

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternal, Paternal and Parental Leave

Analysis of submissions

A total 243 Submissions are recorded on the website, but 1 does not have the submission attached.

A significant proportion of submissions, 25 per cent, did not make specific proposals for duration of paid leave, rate of payment or funding model. Some, such as those from Whitehouse, Baird and Charlesworth, AIFS, and the Centre for Women's Studies & Gender Research provided research findings. Those from Commonwealth agencies and Departments did not make any proposals but provided information.

Many submissions provided general support for the idea of paid parental leave but without specifying all parameters. A very small number (6) were completely opposed.

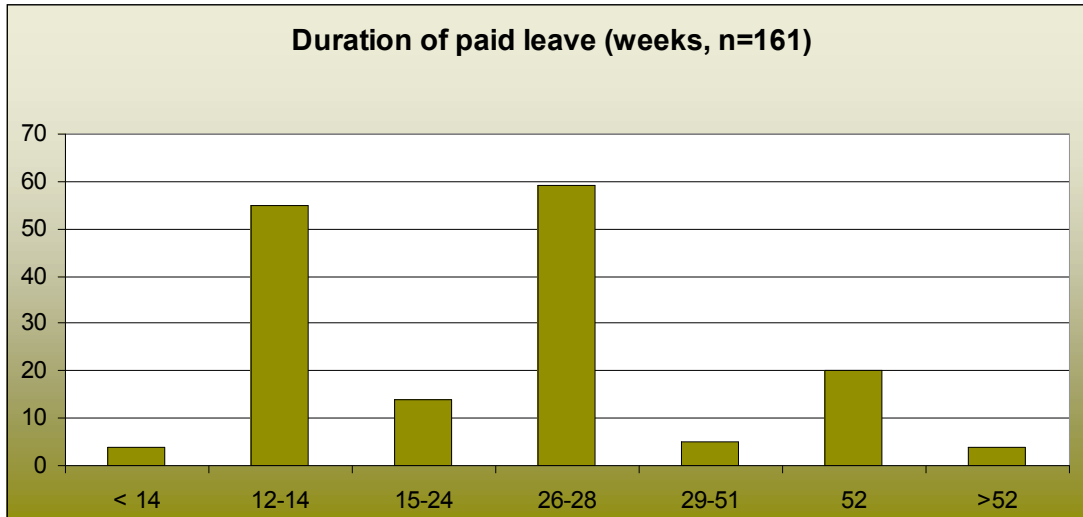
A very high proportion supported parental leave. Some proposed all leave be exchangeable between partners, more proposed separate periods of maternity and paternity leave plus a shared period. Many included same sex partners and some other relatives, where the mother was unpartnered.

A couple of anti-population growth groups proposed leave be confined to 2 children.

Employer organisations all opposed any imposition on employers, with the exception of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, which supported a levy. Employers were divided between opposition to any paid parental leave, including making it a non-allowable matter in industrial negotiations, and support for government funded 14 weeks at the minimum wage. A few employers wrote to describe their own schemes, and one wrote supporting the levy.

Of the 166 submissions specifying duration of paid leave, the pattern was as follows:

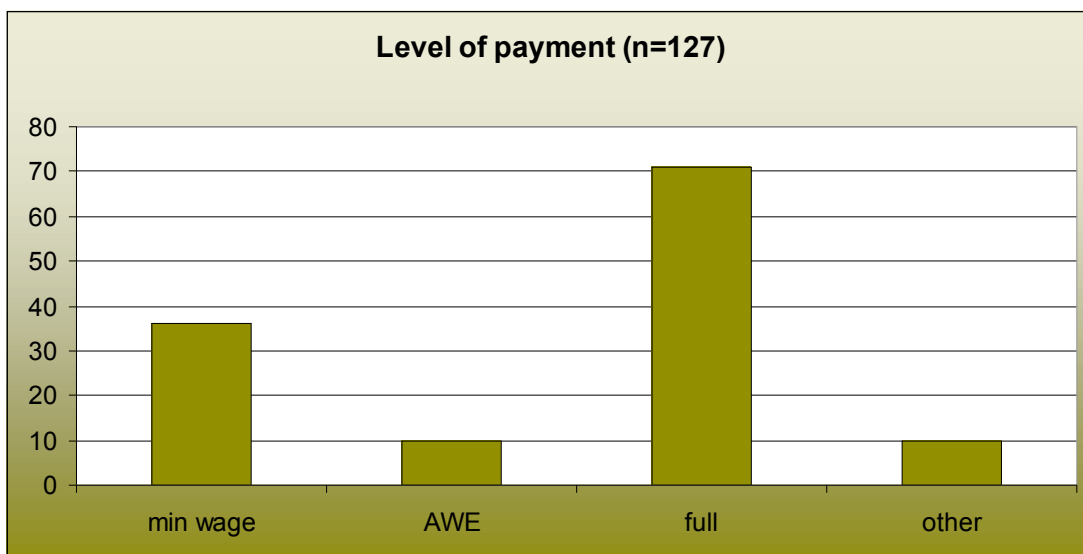
Duration (weeks)	Number	% of total	
< 14	4	2%	
12-14	55	34%	9 'increase in stage 2', 1 said '14 to 26 weeks'
14-24	14	9%	
26-28	59	37%	7 'increase in stage 2', 4 said '26-52 weeks'
29-51	5	3%	
52	20	12%	1 preferred 104 weeks
>52	4	2%	
total	161		



Submissions varied on whether the level of payment they recommended included the existing baby bonus or were in addition to it. They also varied on whether the amount was to be paid universally or represented the upper limit of replacement of former wages. A very high proportion specifically included superannuation contributions. Of the 127 specifying the level at which payment should be provided, the pattern was as follows:

Level	Number	% of total
min wage	34	27%
AWE	9	7%
full	74	58%
other	10	8%
Total	127	

1 said replacement up to \$100,000, 1 said replacement up to the maximum tax threshold

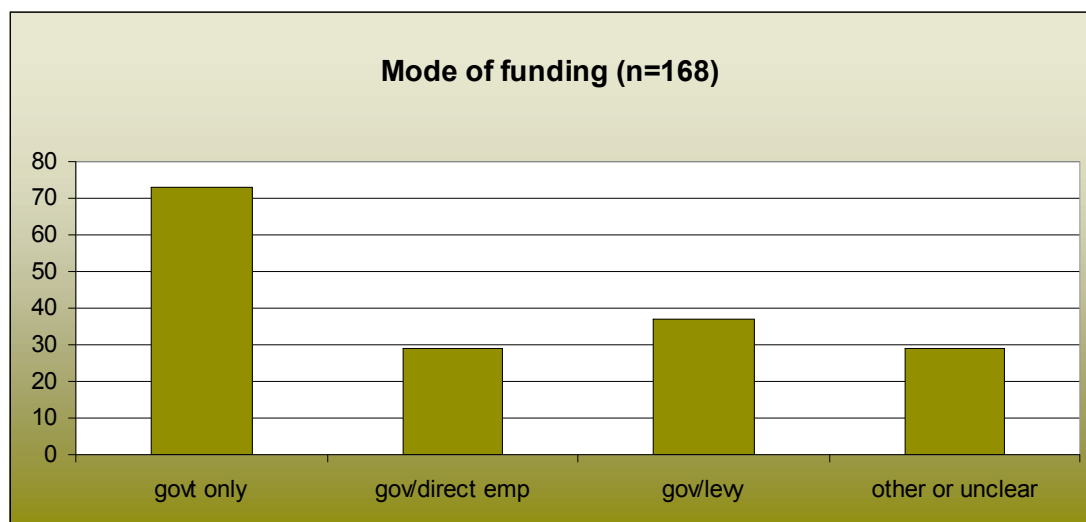


Of the 168 discussing funding models, many were unclear and others suggested more than one model. Some talked of an employer contribution without specifying how that

would be mandated. The pattern was as follows, including those who put forward more than one model for funding:

Model	number	%	
Govt only	73	43%	
Govt & employers	75	45%	Inc 9 where employer form unclear
<i>govt/direct employer</i>	29	17%	
<i>govt/levy</i>	37	22%	4 said 'employer & employee' levy
Direct employer payment only	9	5%	Includes mandatory only
Levy only	2	1%	1 said levy on all taxpayers
Other	9	5%	HECS, super etc
Total	168		

Of those where a specific model was more or less clear, the numbers proposing a Government and mandatory employer combination were slightly higher than those proposing a fully Government funded model. However the former group were divided between direct employer paid leave and a levy. Many who did not support employer contributions expressed concern that direct employer payment, as for sick leave, would lead to discrimination against women, while employer groups in particular were concerned about its impact on small business.



Twenty-five proposed the minimalist model: 14 weeks, Government funded at the minimum wage, without employer contributions. These included 6 employer organisations (Australian Industry Group, ACCI, NSW Business Chamber, Chamber of Commerce & Industry WA, Commerce Queensland, Association of Consulting Engineers Australia), Unions WA, WACOSS, Business and Professional Women, Women's Action Alliance, FECCA, the SDA, Senator Stott Despoja and Lovering.

Twenty-eight proposed the NFAW model: Government and levy funded at full income replacement (apart from 4 who proposed high level caps). Twenty-three of these proposed 26-28 weeks. These included 7 union groups (Unions NSW, RTBU, CFMEU, Queensland Nurses Union, Australian Nursing Federation, Independent Education Union Of Australia, PSA NSW), other organisations including NFAW, Family Day Care Australia, UnitingCare, Victorian Women's Trust, Queensland Working Women's Service, Australian Women Lawyers, and 7 individuals. The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the YMCA proposed 14-16

weeks, and the Working Women's Centre SA, The NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People and Radical Women proposed 52 weeks. Others supporting the levy had slightly different models.

Twelve supported the ACTU model: 14 weeks, government payment to the minimum wage and employer top up to full income replacement. These included 6 union groups (ACTU, Unions WA, Unions Tasmania, Queensland Council of Unions, AMWU and the Australian Services Union). Other groups were EMILY's List, Refugee Advice and Casework Service, JobWatch and PolMin, and the Union of Australian Women (18 weeks). A further 11 supported this funding model for 26-28 weeks, and seven supported other durations (3 of whom specified 75-85% of full replacement). Taken together 30 submissions supported a combination of Government funding to the minimum wage and mandatory employer top-up to replacement or near replacement wages.

Four proposed various models around superannuation, based on individual entitlement to leave which could be rolled into super or used for other forms of leave if not for parental leave. Five supported income contingent (HECS-style) loans, some alone and others as a possible avenue for taking extra parenting leave. One wrote specifically opposing that.