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Extending PPL Will Help Families

At the recent National Meeting the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) voted to support extending Paid Parental Leave to 12 months which is within the proposal recently released by the Families Commission.

“Unpaid parental leave for 12 months is already enshrined in New Zealand law. NCWNZ is seeking an extension to the period that is paid from the current 14 weeks to 12 months,” said Christine Low, National President NCWNZ.

Although New Zealand has taken steps to increase the eligibility of paid parental leave (PPL) and extended eligibility to self employed women, New Zealand is still not in compliance with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention 2000 183.

“At the present time the major area where New Zealand is not compliant is the level of payment received under the current Paid Parental Leave scheme. The Convention states payment needs to be two thirds of the average wage. Currently in New Zealand it is 46 percent of average earnings. Another area where we are in non compliance is that many seasonal and casual workers are not eligible for paid parental leave,” said Christine Low. In a recent survey it was found that it takes 80 percent of one median income to pay the mortgage on a median priced house.

“It is recognised that a majority of families find it a necessity to have two incomes just to maintain family living standards, not a lifestyle choice as some would like to believe,” Christine Low said.

“The extension of Paid Parental Leave needs to be considered by all Parties as an Election issue,” concluded Christine Low.

The Families Commission is recommending 13 months Paid Parental Leave that includes a component to ensure that both parents can spend time at home during the important first year of life of their child.

Further Information:

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