

August 17, 2022

Committee Secretary  
Education and Employment Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Secretary

***Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2022***

The National Council of Single Mothers and their Children Inc (NCSMC) congratulates the Government on the swift and progressive amendment to the Fair Work Act to provide 10 days of paid family and domestic violence as part of the National Employment Standards.

**Who we are**

An organisation dedicated to single mothers and a platform whereby both the community and the Government can communicate. NCSMC can comment on policy and legislation and ensure that the lived experience is available and presented. NCSMC provides information, referrals, and assistance to single mothers through our electronic platforms. In the past year we have responded to tens of thousands individual requests whilst our information post can reach up to 100,000+ per week. One of our greatest strengths is our expertise and commitment in working with and for the advancement of single mother families affected by economic insecurity, hardship, and/or gendered violence.

Our expertise is derived from our own research, collaboration with others and steeped in the rich but often tragic experience of women who have sought our service. It is from this unique but clear vantage point that we present our submission.

**Recommendation**

Implement the Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2022 in its entirety.

NCSMC shares the positive sentiment as expressed by women and we strongly welcome the extension of the paid leave entitlement to casual employees and that full entitlement will be accessible from the commencement of employment.



**National Council for Single Mothers and their Children Inc.**

Eliminate and respond to violence, hardship and inequality for single mothers and their children

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*This is brilliant news. I accessed FV leave in 2018 when I worked for Victorian government. It was beyond helpful. It allowed me space to not worry about work/finances when so much else was going on, to be able to focus on looking after me & my kids, navigate the court system & seek support pathways to recovery. That it is now available for casual & part-time workers is such a big step.*

*I read this with mixed feelings. So pleased that it is happening but too late for me (2019) I left my work; I did not know how to tell them about the violence or how scared I was every day. It got worse, we got help from the police and I just left. I was not making great decisions, not thinking about the future. I was in full survival mode.*

*Trying hard. It was the best job and I have not found the courage to talk to them again. This would have changed my thinking, our lives really. I feel I let them and myself down.*

In closing we seek that the Committee recommends a review of the Crisis Payment within the Social Security System regarding its fit for purpose. Most notably the 7-day application timeframe. Financial safety is a key component for women to protect them and their children. It is our hope that the advances made within the National Employment Standards can be replicated for women who are locked out of paid employment.

*We left in a hurry. We could all go and live with my parents. It meant changing schools (uniforms – new bus routes – new friends). It takes a toll on children. I pretended that we were on an adventure. I was trying to get legal advice, trying to stop him from draining our bank account. I started to look for financial assistance. It was 14 or 15 days after the violence when I phoned Centrelink – not eligible for anything – not the crisis payment. I cried; I had \$7.24 in my account – it was meant to last me a week until family payments. He would not allow me to work.*

Warm Regards,

Terese Edwards



Chief Executive Officer