

## SUPPORTING PARENTS WITH PAID MATERNITY LEAVE

### Position:

- FAMILY FIRST supports paid maternity leave provided it is balanced and affordable. Paid maternity leave could provide many parents with more choice about how to structure their paid work and family life;
- FAMILY FIRST recognises that many families are struggling to make ends meet and many mothers in particular are under financial pressure to return to work soon after their child is born;
- FAMILY FIRST believes the issue of balancing work and family is not about getting more people into the paid workforce or increasing their working hours. It is about finding a way for parents to do the best for their kids and make ends meet without having to sacrifice so much precious family time;
- FAMILY FIRST understands that most parents in the paid workforce want to spend more time with their children. Family life disappears so quickly. Parents work hard to support their family but increasingly feel the strain of long hours away from home;
- FAMILY FIRST believes family policy should be child-focused and not market or adult-focused. Many policies promoted in the name of the family are in fact market-friendly rather than family friendly;
- FAMILY FIRST believes that child care cannot replace the important role of parents, particularly for infants under two years old. This means there is an important role for policy to encourage parents to care for their infant children, which is also what most parents want. This objective might be helped by paid maternity leave;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned that paid maternity leave does not undermine the status of stay-at-home parents, who already make a financial sacrifice to take on the important work of raising children;

- FAMILY FIRST is also concerned that any paid maternity leave scheme should not place undue burdens on small businesses. Most small businesses are family businesses and run on tight margins.

**Actions:**

- FAMILY FIRST is calling for families which have a third or subsequent child to be rewarded with a \$10,000 Bumper Baby Bonus, to encourage more children. FAMILY FIRST's \$10,000 Bumper Baby Bonus would be paid fortnightly over six months, meaning families would receive \$769 every fortnight.