

The logics of paternity leave in Australia

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Honours thesis of Leo Gordon

Australia - A late comer to
paid paternity leave (2013).

Why?

What motivated the policy?



Logics of parental leave

- Health and welfare
 - Gender equality
 - Labour market capacity
 - → will argue that economics and politics more important in the Australian case of paternity leave –called Dad and Partner Pay (DaPP)
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- '[e]very country has a political logic that guides its approach to work–family policy making. While it is important to think about which policies work best, there are also crucial lessons to draw from a comparative study of the political and historical constraints on policy change...'

Patricia Boling (2015)



- The paternity leave platypus:
 - +
 - Unpaid job protected parental leave – 12 months
 - +
 - DaPP – 2 weeks
 - +
 - Employer provided paternity/parental/secondary carer leave
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What is DaPP?

- DaPP is a payment made through Centrelink; Crucial Difference to PPL payment
 - 2 weeks pay at the National Minimum Wage (AUD\$694.90 [€447.94])
 - Not at work, or on unpaid parental leave from the employer
 - Can only be used by father or partner
 - Same **eligibility** as Paid Parental Leave
 - 1) Satisfy work test (330 hours in 10 of last 13 months)
 - 2) Be caring for child
 - 3) Not be working
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Object of DaPP (from legislation)

- “**Subsection 3.A(2)**

- (2) The object of Dad and Partner Pay is to provide **financial support** to fathers and partners caring for newborn or newly adopted children, in order to:
 - (a) **Increase the time** that fathers and partners **take off work** around the time of birth or adoption; and
 - (b) Create further **opportunities for fathers and partners to bond** with the child; and
 - (c) Allow **fathers and partners to take a greater share of caring responsibilities** and to support mothers and partners from the beginning.”
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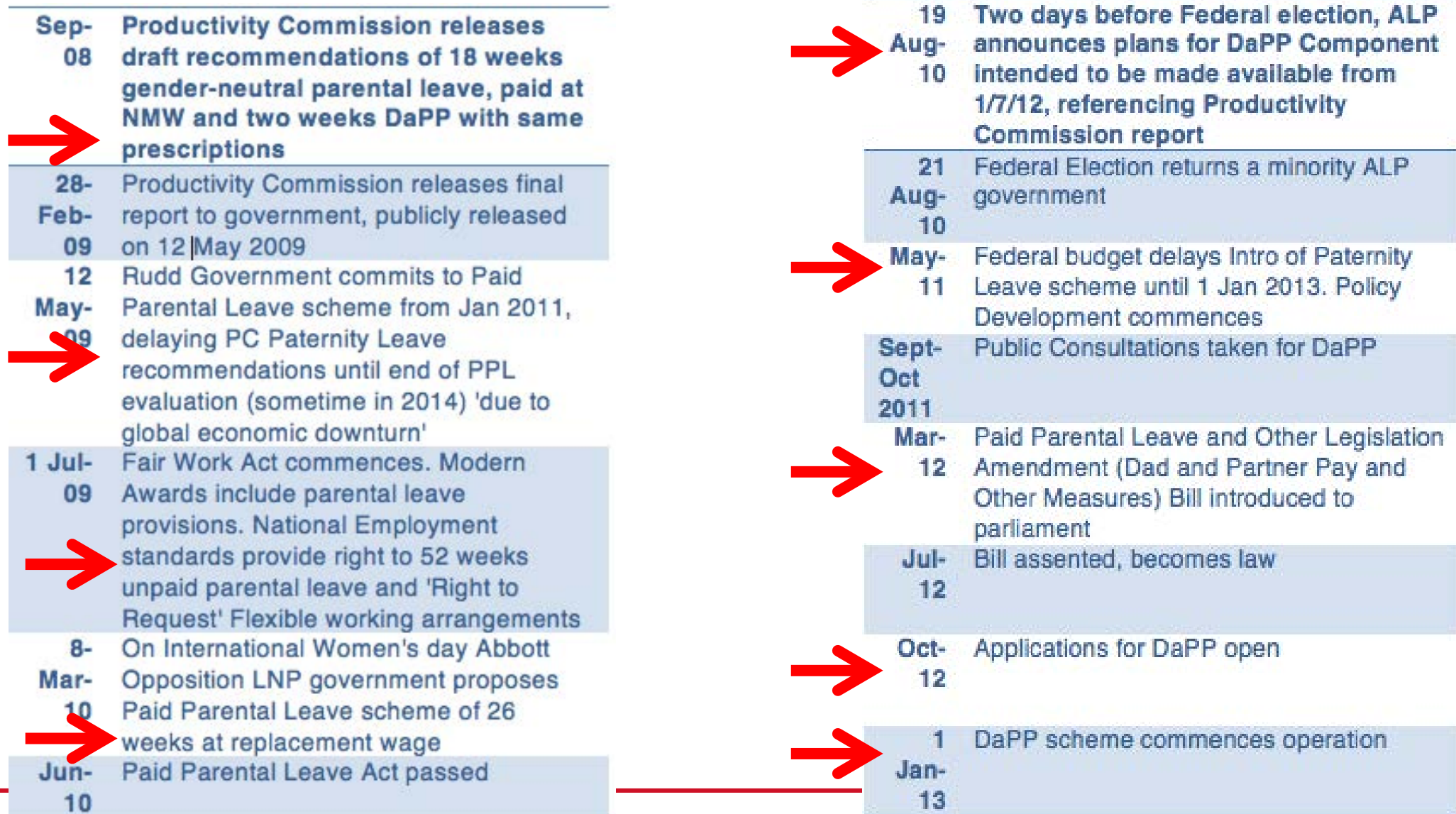
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Mothers as proportion of mothers in the year	15%	43.50%	45.30%	46.70%	50.45%	53.30%	52.7%*
number of mothers for whom PLP has been paid as a proportion of all mothers in the same year ¹	43,000	124,397	130,623	144,255	158,145	169,745	170,925*
Percentage of parents paid government-funded Parental Leave Pay by employers	2.20%	48.50%	73.70%	72.80%	69.80%	70.40%	68.50%
Number of employers administering the scheme	939	75,730	123,502	133,274	141,241	150,288	n/a
DaPP uptake (fathers)			27,240	72,975	70,785	79,126	83,600

How did DaPP Emerge? Timeline: 1974 - 2008

DATE	EVENT
1973	12 weeks PML to Federal Public Servants; 1 week paid paternity leave, soon after removed
1979	ACTU Unpaid Maternity Leave Test Case
1985	Adoption Leave granted
1990	ACTU Unpaid Parental Leave Test Case
1993	52 Weeks Unpaid Parental Leave in Industrial Relations Reform Act
1996	LNP Government elected
1999	HREOC releases Pregnant & Productive
2000	ILO Convention 183: 14 weeks PML (Not ratified by Aus. Govt.)
Apr-02	HREOC releases interim report, "Valuing Parenthood: options for paid maternity leave"
May-02	LNP introduces <i>Sex Discrimination Act</i>
Jul-02	First Child Tax Refund (FCTR) introduced by LNP - refundable tax offset up to \$2,500
Dec-02	HREOC releases final report, "A Time to Value: Proposal for a national paid maternity leave scheme"
2002	Senate Review Committee canvasses funding options for Paid Maternity Leave Scheme
Apr-04	Baby Care Payment - means tested to \$3,000 proposed by ALP
Jul-04	The Maternity Payment or 'Baby Bonus' gives means-tested lump sum of \$3,000. Replaces FCTR. Introduced by LNP
Jun-05	AIRC hands down Work and Family Test Provisions Case - extended parental leave provisions for Australian employees covered by federal awards.
Nov-07	ALP wins government
Dec-07	Paid Parental Leave scheme referred to Productivity Commission
Jul-08	Baby Bonus increased to \$5,000 (indexed to inflation). Introduction of cap at combined family income of \$150,000



How did DaPP emerge? Timeline: 2008-2013



The Politics of DaPP's Implementation

- Delayed introduction due to GFC
 - Abbott (Pm at the time) proposes “Rolls Royce” parental leave scheme
 - Including two weeks fully paid paternity leave
 - Filled paternity leave gap missing in ALP legislation
 - ALP announces plans for paternity leave scheme two days before election in 2010
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- Jenny Macklin Minister for Social Services, interview:
 - later we developed the dad and partner pay.
 - Facilitator 1: That's right, yes. So can we talk a little bit about that change?
 - Facilitator 2: Yes, and was that part of the discussion to change the focus to parental leave?
 - Interviewee: To be honest, it wasn't a huge thing. I mean we would always have supported parental leave. I think that's why I go to the context rather than - it wasn't such a big issue for us, it was more the broader context that we were working in. I mean we would have always supported the notion of parental leave, but it took a while ...
 - Interviewee: ... *[later in the interview]* and the dad and partner pay thing, which has gone so well. It was such a nice little addition. When you meet the dads, they're so thrilled ...
 - Facilitator 1: That's right. Do you recall why you didn't introduce that at the same time as the paid parental leave, incorporated in the scheme from the onset?
 - Interviewee: Oh one step at a time. Public policy has to be taken in chunks.
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Conclusion

- Paternity leave rarely mentioned in fight for parental leave
 - Timing driven by politics and economics rather than gender equity: → a politico/economic logic?
 - Consequently, lays only a modest foundation with which to change current parenting norms and employer attitudes
 - Unlikely to change in the short-mid term, very little momentum for change at present.
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- Thank you
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My analytical Lens: “An Afterthought”

- Political implementation
 - Administration Problems
 - Employer Disconnect
 - Modest Foundation
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Employers' View

- 5 themes:
 - 1) Employer Knowledge
 - 2) Employer role, accommodation and boundaries
 - 3) Workplace Culture
 - 4) Policy Design
 - 5) Employers' perception of leave's use
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- Q1) *What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?*
 - Q2) *What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?*
 - Q3) *How has the representation of the 'problem' come about?*
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- Q4) *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences*
 - Q5) *What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?*
 - Q6) *How has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended?*
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