modern work practices and promote a work-life balance as part of a strategy to attract and retain skilled workers.

Additionally, the Tasmanian Government's Better Workplaces Employer Resource Kit guides employers on adopting modern employment and workplace practices that will in turn attract and retain skilled staff. The kit includes case studies, which illustrate 'employer of choice' initiatives, flowcharts, checklists, templates, fact sheets and reference points for information and advice on employers' legal responsibilities.

## **Summary**

Paid maternity leave is one way to address the inequality experienced by women workers relative to men as a result of childbirth. It should ease the financial burden on families, assist with breastfeeding and care regimes and increase the likelihood of mothers returning to the workforce.

The Tasmanian Government supports a national paid maternity leave scheme which ensures small and medium businesses are not burdened with costs they cannot afford, while at the same time assisting in the retention of skilled and valuable workers.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to support its workforce with family friendly policies including 12 weeks paid maternity leave.

A universal paid maternity leave scheme would have broader social and economic benefits, such as more vibrant and healthy communities, increased employment and a greater proportion of employees with work arrangements that accommodate their work and family responsibilities.

It is recognised that a number of issues remain to be resolved in implementing such a national scheme, including eligibility and the level of benefit entitlements and arrangements to ensure small businesses are not disadvantaged.

## PART II – Parental leave in the Tasmanian State Service

As one of the State's largest employers, the Tasmanian Government provides its in-principle support for a federally-funded universal scheme providing paid maternity leave of 14 weeks. This is subject to there being active engagement between stakeholders and government in an appropriate forum to resolve a number of outstanding issues, such as:

- other elements added to the scheme (such as paternity leave);
- the funding mechanism;
- how such a scheme would be aligned with existing government transfers (payments and assistance for families in Tasmania);
- consideration of a qualifying period for any employer funded component ;

Part I of this paper provides comment on the anticipated benefits of improved parental leave entitlements for Tasmanian society and its economy, including examples from within Tasmanian Government agencies. Much of this comment should be read as applying to the Tasmanian State Service, which comprises over 28,000 Tasmanians who work diligently to serve their State and their communities.

The following comments provide additional information in relation to the Tasmanian State Service.

### Parental Leave Entitlements

The Tasmanian Government 'leads by example' in terms of being a fair and equitable employer and providing a flexible, safe and rewarding workplace. For several years now, State Service employees have been able to access generous parental leave benefits and during that time there has been an increase in the proportion of female employees in the State Service (now over 68%, predominately working in the fields of health and education).

Employee entitlements for parental leave are based in industrial awards and agreements under the *Industrial Relations Act 1984*. At present, after a qualifying period of 12 months continuous service, State Service employees may take advantage of a range of parental leave benefits under the provisions of the *General Conditions of Employment Award* (a key public sector award), including:

- up to 12 weeks paid leave for new mothers,
- up to 2 years unpaid leave for new parents,
- adoptive leave and
- the right to request part-time work until the child goes to school.

A summary of the main elements of the *General Conditions of Employment Award* entitlements are outlined in Table 1 below and the full award clause is included at Attachment 1.

Table 1: General Conditions of Employment Award Parental Leave Entitlements

Entitlement	Role	Details
Unpaid leave	Parents	52 weeks on a shared basis in relation to the birth or adoption* of a child, with the right to return to the job afterwards. * This applies to children up to 5 years of age.
Simultaneous leave	Spouse	1 week (including 1 day paid leave for the partner to attend the birth)
	Adoptive parents	3 weeks at the time of placement of the child.
Additional unpaid leave	Parents	Right to request extension of period of (unpaid) simultaneous leave up to 8 weeks
		Right to request extension of the period of unpaid leave up to 104 weeks
Paid adoptive leave	Primary care giver	12 weeks (amount taken reduces amount of unpaid leave available by same amount).
Paid maternal leave	Mother	12 weeks in relation to the birth of a child (amount taken reduces amount of unpaid leave available by same amount).
Transfer to a safe job or early leave	Mother	If medically necessary and the employer deems it practicable, transfer to a safe job.
		If medically necessary but the employer deems it impracticable to transfer to a safe job, early commencement of parental leave.
Special maternity leave	Mother	For pregnancy-related illness or medical procedure : Any paid personal leave to which she is entitled and such further unpaid special maternity leave as is medically required (where continuous with commencement of maternity leave, amount taken reduces the amount of parental leave available by same amount).
		For pregnancies ending at or after week 20 and other than by the birth of a living child: (not earlier than 20 weeks before the expected date of birth) up to 52 weeks (including the 12 weeks paid maternity leave), as medically necessary.
Communication about workplace change	Parents	Employer to take reasonable steps to communicate with the employee about decisions to introduce significant change that will affect the employee.



Entitlement	Role	Details
Return to work part-time	Parents	<p>Right to request part-time work until the child reaches school age, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working on different days or at different times, or both; and/or</li> <li>• working on fewer days or for fewer hours or both, and/or</li> <li>• undertaking different duties at the same classification.</li> </ul>

### Uptake of Parental Leave in the Tasmanian State Service

As a family-friendly employer, the Tasmanian Government has worked with its employees to establish a large number of employment policies and programs that facilitate a more modern and flexible approach to the management of work and family commitments. Tasmanian Government agencies report annually on the uptake of flexible work practices by employees, including the number of granted paid maternity leave, unpaid parental leave or adoption leave, as summarised in (Table 2). The uptake of unpaid parental leave before 2007-08 shown in the table, includes an unknown incidence of parental leave taken by fathers/partners of mothers and by spouses/partners of adoptive mothers and fathers.

Table 2: Uptake of Parental Leave in the Tasmanian State Service 2001-02 to 2006-07<sup>17</sup>

Type of Parental Leave	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Paid maternity leave <sup>18</sup>	430	441	484	507	470	515
Unpaid parental leave <sup>19</sup>	n.a. <sup>20</sup>	133	n.a. <sup>21</sup>	388	210	288
Adoption leave <sup>22</sup>	1	7	5	6	6	8

### Estimates of Future Demand

An estimate of the number of State Service employees who become mothers in a particular year can be calculated, using data on the size of the State Service female population (headcount) and age-specific fertility rates. Table 3 (over page) shows an estimate for 2007, using Tasmanian age-specific fertility rates.

This type of data, together with labour cost data, could assist Tasmanian Government agencies to estimate the future direct costs of proposed changes to paid maternity leave. However, similar data in respect to State Service paid paternity leave, is not yet available.

<sup>17</sup> Source: State Service Commissioner's Annual Reports 2001-02 to 2006-07

<sup>18</sup> 12 weeks paid. A 12-month qualifying period for paid maternity leave applies.

<sup>19</sup> Maternity leave only until 2004-05, then parental leave.

<sup>20</sup> No data

<sup>21</sup> No data

<sup>22</sup> 12 weeks paid (6 weeks before 2004) and 46 weeks unpaid (from June 2002).



Table 3: Total Expected Number of Births to Female State Service Employees in 2007 (Using Tasmanian Age-Specific Fertility Rates)

Age Range	2006 Fertility Rate <sup>23</sup>	State Service Females in Age Range	Expected Births for State Service Mothers in a Year
19 years and under	26.6	42	1.1
20–24 years	81.7	717	58.5
25–29 years	127.3	1574	200.3
30–34 years	121.8	1697	206.6
35–39 years	55.7	2285	127.2
40–44 years	9.1	2843	25.8
45 years and over <sup>24</sup>	0.3	10258	3
Expected Births to State Service Mothers per Year			622.5

## Summary

The Tasmanian Government as a major employer of Tasmanian parents supports the key findings of Part I of this paper.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to be a family-friendly employer, supporting its workforce and leading by example with a comprehensive range of parental leave entitlements. The Tasmanian Government supports a federally funded universal paid parental leave scheme, which includes paid maternity leave of 14 weeks, to be more fully developed in consultation with stakeholders.

<sup>23</sup> Data is from the ABS Births collection (ABS cat. no. 3301.0). Refer to catalogue's explanatory notes at the ABS website. Fertility is defined as the number of live births in a population relative to its size. Age-specific fertility rates are the number of live births in a year to mothers at each age per 1 000 of the female population of the same age.

<sup>24</sup> ABS data for the 45–49 year age group includes births for women 50 years and over, as does the Tasmanian data shown (three births).

### PART III – Parental Leave in selected Tasmanian companies – Snapshot as at May 2008

In line with the table displayed on page 21 of the Productivity Commission report (entitled "*Examples of paid parental leave in Australia*"), a small scale and informal 'industry scan' of the private sector was undertaken by contacting six prominent Tasmanian publicly listed companies and obtaining information on their parental leave entitlements.

Information received from these six Tasmanian companies indicated that there were no paid maternity leave provisions available to women. However, all six companies provided the option of 52 weeks unpaid maternity leave which appear consistent with minimum parental leave provisions in the Tasmanian *Industrial Relations Act 1984* and/or the Commonwealth *Workplace Relations Act 1996*.

Under a Collective Agreement with one organisation contacted, an employee entitled to parental leave may request the employer to allow the employee:

- To extend the period of simultaneous unpaid parental leave up to a maximum of eight weeks;<sup>25</sup>
- To extend the period of unpaid parental leave provided (i.e. 52 weeks) for a further continuous period of leave not exceeding 12 months;
- To return from a period of parental leave on a part time basis until the child reaches school age;

to assist the employee in reconciling work and parental responsibilities.

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<sup>25</sup> The maximum period of simultaneous leave allowed between parents, as prescribed in the above Acts, is one week, with the remaining 51 weeks allowed for fathers only if they are the primary caregiver. The other surveyed companies appear to allow employees this one week period of simultaneous leave.