

Paid Parental Leave – a win for all working Australians

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After 30 years of union campaigning, all working women will now have access to Paid Parental Leave.

It is estimated that approximately 150 000 families will benefit from this scheme annually.

The new government-funded scheme which starts on 1 January 2011 ensures that working families will have better access to job and financial security as they adjust to the new birth of their baby.

It will entitle new parents to 18 weeks of leave paid at the minimum wage — currently just over \$10,250 — regardless of whether the primary carer works full time, part time or casual.

Access to the scheme will be subject to an income test of \$150 000 based on the primary carer's income in the previous financial year.

To be eligible, new parents need to have been working continuously for at least 10 of the 13 months prior to the expected birth or adoption of a child and have had paid work for at least 330 hours in the last 10 months. Work across multiple employers is acceptable.

"This is a positive step forward for all working families," said Ged Kearney, ACTU President.

"We've always argued that parental leave must be seen as a long term economic and social measure that will assist to increase female workplace participation, whilst also allowing primary carers the time to adapt and bond with their newborn child.

"This initiative has not only social benefits but it will also contribute to improving productivity in our economy by retaining highly skilled workers in the workforce

"We praise the Labor Government for implementing this long overdue scheme," she said.

The Government has established an implementation group that will help roll out the scheme to working parents and employers who will be administering the Government-funded payments to their employees.

Union activism and campaigns has led to various landmark wins for working mothers and parents. First came unpaid maternity leave, then paid maternity



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leave in the public sector, and then the maternity allowance before the introduction of the baby bonus in 2005.

All working families with a new child can now enjoy the benefits of this latest union movement win.