

## Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

Bill Shorten

### Helping Australian mums and dads with improved parental leave and protections for pregnant workers

Wednesday 13 February 2013

Australian mums and dads will be given further support in managing their work arrangements under changes announced today by the Gillard Government.

Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Bill Shorten said new and expecting mums who want to work should receive appropriate support.

"The rise and rise of women playing a central role in modern workplaces is a welcome fact of life," Mr Shorten said.

"We want to better protect pregnant women at work and we want to provide more flexibility for families with newborn children."

Under changes announced today the Government will:

- Increase the entitlement for parents taking unpaid leave together from 3 to 8 weeks;
- Allow parents to choose when they can take their unpaid parental leave together;
- Protect women at work by ensuring that they can transfer to a safe job where one is available, regardless of their length of service; and,
- Ensure that women who need to take unpaid special maternity leave, prior to giving birth, are not penalised by a reduction in their unpaid parental leave entitlements, as recommended by the independent Review Panel which reviewed the Fair Work Act.

The Government will also expressly provide employees with the right to request flexible work arrangements from their employer when they return to work after a period of parental leave.

"As the independent Review Panel found, many employees are not aware of their right to request entitlements," Mr Shorten said.

"The Government believes expressly reflecting the right to request flexible work arrangements when returning from parental leave in the Fair Work Act is one appropriate way to achieve this.

"This is about making sure mums and dads can share their child's important milestones that they will otherwise regret missing for the rest of their lives.

"The Gillard Government knows modern Australian families want modern workplaces and this is why we are detailing new policies to make our workplaces safer and more family friendly."

The Government will finalise the details of the new provisions in consultation with stakeholders.

**For more information**

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