

EEO TRUST

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TRUST
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Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

- Paid parental leave was increased to 14 weeks in December 2005.
- Employees are eligible for PPL if they have been employed by the same employer for the previous 6 or 12 months, for an average of 10 hours per week.
- Since 2002, more than 52,000 people have accessed the PPL scheme.
- Up to 34% of employers offered some form of PPL prior to the introduction of government funded leave.
- On July 1 2006, the weekly maximum payment increased from \$357.30 to \$372.12; and entitlement was expanded to include self employed parents.
- Prior to the introduction of PPL, New Zealand was one of three countries in the OECD who **did not** provide PPL. The other two were Australia and the US.

Best practice

Meredith Connell – Winner of the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards Large Organisation Award 2006

Auckland Law firm Meredith Connell offers an extra week's paid leave after the birth of a child and six weeks paid leave to a new parent with prime parental responsibility. Parents returning to work after parental leave can often work part-time, and remote access is provided to many staff so they can work from home. Of the 18 women who have taken maternity leave in the past three years, 17 returned to work with Meredith Connell, with one leaving Auckland for lifestyle reasons.

Deloitte – Winner of the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards Large Organisation Award 2004

In 2004, Deloitte offered 12 weeks paid parental leave for both men and women in addition to the Government funded parental leave. The firm also offer breastfeeding facilities on site; and car parks closest to the entrance of the building are allocated to new mothers who may need to leave quickly. Over the past four years, Deloitte has seen its return from parental leave rate increase from 0% in 2000 to 86% in 2003.

Westpac Banking Corporation – Joint winner of the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards Large Organisation Award 2003

Westpac's parental leave policy tops up the Government's leave to give employees 100% of their salary for a 12 week period. Employees receive 66% of their salary during those 12 weeks, and the further 34% is paid three months after the employee has returned to work. All employees taking leave are entitled to return to work gradually. A designated area for breastfeeding is provided and parents are given one year's membership to Parents Centre. In the first 11 months after the parental leave policy was introduced, the return rate rose from 48.8% to 75%.

Stagecoach New Zealand Ltd

Stagecoach operates the urban bus passenger networks in Wellington and Auckland. Twenty one per cent of its workforce is female. It developed a "First Steps" parental leave management programme to help with recruitment and retention. The programme includes resources for new parents, an agreement between the employee and their manager describing how contact will be maintained with the employee while they're on leave, a regular newsletter to staff on parental leave and invitations to workplace events while they're on leave. Stagecoach has also introduced part-time, flexible shifts for employees needing to balance out of work responsibilities.

What does your organisation offer?

Eg:

- Do you offer PPL in addition to government-funded payments?
- Do you have a contact for people wanting to find out about PPL?
- How do you tell employees about PPL options eg. intranet, staff newsletters, team meetings?
- How many employees have taken PPL since the inception of the government-funded scheme?
- Do you offer a return to work programme?
- Do you keep in touch with parents on parental leave?