



Paid Parental Leave (PPL) – federal scheme FACT SHEET and ADVICE FOR MEMBERS

Appeals and Disputes

The scheme includes a comprehensive dispute settlement/compliance component if any problems occur with the application or payments.

The roles are divided between the Family Assistance Office and the FWO. The Family Assistance Office will assist to resolve disputes relating to employee's eligibility and general administration of the scheme and the FWO will be responsible for disputes relating to employer/employee obligations and payment.

Importantly, the Family Assistance Office will assume responsibility for PPL payments to the employee during any dispute process.

Please contact the union as we can assist members at any stage of dispute.

What's Next

After decades campaigning, the AEU welcomes this scheme but will continue to bargain and lobby for improvements including:

- bringing the 18 weeks' PPL up to full replacement wage;
- payment of superannuation;
- counting the PPL as service;
- the right to return to work part time from parental leave;
- amending the National Employment Standards to align eligibility criteria for unpaid parental leave with eligibility criteria for paid parental leave;
- amending the definition of 'continuous service' to ensure seasonal/semester-based workers are eligible.

There will be a review of the scheme in 2013 at which the campaign will escalate. We encourage AEU members to get involved.

Useful Links

1. Paid Parental Leave scheme claiming - http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/individuals/ppl_working_parents_aims_and_payments.htm
2. Paid Parental Leave estimator - http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/individuals/ppl_working_parents_estimator.htm
3. Brochure for Parents http://www.familyassist.gov.au/documents/brochure_parent_mainstream_2.pdf
4. Paid Parental Leave - Information for Parents booklet http://www.familyassist.gov.au/documents/ppl_parents_info.pdf
5. Paid Parental Leave Guide http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/guides_acts/ppl/ppl-rn.html

As of January 1st 2011, the Australian Government provides a national paid parental leave scheme, to eligible workers.

The scheme provides an 18 week (taxable) payment at the national minimum wage, currently (January 2011) \$570 a week before tax.

Your Options

Paid Parental Leave (PPL) will not reduce any existing paid maternity leave entitlements already provided by your employer.

As public education employees you are likely to be eligible for a number of paid and unpaid leave options both through the Federal Paid Parental Leave scheme and your employer (under your workplace agreement or Award), which means you may have some choices to make about:

- the timing of your leave (prior to and after the birth/adoption) and when you might like to return to work;
- whether you take full pay or half pay for any of your leave (if this option is available to you);
- whether you wish your partner to access any part of your paid leave;
- whether you will take other paid leave (such as Long Service Leave, or Annual Leave) and/or unpaid leave to maximise time or pay.

For this reason, you should be aware of *all* the entitlements now available to you.

What are you entitled to?

Employer provided leave

Your employer, (State/Territory Education Department, TAFE institute, early childhood centre, disability or correctional service, school council etc) provides paid maternity/parental leave and unpaid parental leave.

You will need to contact your union or the employer to clarify your leave and other entitlements and to make your separate application for employer provided paid maternity/parental leave.

ACT -	http://www.aeuact.asn.au/	(02) 6272-7900
QLD -	http://www.qtu.asn.au/	(07) 3512 9000
NSW -	http://www.nswtf.org.au/	(02) 9217-2100
NT -	http://www.aeunt.org.au/	(08) 8948 5399
SA -	http://www.aeusa.asn.au/	(08) 8272 1399
TAS -	http://www.aeutas.org.au/	(03) 6234 9500
VIC -	http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/	(03) 9417 2822
WA -	http://www.sstuwa.org.au/	(08) 9325 5311

This new federal PPL can be **taken at the same time** as any existing paid maternity leave or after it (but cannot be taken before the birth). However, PPL *must* be taken within 12 months of the birth of the child.

Federal PPL

You will be entitled to the Australian Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme if you earn an individual adjusted taxable income of under \$150,000 and meet the following "work test":

- You must have worked continuously for at least 10 of the 13 months prior to the birth or adoption of your child, AND
- You must have worked for at least 330 hours in that 10-month period (i.e. just over one day a week), with no more than an eight week gap between two consecutive working days.

A working day is a day you have worked for at least one hour. You do not need to be working full-time to be eligible for parental leave pay.

You therefore may meet the work test even if you:

- Are a part-time, casual or CRT
- Have multiple employers, or
- Have recently changed jobs, or
- Have recently resigned.

How to apply

To apply for PPL, individuals must first register through the Family Assistance Office (online or via the FAO at Medicare offices).

You will need to provide the FAO details such as:

- your expected confinement date
- your employment status and details of current employer
- work history to establish eligibility (i.e. continuous service for 10 out of previous 13 months or 330 hours over the 10 month period)
- proposed start and end dates for the 18 weeks PPL payments.

You must submit, with your application form, evidence of eligibility such as tax assessment notices, play slips etc.

You will be assessed to be either eligible to receive the PPL payment via your employer as part of regular payroll, or directly from the FAO (if you have not been employed with your current employer for 12 months prior to the birth/adoption).

The FAO will make all the necessary arrangements for payment with your employer.

If you have more than one employer, you may nominate the employer you wish to administer the government PPL payment.

More information is available from www.familyassist.gov.au, or call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Important Considerations

1. Parental Leave Pay and the Baby Bonus cannot be paid for the same child. The PPL is taxable income so it may affect your Family Tax Benefits. You can instead take the Baby Bonus (which is not taxable).

If you meet the eligibility criteria for both payments, you can choose which payment is the best financial decision for your family.

To assist your decision, the Paid Parental Leave Comparison Estimator is an online tool available. It does not provide a rate of payment or assess your eligibility.

You will need the following information before using the estimator:

- Expected date of birth or adoption of the child
- The number of other dependent children you and/or your partner have from previous relationships.
- Care arrangements for each child (i.e. the number of nights in your care).
- Child Support you and/or your partner receive and/or pay.
- Date you cease work, or intend to cease work.
- Details of any passive employment income (other paid leave) you will receive when you stop work.
- Date you would like to start your Parental Leave Pay.
- The number of weeks you want to receive Parental Leave Pay for.

2. If you (as the primary care-giver) return to work early, the parental leave pay will stop. Any work at all may be considered "a return to work", so casual or CRT work should not be undertaken during PPL.
3. The unused part of the pay can be transferred to your partner/secondary care-giver if they meet the scheme's eligibility criteria and claims the unused parental leave pay.
4. You can however '**keep in touch**' with your workplace, which means you can participate in activities (e.g. training) at the workplace for up to 10 (additional) days paid without losing your entitlement. This must be a voluntary agreement (not compulsory) between you and your employer and cannot be within the first two weeks after the birth of your child.
5. The PPL will not count as service for the accrual of other entitlements.