

PAID LEAVE FOLLOWING CHILDBIRTH IN AUSTRALIA

DURATION OF PAID LEAVE

Leave periods available ⁱ	Months
Paid Parental Leave	4.2
Paid Paternity Leave	0.5

ELIGIBILITY

Group	Paid Parental Leave	Paid Paternity Leave
Employed	+	+
Self-employed	+	+
Student ⁱⁱ		
Unemployed	-	-
Adoptive parent ⁱⁱ		
Grandparent	-	-
Migrant ⁱⁱ		

TAKE-UP RATES

Leave type	%
Paid Parental Leave (% of mothers) ⁱⁱⁱ	49
Paid Paternity Leave (% of fathers) ⁱⁱⁱ	25

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay
Paid by government from general revenue.

LEGEND:

I) PAYMENT PERIODS RATHER THAN LEAVE – PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IS TERMED ‘PARENTAL LEAVE PAY’, PAID PATERNITY LEAVE IS TERMED ‘DAD AND PARTNER PAY’. PAYMENTS ARE USUALLY ACCESSED WHILE ON UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE (SEE AUSTRALIA COUNTRY NOTE FOR DETAILS)

II) ELIGIBLE IF WORK, INCOME AND RESIDENCY TESTS ARE MET (SEE AUSTRALIA COUNTRY NOTE FOR DETAILS)

III) ESTIMATES BASED ON AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ESTIMATES OF PERSONS AGED 0 IN 2018



History of leave policy and recent changes

Paid parental leave for Australian working parents in a ‘primary carer’ role commenced in 2011 (subject to eligibility tests), with an entitlement to ‘Parental Leave Pay’ of 18 weeks (at the national minimum wage). This was extended with 2 weeks ‘Dad and Partner Pay’ (at the same rate) from 2013.

Some employees also receive employer-paid maternity, paternity and/or parental or ‘primary/secondary carer’ leave. Twelve weeks’ paid maternity leave (at replacement wage) was introduced for federal public servants in 1973. Currently, public servants in federal, state and territory jurisdictions have entitlements ranging from 12-20 weeks at replacement wage. Some private sector employees also receive paid leave from their employer: prevalence and duration has increased in recent decades, with 48% of large organizations providing paid leave for an average of 10 weeks in 2018.

DEFINITIONS

MATERNITY LEAVE

Leave generally available to mothers only. It is usually understood to be a health and welfare measure, intended to protect the health of the mother and newborn child, to be taken just before, during and immediately after childbirth.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Leave generally available to fathers only, usually to be taken soon after the birth of a child and intended to enable the father to spend time with his partner, new child and older children.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Leave available equally to mothers and fathers, either as a non-transferable individual right, an individual right that can be transferred to the other parent, or a family right that parents can divide between themselves as they choose.

INTRODUCING THE NETWORK ON LEAVE POLICIES AND RESEARCH

The international network on leave policies and research, consists of over 60 members, all of whom are experts on leave issues and who come from 43 countries across the world. Members bring not only expertise to the network, but great commitment and enthusiasm, enabling the group to grow and flourish without any regular source of external funding and to provide a unique forum for exchange, dialogue and collaboration on issues of care, employment and gender.

Detailed Country Notes, Cross-country tables and definitions of leave policies are available at

www.leavenetwork.org/leave-policies-research/

CONTACTS

GENERAL INQUIRIES, MEMBERSHIP AND SEMINARS:

Ann- Zofie Duvander, Stockholm University

ann-zofie.duvander@sociology.su.se

Margaret O’Brien, University College London

m.obrien@ucl.ac.uk

ANNUAL REVIEW:

Sonja Blum, University of Hagen

Alison Koslowski, University of Edinburgh

Alexandra Macht, Oxford Brookes University

RECENT PUBLICATIONS – AUSTRALIA

BAXTER, JENNIFER (2019) *FATHERS AND WORK: A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW*. AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF FAMILY STUDIES: [HTTPS://AIFS.GOV.AU/AIFS-CONFERENCE/FATHERS-AND-WORK](https://aifs.gov.au/aifs-conference/fathers-and-work)

TEMPLE, J., DOW, B. AND BAIRD, M. (2019) ‘SPECIAL WORKING ARRANGEMENTS TO ALLOW FOR CARE RESPONSIBILITIES IN AUSTRALIA: AVAILABILITY, USAGE AND BARRIERS’, *AUSTRALIAN POPULATION STUDIES*, 3(1): 13-29.

HULCOMBE, J., CAPRA, S. AND WHITEHOUSE, G. (2019) ‘ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN QUEENSLAND HEALTH RETURNING TO WORK AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE: HOURS OF WORK AND DURATION OF TIME ON PART-TIME HOURS’. *AUSTRALIAN HEALTH REVIEW* DOI: 10.1071/AH18110

CONTACTS AUSTRALIA

PROF. GILLIAN WHITEHOUSE

University of Queensland
g.whitehouse@uq.edu.au

PROF. MARIAN BAIRD

University of Sydney
marian.baird@sydney.edu.au

DR. JENNIFER BAXTER

Australian Institute of Family Studies
jennifer.baxter@aifs.gov.au