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**Police Federation
of Australia**

The National Voice of Policing

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Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committee
PO Box 6100
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Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Measures) Bill 2014 (the Bill)

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) represents the professional and industrial interests of in excess of 58,000 Australian police office officers. We appreciate the opportunity to make this submission on their behalf.

The PFA opposes both amendments as proposed.

In our recent submission to the Productivity Commission's Public Inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning we cited the unpredictable nature of policing work and the difficulties it poses for police who are parents. Policing requires complete commitment 24hrs a day, 7 days a week, for 365 days of every year. Whilst this is true of some other emergency services and shift work industries, there is unpredictability faced by Police that is not faced by any other type of worker in Australia. The round-the-clock demands of policing mean that police need childcare outside the standard 9-5 hours, and away from the normal bricks-and-mortar model of centre-based childcare. This childcare comes at a significant cost and therefore balancing work and family commitments remains difficult for many of our members. We have always viewed quality, affordable child care for police officers as a significant means of achieving greater workforce participation for our members and predominantly our female members.

The policy behind the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate is to provide financial assistance to families to help support access to child care and to increase workforce participation, especially for women, and social and educational development for children.

We are concerned that the Bill's two measures do nothing to achieve these aims and we believe may even lead to increasing the affordability of childcare and undermining its potential accessibility for our members. Freezing the income thresholds for Child Care Benefits until 30 June 2017 will mean that more of our members will receive less and some may lose it altogether. As their Child Care Benefit payments reduce, their out of pocket costs increase and they will reach the \$7,500 cap for Child Care Rebates earlier.

We are concerned that this will reduce the level of government assistance to police families.

The issue of access and affordability of child care is consistently one of the most important issues raised by our members across Australia. It is for these reasons that the PFA does not support the measures in this Bill.

We would be happy to appear before any Inquiry should that be deemed appropriate.

Sincerely yours

Handwritten signature of Mark Burgess in black ink.

Mark Burgess
Chief Executive Officer

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