

**WORK + FAMILY POLICY ROUNDTABLE BENCHMARKS COMPLEMENT
FINDINGS IN HREOC'S *IT'S ABOUT TIME* PAPER**

PLAIN TEXT MEDIA RELEASE TO FOLLOW

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The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) welcomes the release of a comprehensive set of benchmarks to guide and evaluate policy responses to work and family responsibilities following a *Work + Family Policy Roundtable* launch in Sydney today.

The Australian *Work + Family Policy Roundtable* was established in 2004. It is made up of Australian researchers with expertise on work and family policy. Its goal is to propose, comment upon, collect and disseminate relevant policy research to inform good, evidence-based public policy around work and family issues in Australia.

HREOC President and Acting Sex Discrimination Commissioner John von Doussa QC said secure, stable and fair work and family arrangements were needed to ensure that Australian women and men are able to meet the competing demands of paid work and family life.

“In the lead-up to the 2007 Federal Election, HREOC supports policies that will achieve positive work and family outcomes for individuals, families and the nation,” Mr von Doussa said.

HREOC’s *It’s About Time: Women, men, work and family* paper, released earlier this year, recommends the adoption of a holistic life cycle framework underpinned by the human rights principles of equality between men and women and equality for employees with family responsibilities.

“To be effective, work and family policies have to address caring responsibilities at all stages of life - from child care to care of older people and people with disability. They have to consider the role of both men and women as workers, and their responsibilities for unpaid and paid work,” Mr von Doussa said.

“In the face of such complex policy challenges, clear, evidence-based principles by which to measure work and family policies are not only welcome, but essential.”

Mr von Doussa said the benchmarks developed by the *Work + Family Policy Roundtable* met this need and also complemented HREOC’s own findings in the *It’s About Time* paper.

“The result of two years extensive consultation and research, *It’s About Time* outlines 45 priority measures to support its framework. These include: a right to request flexible working arrangements; a national paid maternity leave scheme; federal legislation to protect employees from discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities; and quality, affordable early childhood education and care services. Many of these measures are supported in the benchmarks being launched today,” Mr von Doussa said.

HREOC's *It's About Time: Women, men, work and family* paper is available at:
www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/its_about_time/index.html

For more information on the *Work + Family Policy Roundtable* see:
www.familypolicyroundtable.com.au

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