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CAREERS OR SIMPLE DOLLARS AND CENTS

Simplifying women into categories of 'career-minded' versus 'non-career orientated' as an argument for ignoring how an extension to paid parental leave will be accessed by would-be mothers, is painting an incorrect picture of the schemes usage and the drivers behind it, believes the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ).

'Career-minded women' frequently have higher incomes and therefore are better positioned to save in advance of having a baby. These savings support women to utilise the full one-year period available to them under the parental leave scheme. Added to this, drivers such as socio-economic grouping often tend to see partnerships between people of the same or similar standing. The 'career-minded' women have 'career-minded' husbands or partners, who can also carry the household over the short-term.

Women, who are classified as having 'low-paid, non-career' jobs, are more likely to see themselves having to return to work after the paid parental leave period has expired, simply to make ends meet. Again the coupling across the same socio-economic grouping influences the make-up of these families.

"For many women the driver for staying at home for one-year to raise a baby rests on finances," says Elizabeth Bang, NCWNZ National President. "A lot of 'career-minded' women go into their pregnancy with every intention of quickly returning to work once the PPL entitlement runs out, only to find that they actually like being at home with their baby. It is an age-old-known fact amongst women that when a woman transitions from being childless to being a Mum... her whole world changes along with her priorities. "

"Extending paid parental leave to better support growing families, to enable that bonding in the first year of life, to encourage our future workforce is a smart social-economic move," says Elizabeth Bang. "If economic policy is to be set out in the lead up to the Election, then women demand that PPL be a component of how we will build this nation's economy."

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