

Tuesday 7 February 2023

Paid parental leave another step closer to reality for working women

The expanded Paid Parental Leave is another step closer to being made law as the Federal Parliament discusses the new laws in the second reading debate today.

The ACTU says the new laws follow a long and concerted campaign by union members and are long overdue.

The scheme will significantly increase the overall amount of leave available while also making it more easily shared between parents, including on a flexible basis.

It will finally advance Australia from its status as the second-worst paid parental leave scheme in the developed world, which is a direct driver of women's lower workforce participation and unequal caring responsibility and causing women's earnings to fall by 55 per cent on average in the first five years of parenthood.

The ACTU will continue to campaign for parental leave to be paid at the full replacement wage and to bring forward the staged increase in leave, which even under these improved laws, will improve gradually until 2026.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“This increase from 18 to 26 weeks in Paid Parental Leave is a great step forward for Australian parents, particularly working women.

“Women have waited far too long for these reforms, which make family decision making a much simpler and fairer equation and will drive increased workforce participation by women.

“Paid parental leave should encourage use by both parents and this new scheme is a long overdue improvement. There is more work to do to continue to improve the scheme by lifting the payment rates and by ensuring superannuation is paid on Parental Leave.

“All union members around Australia should be proud of their long, successful campaign to increase the minimum entitlements under the government scheme.

“We look forward to broad parliamentary support for the scheme in today's parliamentary debates and welcome the Albanese Government's leadership and prioritisation of this issue, which is so important to close the gender pay and super gaps.”

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