PAID TO SERVE, UNPAID TO CARE

How Compensation Policy Shapes Family Roles

What do compensation policies reveal about whose contributions our society values, supports and protects?

114#: Can policy see him?

115#: Can he afford to care?

116#: Is he protected when he does?

Three Ways Government Compensates Civic Service

Different mechanisms. Different levels of Government compensation — and institutional signalling.

JURY DUTY

Base rate
of pay

Government mandates employer make-up pay

Up to 10 days

Fair Work Act 2009, s.111

DEFENCE RESERVE

~$2,051+
per week

Government compensates the employer

Up to 52 weeks

Benchmark set at **national average weekly earnings.**

Reservist separately receives Defence pay

Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001, ss.17 & 26

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

~$1,005
per week

26 weeks

4 weeks reserved for the other parent

Set at the national **minimum weekly wage.**

Paid Parental Leave Act 2010

Jury duty → compulsory civic obligation; government mandates temporary wage continuity.

Defence Reserve → voluntary/public civic service; government pays the reservist and subsidises employer disruption.

Infant care → socially valuable private/domestic contribution; government pays a flat minimum-wage rate, regardless of previous earnings.

Three Ways Government Protects Civic Service

Different levels of job protection — and institutional signalling.

Historically **PUBLIC-FACING, MASCULINE-CODED** civic contributions

Historically **PRIVATE, FEMINISED** work

JURY DUTY

- Jury service falls under community service leave as part of the National Employment Standards.
- Employees must be released for jury service when summoned.
- Refusing to release an employee, dismissing them or altering their position because of jury duty can carry **heavy fines** or **imprisonment** for individuals and corporations — including **up to 12 months' imprisonment or thousands of dollars in fines** under state Juries Acts.

PAY REMINDER

BASE RATE OF PAY

(ordinary pay, excluding overtime and extras)

DEFENCE RESERVE

- If an employer refuses to release a reservist to perform military duties, they are committing a **criminal offence** under ss.17 and 26 of the *Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001*.
- Employers can face **severe civil penalties, substantial fines** and **prosecution**. Criminal liability is treated as a breach of federal law.
- The employee can also lodge a formal complaint with the Office of Reserve Service Protection, which investigates workplace non-compliance.

PAY REMINDER

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS RATE

(based on the national average weekly earnings)

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

- Parental leave does not have an equivalent purpose-built criminal protection regime.
- Protection instead operates through general workplace and discrimination law — including adverse action under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, Part 3–1, and family responsibilities discrimination under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, s.7A.
- These are **civil protections;** there is **no equivalent dedicated criminal offence** for employer interference with parental leave.

PAY REMINDER

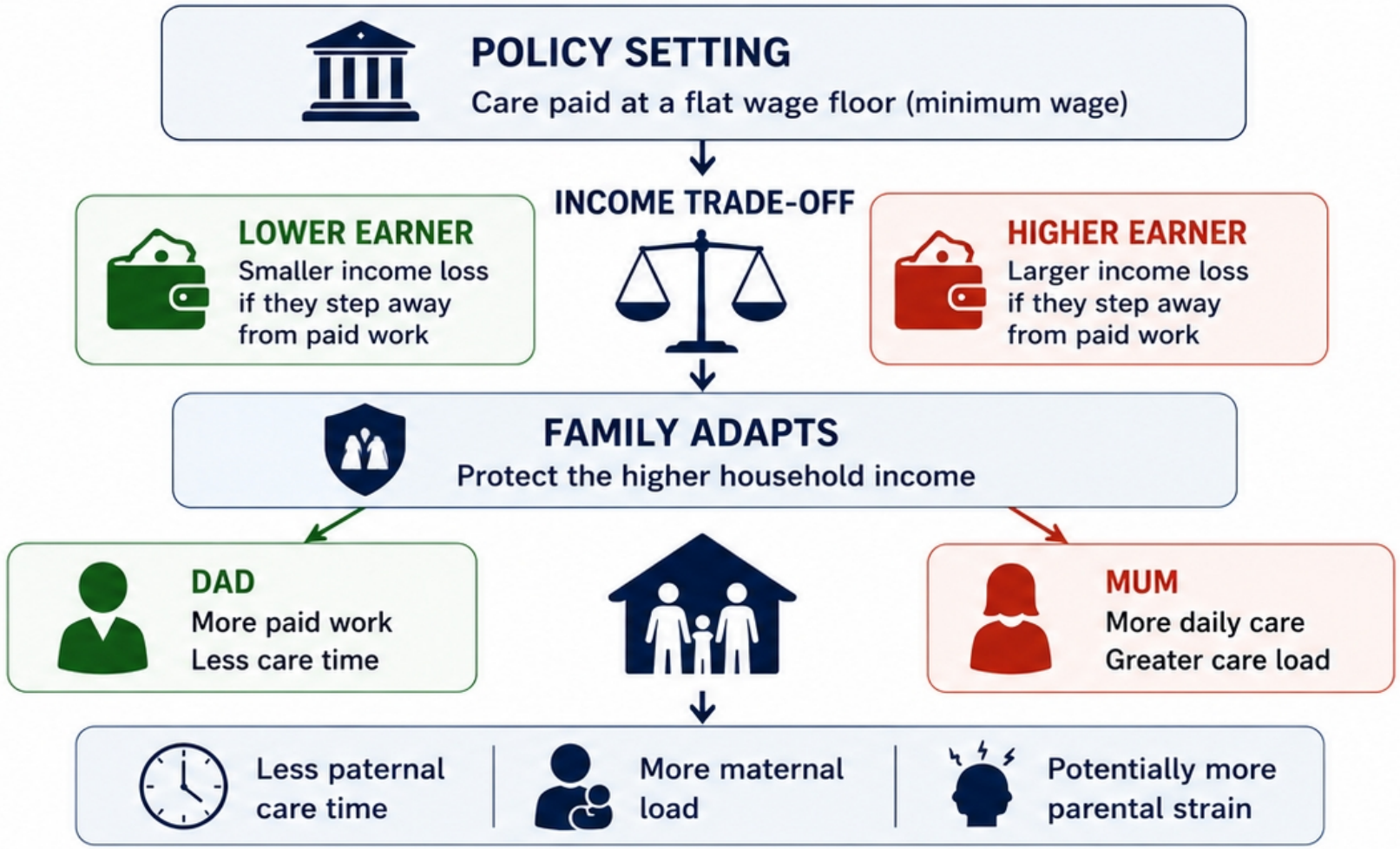
MINIMUM WAGE RATE

(based on the national minimum weekly wage)

This comparison reveals what government chooses to **pay, subsidise and protect** — and what it does not.

FAMILIES ARE RATIONAL.
POLICY SHAPES THE RATIONALITY.

Policy doesn't have to tell families how to divide work and care.
It can change the economics of the choice.



What looks like preference downstream can have policy conditions upstream.

WHAT BEHAVIOUR ARE WE MAKING EASIER?

Policy can reduce — or increase — the practical cost of saying “yes”.

JURY SERVICE

- Income protected
- Employer make-up pay
- Specific criminal protections

Government reduces the cost of saying yes.

DEFENCE RESERVE

- Employer financially supported
- Reservist separately paid
- Specific criminal protections

Government reduces the cost of saying yes.

PATERNAL LEAVE

- Flat payment at minimum wage
- Higher earners give up more income
- Narrower, civil protections

For many fathers, saying yes carries a larger household trade-off.

AND THERE’S A GENDER DIMENSION

PUBLIC / HISTORICALLY MASCULINE-CODED

Jury service • Defence service

Stronger income or employer support
+ purpose-built protections

VS

PRIVATE / HISTORICALLY FEMINISED

Infant care

Wage-floor payment +
more general protections

If policy makes some forms of participation easier to say yes to than others, should we be surprised if participation differs?

Policy may not simply reflect social roles. It may help make some roles easier to inhabit than others.

THE IMPLICATION:

POLICY CAN SEND SIGNALS WE DO NOT INTEND.

Not only about *who* we recognise, but about *which* forms of contribution we economically safeguard.

THE SIGNAL IN THE ARCHITECTURE

JURY DUTY + DEFENCE RESERVE

Historically masculine-coded civic contribution

- **Stronger income / employer support** (income protected; employer financially supported; separately paid)
- **Purpose-built legal protections** (specific criminal protections)

VS

INFANT CARE

Historically feminised contribution

- **Payment at the wage floor** (flat payment at minimum wage)
- **Broader civil protections** (narrower, civil workplace and anti-discrimination protections)

If we want more shared care, the economic signal and the caregiving goal should broadly point in the same direction.

NEXT: PAPER 116# → IS HE PROTECTED WHEN HE DOES?

What happens when Dad actually takes leave, reduces hours or asks for flexibility?

Three papers. Three conditions for genuine caregiving choice.

PAPER 114

RECOGNITION

CAN POLICY SEE HIM?

Caring fathers must be visible as policy subjects.

→

PAPER 115

FEASIBILITY

CAN HE AFFORD TO CARE?

The household has to be able to absorb the economic cost.

→

PAPER 116

PROTECTION

IS HE PROTECTED WHEN HE DOES?

The caring worker must be protected when he acts on it.

Recognition, feasibility and protection all shape the choices families can genuinely make.

Next: Paper 116#

What happens when Dad actually takes the leave, reduces his hours, or asks for flexibility?

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Q & A