

Fair Work Ombudsman leads by example on parental leave

13 September 2011

Improved parental leave entitlements are among the highlights of the new Enterprise Agreement covering Fair Work Ombudsman employees.

The Agreement, for the period 2011-2014, increases access to parental leave for both parents following the birth of a baby.

Mothers who have just given birth are now entitled to 16 weeks parental leave on full pay, up from 14 weeks under the Fair Work Ombudsman's previous Enterprise Agreement.

The partner of a mother who has given birth is now entitled to four weeks leave on full pay to support the mother, up from three weeks under the previous Agreement.

Under the new Agreement, there is also a new entitlement to paid primary caregiver's leave if the partner of the birth mother is required to be the primary caregiver of the baby for any period of time within 16 weeks of the birth.

The paid parental leave entitlements in the Agreement are in addition to the entitlements under the Australian Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says the Agency is leading by example by going beyond its minimum legal obligations to develop a parental leave policy that is tailored to employee needs, but also benefits the Agency.

"Implementing generous, innovative and flexible parental leave policies can help employers boost their productivity and performance," Mr Wilson said.

"Employers with parental leave policies that make employees feel valued can benefit from having more committed and productive staff.

"They can also improve staff retention, resulting in lower recruitment and training costs."

The Fair Work Ombudsman's Enterprise Agreement also provides for employees to receive superannuation payments while on paid and unpaid parental leave and it enshrines the provision of paid lactation breaks for mothers.

The Agreement covers about 950 Fair Work Ombudsman employees, who received a four per cent pay increase on commencement of the Agreement last month.

Employees will receive a three per cent pay increase in July, 2012 and a two per cent pay increase in July, 2013. The Agreement expires on June 30, 2014.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has produced a Parental Leave Best Practice Guide to provide advice for employers on how to develop policies that provide optimal support for employees who access parental leave.

The Guide is available for free download at www.fairwork.gov.au.

There are also Best Practice Guides on work and family, individual flexibility arrangements, consultation and co-operation, young workers, gender pay equity, small business and the Fair Work Act, bargaining, privacy, managing underperformance and dispute resolution.

Employers and employees seeking more information should visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50.

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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