

Tuesday, 15 June 2010

25,000 Australians call on Senate to make history this week with a final vote for paid parental leave

More than 25,000 Australians have signed a community petition urging the Senate to vote this week in support of the nation's first Paid Parental Leave scheme, so it can be up and running by the start of next year.

The petition will be delivered today (Tuesday) by parents and children to federal MPs in Canberra.

"No senator or party leader should underestimate the strength of the general community's desire to have a scheme in place as soon as possible," said ACTU President Sharan Burrow.

"In just 4 weeks, 25,400 people right across the nation have signed this petition.

"From Townsville to Albany, from country and city, from a range of communities and workplaces, the message to all MPs is very clear.

"It's time to end 30 years of inaction and time to stop playing the politics of recent months that could end up delaying or jeopardising the proposed 18-week, government-funded scheme.

"We need to join the rest of the world by voting this week for a Paid Parental Leave scheme that will ease the financial and emotional pressures of the first crucial months of looking after a newborn baby."

Working mother Ilana Crawford said a Paid Parental Leave scheme will give her and her partner the financial security to have another child and allow her to return to work in good time and good health:

"We have put off having another child because we just couldn't afford it. With my first child I had to return to work before I was ready. I was scared of losing my job, but going back too soon badly undermined my health," Ms Crawford said.

"This petition shows that thousands of others have experienced the same strains and we call on all politicians to vote for the scheme this week."

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