

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL & BIOETHICAL QUESTIONS

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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE - INQUIRY INTO BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission on how the Australian Government can better help families balance their work and family responsibilities. I agree that this is an area of major concern. In 2005 in Australia many women are waiting till age thirty to have their first child, often for financial reasons. About one in four pregnancies is terminated by induced abortion, again often because of a perceived lack of financial security.

Last year I approved of the Menzies Research Foundation suggestion that all mothers should be paid \$11,000 a year, tax free, for the first five years of their child's life. Mothers can choose either to stay at home (which promotes better child development), or if they wish they can return to work and pay for child care.

I believe that our government needs urgently to introduce major reforms to make our tax and welfare systems much more family friendly, similar to those in Norway and Finland, France and the Netherlands. A family friendly government rewards people for having children. It provides paid maternity leave, and on-site child care at schools and tertiary education centres, and waives HECS fees for mothers wanting to return to study. It provides supported accommodation for women in need. It pays mothers to stay at home and raise their children, arguably the most important job of all. For those mothers who choose to return to employment there needs to be improved child care at their workplaces.

Please keep me on your mailing list for any reports that arise from your inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

DR ROBERT POLLNITZ

