



Parental Leave (Qualifying Period)

-What's Changed

The qualifying period to access parental leave has been reduced from 12 months to 40 weeks continuous service. This provides greater flexibility for families and supports gender equity in caring responsibilities. This means eligible employees will now be eligible for parental leave earlier.

The definition of 'normal rate of pay' calculation for part-time employees with variable hours of work has been also amended to reflect the change to the qualifying period, specifically where the employee has completed at least 40 weeks, but less than 12 months service.

What this means in practice

When an employee has completed 40 weeks of continuous service, they are eligible to access parental leave entitlements, including paid and unpaid leave (where applicable).

The normal rate of pay definition for a part-time employee with variable hours of work is now calculated as the greater of the following:

- the average of the hours worked by the employee over the preceding 12 months; or the average of the hours worked by the employee if the period of employment is less than 12 months but 40 weeks or more; or
- the actual hours of work at the time of commencement of leave.

What entitlements does this apply to?

The reduction in the qualifying period applies to eligibility for:

- Primary and Secondary Caregiver Leave;
- Adoption Leave (for primary and secondary caregivers); and
- Grandparent Leave.

When does this change apply?

This change applies from 11 May 2026. This means that employees who had completed 40 weeks of continuous service as at 11 May 2026 will now meet the qualifying period for eligibility for parental leave.

Transitional arrangements

Any employees who became eligible for parental leave due to the change in the qualifying period before the award variation can request that their circumstances or leave arrangements be reconsidered.