



25 August 2014

Employment Standards Policy Team
Discussion document submissions
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
PO Box 3705
Wellington

Dear Employment Standards Policy Team

RE: MODERNISING PARENTAL LEAVE – DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

The New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the “*Modernising Parental Leave – discussion document*”. The Institute’s submission has been developed in collaboration with members and Architecture + Women. Flexibility in the workplace and recognising the importance of parental care to new born development is supported by the Institute.

The NZIA, which was founded in 1905, is the professional body that represents more than 90 per cent of New Zealand’s registered Architects, as well as hundreds of architecture graduates and students. The Institute promotes high standards of building design and professional performance. It produces material essential to architects’ practice, operates design and technical programmes to educate its members, and runs a rigorous, peer-reviewed awards programme that sets the benchmark for New Zealand architecture. The Institute seeks to collaborate with central and local government, other professional organisations and the wider construction industry.

Whilst the Institute is supportive of the proposals included in the discussion document, we would strongly encourage the Government to consider the following:

- **increasing paid parental leave period** – extending the paid parental leave to 26 weeks or 6 months. This would support the Ministry of Health recommendation that a child breast fed for the first 6 months of their life, allowing mothers who might otherwise have to return to work to remain with the child without financial repercussions.
- **introducing paid paternal leave** – in addition to the current allowance of two weeks unpaid paternity leave, the Institute would support the introduction of a paid paternal leave (or secondary carer) period of two weeks, that could be taken consecutively or concurrently with maternity/primary carer leave.

It is important that any changes to parental leave provisions simultaneously consider the impacts and relationship to various industries and professions. As you would be aware, various professions have differing workplace/client needs and expectations so flexibility in arrangements is paramount, which demands an employer/employee agreement.

As technology changes and modes of employment adapt, the parental leave provisions need to keep pace and not provide any unnecessary barriers or restrictions on outcomes that benefit the employer and employee. Three decades should not pass before the parental leave provisions are reviewed and updated in the future, regular reviews will be important.

One issue that goes unaddressed in the discussion document is, how to maintain professional women in the workforce. In the profession of architecture, the Institute sees a significant loss of women to the profession following graduation and pre-registration as a Registered Architect. This is due in part to the competitive tension between raising a family and fulfilling the requirements of registration under the Registered Architect's Act. Following the completion of a five-year degree programme, graduate architects will require anywhere from 2-3 years post graduate experience in order to fulfil the requirements of registration. For females, this eight year horizon is often in direct competition with considerations of starting/raising a family.

Please find outlined below a profile of Institute members which shows the loss of females to the profession of architecture as they move from student, to graduate and to registered architect.

NZIA MEMBER PROFILE	September 2014			
	M	F	% (m)	%(f)
MEMBERSHIP				
Academic	10	2	83%	17%
Architect	1199	302	80%	20%
Graduate	416	255	62%	38%
Student	264	236	53%	47%

The Institute strongly believes that the Government should simultaneously look at the parental leave provision changes and the various professional registration requirements (e.g. architect, engineer, lawyer, doctor, veterinarians, etc.) to ensure that the professions benefit from both diversity and appropriate parental provisions.

The Institute appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and looks forward to continued engagement as the proposals are developed. We would be happy to provide further clarification on this submission. For further information, please contact:

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Kind regards



Teena Hale Pennington
Chief Executive

Encl. NZIA submission

Cc.

Architecture + Women

Chair and Chief Executive, New Zealand Registered Architect's Board