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Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City, ACT 2601

Attention Committee Secretary,

The Premier's Council for Women would like to extend its congratulations to the Productivity Commission for the extensive work that it has already completed and continues to undertake during the Inquiry Into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave. The strong response to the inquiry from the public and media demonstrates the significance of paid parental leave in Australia.

The draft report clearly shows that universal paid parental leave is a crucial element in supporting women's health, strengthening women's attachment to the workforce and advancing gender equity. As you will note from our previous submission, these are the very policy objectives the Premier's Council for Women believes universal paid parental leave will achieve.

The Council would like to commend the Productivity Commission for taking a bold stance on this issue by recommending paid maternity leave standards higher than those of the International Labour Organisation Convention 103. In particular, the draft report's recommendation of eighteen weeks of paid maternity leave makes a clear statement about the importance of paid maternity leave despite the current uncertainties of the economic climate.

While the Premier's Council for Women strongly supports the draft recommendations, we believe the draft report is only a starting point in policy development regarding parental leave. It is our hope that the recommendations of the Productivity Commission will lead Australia to conform with internationally accepted parental leave practices.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Mikan".

Pat Mikan
Chair
Premier's Council for Women