



# MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 27 May 2015

## Unions will work with business over unfair cuts to paid parental leave

Unions will work together with business to combat attempts by the Abbott Government to strip away paid parental leave from 80,000 Australian families.

Around a thousand union delegates from around the country have voted to work with employers, community and women's groups to lobby MPs to oppose any reduction in employees' access to the government paid parental leave scheme at the triennial ACTU Congress in Melbourne today.

The Congress also voted to defend all employees' rights to access the government scheme as well as any entitlements achieved in bargaining, including working with employers to ensure they are able to continue their commitment to supporting women and employees with caring responsibilities.

The current universal paid parental leave scheme introduced by the previous government was designed as a basic scheme for parents that would be complemented by more generous employer schemes taking women's wages up to their full salary.

To suggest that women are double dipping completely misrepresents the nature and design of the scheme.

Under the Abbott Government's budget proposal almost half of new mothers will be left without access to government-funded paid parental leave.

Access to paid parental leave is beneficial for families, provides support for women with caring responsibilities and will encourage women's participation in the workforce.

A government that genuinely has the interests of Australian families at heart would not hold them to ransom in this way.

Australian Unions support a paid parental leave scheme that provides 26 weeks leave at full pay including superannuation payments.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"Unions and business have differing opinions on many issues but paid parental leave isn't one of them.

Over coming weeks we will discuss in more detail how we can work together to oppose cuts that will leave almost half of new mothers without access to government funded paid parental leave.

To say women are double dipping fundamentally misrepresents the paid parental leave scheme which was always intended to complement employer based entitlements.

A government that cares about supporting Australian families wouldn't force an impossible choice between parental leave, family support payments and childcare upon them."

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