

I would like to commend the Productivity Commission on its interim report and note that the information (especially the statistics and charts etc,) enables a very comprehensive picture of the issues to be obtained.

However, I do believe that the report is flawed because of over-emphasis on what is seen as the second objective i.e. attachment to the paid workforce at the expense of the first well being of mother and child. As well I believe that the third objective (interpreting the trends in society) has not taken in the whole of the research- especially that relating to the problems associated with excessive child care in the hands of third parties.

This has led to the recommendation that mothers (usually mothers although it could be the fathers) who elect to care for their own children on a full-time basis being entitled to less payment (approx \$4,000.00) than those who return to paid work.

The Productivity Commission has totally failed to take into account the high productivity of the mother who performs the necessary work of nurturing and raising her own children. There is NOTHING more productive than the good care of children – without them we would have no future. Yet such care is only considered “productive” if done by third parties. Again and again we are told by “experts” that children as young as three are stressed by the fast life style we lead – that they need “medication” to cope with speed of their lives.

Yet the Productivity Commission sees that outcome as deserving a reward. If a young mother is in two minds about going back to paid employment she can be BRIBED by an extra \$4,000 payment.

As mentioned earlier the differential in actual payment is quite discriminatory.

It is also divisive as the mother who decides to forego income and possible promotion is seen as choosing the “lesser” job and NOT MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY – whereas in taking in the overall picture, she is making a similar or (in my opinion) a better choice both for her children and the community.

I also consider that the proposed method of payment for paid maternity leave is deceptive. It pretends that the money is coming from the employer (and therefore not tainted with the word WELFARE) whereas its source is the same as that for the Baby Bonus (now to re-named Maternity Payment).

L. Smyth

If all mothers were to be paid the same (based on \$544.00 Per week) then some anomalies such as reduced payments for "junior" workers, the "ten hours per week for a year" requirement for eligibility would not be relevant. Also seasonal workers would qualify.

One of the ironic recommendations is that NO MOTHER who continues to look after her children full-time would receive the \$544.00 BUT the father of the child would receive two weeks paternity payment - whether the mother returns to paid work. In the age of social inclusion the mother suffers exclusion yet her giving birth creates all the entitlements for OTHERS.

One reads in the media that women are still not valued in the corporate world - yesterday "The Australian" reported that women in senior executive positions, on boards etc. are well behind statistically.

Until the unique characteristic of women to give birth (it does not seem that many men will follow an American's example of a donated womb and subsequent birth) and motherhood is recognized and valued then all subsequent contributions from women will suffer from this basic failure of recognition.

I believe that in correcting its interim Report the Productivity Commission should re-examine the terms of reference and give proper emphasis to all three main objectives. The fear of governments appear to have of parents raising their own children - and only rewarding parents when they hand their children over to child care, nursery schools, pre-schools, schools, all sorts of third parties SHOULD NOT BE REFLECTED IN FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

Members of the Productivity Commission should look[†] re-examine the proposed

Differential in Maternity Payments

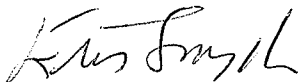
By looking to

Deficiency (in following the three main objectives)

Discrimination (against one set of mothers)

Division (between those in the paid work and those who work full time at nurturing their children)

Deception (the pretence that the monies to pay maternity leave by being paid through the employer do not come from the tax payer as does the baby bonus).



ERIS SMYTH OAM B.COMM.ALAA.