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Don't trust the Coalition on Paid Parental Leave, what glitters isn't always gold

ACTU president Ged Kearney said parents and especially women should be extremely wary of the Coalition's trumped up paid parental scheme policies, "This policy would dismantle well-functioning agreements between business and employees and create a one-strike-and-fold opportunity for the Coalition to dismantle the scheme should they come to power," Ms Kearney said.

Tony Abbott said he was determined to push ahead with his plan to tax Australia's top 3200 companies an extra 1.5 per cent to help pay for a \$2.7 billion parental leave scheme but Ms Kearney said this levy would be difficult to maintain over time.

"You don't have to be particularly imaginative to foresee where this is going. Business will reach a point where they say they can no longer afford the levy for a variety of economic reasons. By then agreements between employers and employees will have been undone and the Coalition will say it is no longer affordable to pay the scheme.

"Australia should be proud of the paid parental scheme we currently have which goes some way to making the system fairer, especially for women. We should do all we can to ensure Tony Abbott and the Coalition do not strike a mortal blow to what is currently a healthy and well-functioning policy that supports parents.

What we know is that there are years of entrenched views from Mr Abbott that are antagonistic to women. In 2002, Mr Abbott told a Liberal Party function in Victoria: "Compulsory paid maternity leave? Over this Government's dead body, frankly."

Ms Kearney said that women fared extremely badly under a Coalition Government, which under Workchoices took away job and income security, and made it harder for mothers to balance their work and family responsibilities.

It is also important to note that no one wants this. "Business doesn't want it, and there is dissent from his own party on the issue. Many employers who provide paid parental leave on top of the government's 18 weeks at min wage payment, would have to honour their legal obligation to do so until the workplace agreement expires- which could be 3 years. They would have to pay both their leave as well as the hefty tax. It will be chaos. The collecting of the levy would also put an extra burden on business."

"This is trumped up policy which should be viewed sceptically and in historical context. Mr Abbott didn't want to support parents, especially women, in the past and he won't want to should the Coalition come to power in September."

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