



Police Federation  
of Australia

The National Voice of Policing

***SUBMISSION to the***

The Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

via – [community.affairs@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs@aph.gov.au)

***Paid Parental Leave Amendment  
(Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Bill 2022***

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) is the national body representing the professional and industrial interests of Australia's more than 66,000 police officers, across all state, territory, and the federal police jurisdictions.

Membership as at: 31 December 2021	
Police Association of South Australia	4,774
Western Australia Police Union of Workers	7,100
Queensland Police Union of Employees	12,190
The Police Association (Victoria)	17,791
Police Association of NSW	17,174
Police Association of Tasmania	1,419
Northern Territory Police Association	1,616
Australian Federal Police Association	3,965
<b>Police Federation of Australia</b>	<b>66,029</b>

The PFA supports the provisions contained in the Paid Parental Leave (PPL) Amendment (Improvements for Families and Gender Equality) Bill 2022.

For many years the PFA has made submissions and appeared before a range of Parliamentary and other Inquiries in support of better, more equitable and easily accessed PPL provisions for police and other workers.

A decade ago, we argued that as Police protect the welfare of our community; they should not have to do so while worrying about the welfare of their children. The nature of policing work and the difficulties it poses for parents is unique. This is true of some other emergency services and shift work industries, but there is an unpredictability faced by Police that is not faced by any other type of worker in Australia.

In Senate Legislation Committee hearing in Melbourne in February 2017 two Victorian Police operational sergeants, along with their infant children at the time, provided strong and compelling firsthand accounts of the importance of appropriate PPL provisions, particularly for shift working police officers.

Together with an Industrial Manager from the Victorian Police Association, also the mother of a then young child, explained to the Committee the importance of being able to have infants cared for by a parent for the early part of their life. Those PPL and other leave arrangements then need to be supported by policies allowing for flexible working arrangements including arrangements for full time employment with set shifts & days, part time employment with hours set around member's responsibilities as carers as well as potential changes of work location to support work/life balance for police families.

These issues have all been confirmed by the PFA's 2017 survey of Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand, conducted in conjunction with the PFA's Women's Advisory Committee. That survey, completed by 11,418 police officers - 16.5% of the combined police forces at that time, found that over 40% of female officers aged under 50 years who are currently employed part time or in some other flexible work arrangement would have accepted a regular full-time position if they had other, viable childcare options such as 24-hour childcare providers or subsidized home-based care (nanny, au paire, etc.). Extrapolating the survey data almost 2,100 female officers, at that time, working part time or in a flexible work arrangement would have remained in regular full time work had viable child care options been available to them.

Police services are reflective of the communities they serve. The reduction of police women on the frontline will also impact on communities they serve. The advantages of women on the frontline are well documented. One of the key policy challenges for all levels of government is tackle issues of domestic violence. Our members are first responders in those situations. Ensuring that we have appropriate PPL entitlement as well as the potential for flexible working arrangements, will have a flow on effect on the number of police women on the frontline to assist victims of domestic violence. Police of childbearing age also fulfil valuable roles in dealing with victims of sexual assault and child abuse. Community access to those police officers should not be compromised.

An effective PPL scheme is one of a range of measures required to support police parents balancing family commitments with the important and unique job of protecting the welfare of the Australian community.

I would be happy to appear before the Committee to expand on any aspects of this submission.

Sincerely yours

Scott Weber APM  
Chief Executive Officer

23 January 2023