

## New parental leave kicks in 1 July

June 29, 2021

From 1 July 2021 a new Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme, will be rolled out throughout the NSW public service. It expands on current maternity leave provisions to provide greater access to paid parental leave, regardless of gender. For many years the Federation, along with other public sector unions, have sought improvements to parental leave, importantly access to paid parental leave. In November 2020 the NSW State Budget included a reference to an expansion of paid parental leave stating “We will also help more women stay in the workforce, with a new paid parental leave policy for the NSW public sector – making 14 weeks leave available to all eligible workers.”

Federation participated in consultation with the government through the Public Sector Union Consultative Forum over several months on the draft Public Service Determination. The final [Industrial Relations Circular IRC21-05 - Paid Parental Leave](#) has now been issued.



An email was sent to all Departmental employees on 23 June from the Chief People Officer Yvette Cachia and outlined the basic provisions of the new determination. The current maternity leave provisions will not change however, ‘Maternity Leave’ will be renamed as Parental Leave (Parent with Primary Responsibility). According to this information SAP ESS will be updated and employees should continue to apply for this leave by choosing Maternity Leave. Parental Leave will also be renamed as Parental Leave (Other Parent).

The following entitlements will apply to all births, adoptions or altruistic surrogacies on or after 1 July 2021 (regardless of the expected date of birth) for all eligible employees:

- The birth mother and parents who have primary responsibility for their child's care at the time of birth, adoption or altruistic surrogacy can take up to 14 weeks of paid parental leave (unchanged).
- The ‘other parent’ can access 2 weeks of paid parental leave when the child arrives (an increase on the current one week).
- The ‘other parent’ can access an additional 12 weeks paid leave if they become the primary carer at any time in first 12 months and their partner returns to work or study (new).

To be entitled to the 2 weeks paid parental leave, the date of birth of the child must be on or after 1 July 2021 and the employee must have at least 40 weeks continuous service prior to the date of birth of the child. Due to the rushed timeline set by the NSW government not all elements of the new policy as they pertain to the teaching service have been finalised, particularly in relation to the conditions for eligibility and application of the new entitlement. According to the information: “The Department will need to consider this further and consult both within the organisation as well as with the relevant unions to determine the level of flexibility that may be available based on operational requirements. Further information on this will be provided to employees in the coming months.” and “Until those discussions occur, PPL is available to be taken in one

continuous block.” The Department has stated that additional materials will be added to the dedicated paid parental leave page on the department's intranet as they are developed. The Federation will continue to pursue clarification on these matters and provide information to members.

If you require assistance please contact Professional Support 1300 654 369.

**- Leeanda Smith, Women's Coordinator and Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial officer**