

# Returning to Work

Easing back into the job after becoming a parent



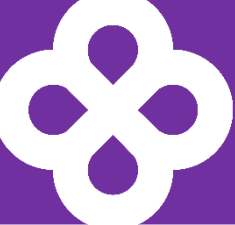
**Selection**  
PARTNERS



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# RETURNING TO WORK

## PARENTS RETURNING TO WORK

For many parents, both men and women it can be gut wrenching to leave their new baby at home and return to work. For many women whose income is necessary to maintain their lifestyle or if they are a single parent going back to work sooner rather than later is less of a choice and more of a necessity. Either way when women go back to work, the transition can at times be challenging and problematic.

This eBook offers ideas and guidance to assist employers to ensure their organisation supports employees who are pregnant, on parental leave, or returning to work; as well as to create successful, comprehensive infrastructure and programs to accommodate employee needs.

Not all of this information will necessarily apply to every organisational setting. For example, some points may be more relevant for small businesses than for large ones and vice versa. So please take what you like and leave the rest. Whilst much of this information applies to broader carers leave, it is however written specifically with new parents in mind.



**A recent study by Bright Horizons found that upon returning to work, roughly half of new parents – both men & women – would take a job for less money at a family-friendly employer. Three in five (59%) say they're likely to switch employers now that they have their first child.**



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A survey of 720 human resource professionals conducted by the Australian Human Resources Institute revealed that nearly half the respondents (47%) believed that open communication and consultation before, during and after parental leave is the best way for the organisation to retain the services of pregnant employees and parents returning to work.

## ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

A strong organisational foundation is critical to successfully support employees during pregnancy/return to work. This includes a thorough understanding of employer obligations, the development of robust policies, as well as informed and empowered managers and employees. It also includes laying a basis for relevant strategies and policies to be embedded into the culture of the organisation and as such, ensuring they are sustainable into the future.



Outlined below are the steps necessary to lay this foundation.

WHAT	HOW	EXAMPLES
<b>Think big picture:</b> understanding 'what' and 'why'	Know your legal responsibilities as a business; understand and communicate the reasons; approach the pregnancy and parental leave process as a continuum.	Utilise existing resources and advice from government and industry peak bodies; communicate policy and procedures; promote awareness and understanding.
<b>Lead the way:</b> Role model behaviour	Ensure that senior leaders in the organisation are vocal and visibly committed.	Senior leaders vocally champion the value of pregnant employees and employees on return to work; senior leaders vocally support and model flexible work arrangements.
<b>Get the right policies in place:</b> Establish effective programs	Ensure that policies regarding pregnancy, parental leave and return to work, are comprehensive, effective and in line with your legal responsibilities.	Education and coaching for managers and employees; review of all decisions on dismissal or redundancy while an employee is pregnant, on parental leave or on return to work; flexible work policies; employer funded parental leave (for primary and secondary carers); employer funded early childhood education and care options; special measures to accelerate change.
<b>Track success:</b> Monitor and evaluate policies and practices	Gain a clear understanding of the state of implementation of policies in your organisation; assess and review existing programs and practices at regular intervals to identify where improvements or changes need to be made.	Regular audits of retention rates; regular surveys and consultations with staff who intend to use/have recently used parental leave or have returned to work; actively track career progression post-parental leave; regular implementation of relevant feedback into policies and practices.
<b>Enable informed and open decisions:</b> Provide the information	Use a guide/toolkit; make the information accessible.	Hardcopy guides / toolkits / brochures for soon-to-be/recent parents and line managers; make information available for download from intranet and internet; allocation of staff positions responsible for ensuring accessibility of information.



WHAT	HOW	EXAMPLES
<b>Empower managers:</b> Provide support for management	Ensure that all managers are aware and informed of policies; support managers with coaching and resources; ensure that the organisation's structures encourage managers to support pregnant women and working parents.	Formal training and coaching for all managers; checklists for managers to assist in implementation of a formal frameworks and procedures; monitor and reward managers, eg performance criteria and repercussions for managers who discriminate; conduct surveys to assist in performance feedback.
<b>Empower individuals:</b> Provide support for employees	Offer internal and/or external coaching and/or training; create internal networks of support; establish a robust return to work support infrastructure; provide anti-discrimination and unconscious bias education.	Education and training; workshops; mentoring, coaching and buddy systems; establish online networks as a conduit for advice and guidance; establish support groups and programs.
<b>Facilitate return to work:</b> Establish flexible work arrangements	Design flexible jobs and flexible careers; promote flexible work and embed flexibility into the organisation's culture.	Establish a 'results focused' culture; Increased schedule control for employees; create job share registers; IT equipment purchases to enable remote work.

Understand and communicate the reasons for establishing infrastructure, policies and programs to support employees who are pregnant, on parental leave or returning to work. Awareness of employee rights is crucial to ensuring that these policies are integrated into the organisation's values, operations and culture.

It is also important to communicate to the organisation the critical value of working parents and being able to manage work and life responsibilities. This may be done through seminars or workshops for managers and employees alike to promote awareness and understanding of what it means to be a working parent. Embedding a clear understanding of the reasons for - and advantages of - supporting pregnant women and working parents in the organisation empowers managers to execute policies and programs successfully.

Approach the parental leave process as a continuum from pregnancy to parental leave and then return to work. To establish a successful and enduring program, it is important that policies take into account the journey in its entirety. Employers must develop their policies and practices to reflect the continuum, focusing on providing support during all phases to ensure successful transitions. The better the policies are integrated, the more successful the employer/employee relationship is likely to be.

Ensure that senior leaders in the organisation are vocal and visibly committed to supporting pregnant women and parents. This support is essential to the success of policies and initiatives, setting the position and tone 'from the top' and giving weight to the importance of the issues. Profiling senior role models who have taken/are taking extended absences and are working flexibly is an effective way to promote policies and demonstrate senior support.



Employers should assess and review existing policies by asking:

- Does the policy meet the legislative requirements?
- Is the policy in writing?
- Have you sought advice from your employer or employee association or other advisor?
- Does the policy meet the needs of employees and your organisational/business environment?
- Are there provisions to enable flexible work arrangements to meet the needs of employees?
- Is there a mechanism for constant review of the policy to ensure its continued relevance?
- Can the policy be used to attract potential staff?



Make sure that policies are flexible taking into account the specific and diverse needs of employees, such as special maternity leave, adoption, IVF, miscarriage, terminations and still birth. There are a number of ways to help accommodate these needs. For example, access to leave for medical appointments and opportunities to work from home during times of difficult personal circumstances.

When a parent is contemplating going back to work: **There is no one right time to go back.**

**There is also no one right way to return.** Some women have gone back to work after 6 months, 12 months or 5 years. Whatever works is ok and needs to be accommodated.

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## CREATE A GUIDE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

This information can be paper based, on an internet, website or social media sharing platform. Guides should include information on:

- Employee rights and eligibility
- The process for applying for leave, including key dates
- Being on leave and keeping in touch
- Returning from leave, including return to work notification requirements
- Career planning with extended leave
- Early childhood education and care options (eg directory of early childhood education and care services in the area, vacation care programs)
- Further information sources (government websites, external agencies etc.)

### Offer internal and/or external coaching/training

Coaching can be for those taking parental leave or those managing people on parental leave. This can include managing absences and managing work/life responsibilities to support employees to understand the impact of work on a parent and vice versa.

Some organisations offer workshops every quarter for women who are on leave to allow them to speak to other women about their experiences and keep in touch.





Some organisations have workshops for New Dads and Secondary Carers. The workshops are about their experience, how to maintain their careers and how to handle the new complexities of parenting in the workplace.

### Create internal networks of support

It is often useful to establish formal and informal mentoring programs to support and guide pregnant women and parents.

Some larger organisations have an on-line portal that provides pre-leave coaching, post-leave coaching, so that it's not dependant on the specific manager. People can use this to ask for advice about all sorts of things from kids' lunches, holiday care to tips for coming back from work.

### Establish a robust return to work support infrastructure

Formal return to work processes generally include a re-induction or re-orientation program for those returning from leave, as well as interviews on return and subsequently (e.g. every three months) to learn what is working well and what needs to be changed.

These interviews enable the organisations to come up with new ideas and enable the organisation to profile successful women returning to work and flexible arrangements.

Identifying a return to work coordinator or establishing a 'buddy system' to ensure that there is an individual in the organisation who is responsible for remaining connected with the employee on leave, and facilitating return to work is very important.

### Flexibility

It is also important to note that flexible work should be promoted as being accessible to both men and women and not be seen as merely a 'women's issue'. The increase of dual working parent households with dependent children has led to more men requiring and wanting greater work/life balance.


Research by Diversity Council Australia suggests that flexibility at work is critical to employment decisions and job performance for men and women, including male managers, young men, men approaching retirement and especially younger fathers.



**Studies have shown that different forms of flexible work have generated different benefits, for example, a compressed work week nearly doubled productivity and telecommuting increased productivity by 40%; flexible work schedules reduced turnover from 50% to 6% and companies that support flexible work arrangements showed 3.5% higher market value. Research by DCA.**



The above statistics suggest that, contrary to common inaccurate assumptions about women in flexible roles 'not pulling their weight', the reality is that introducing or expanding flexible work options can lead to greater efficiencies and outputs in the workplace. As a working parent myself, I know that I work at 110% when in the office, so that when I get home I can spend quality time with my son, without having to think about work.



In addition, flexibility can reduce absenteeism and turnover; reduce employee stress; increase job satisfaction; and increase capacity to attract and retain valued employees.

## SUPPORT MANAGERS WITH COACHING AND RESOURCES

Managers often face an array of issues when managing pregnancy/return to work, and may need support in executing their organisations' policies. It may be helpful, for example, to provide anti-discrimination and unconscious bias education for managers, as well as internal and/or external coaching on managing uncertainty; managing employees on parental leave; and managing employees returning after parental leave.

Selection Partners provides coaching and training to both managers and parents.




## STRATEGIES FOR EMBEDDING FLEXIBLE WORK

Diversity Council Australia, a workplace diversity advisor, has identified key strategies for implementing flexible work successfully. To follow is their information which I think it well worth sharing.

1. **Get designing:** Integrate flexibility into job descriptions, job and work design, and teams; integrate flexibility into performance reviews & development plans; assess performance on outcomes, and recognise outcomes can be met in different ways; treat flexibility as a management deliverable; explore possibilities of technology and alternative work strategies.
2. **Get cultural:** Ensure those who work flexibly are “accepted”; base relationships and expectations on trust; ensure flexible work is seen as the way things are done around here; challenge the stigma of working flexibly.
3. **Get leading:** Senior leaders genuinely commit to flexible work; leaders lead by example – they are effective role models for flexibility; leaders have an active approach to mainstreaming flexibility; leaders have the capabilities to manage a majority flexible workforce; all staff have the necessary skills to engage in flexible work.
4. **Get talking:** Show the business benefits; redefine flexible work by bringing it to life with examples; illustrate success stories – provide the details to enable others to copy; show how flexible work arrangements work on a practical level.
5. **Get strategising:** Identify flexible work as a business need; have a long term business commitment to flexible work; create a strategy for a majority flexible workforce – this is part of workforce planning; report progress and outcomes as part of standard business reporting.
6. **Get universal:** Foster a genuine acceptance of flexible work by all; ensure flexible work is available to all, regardless of job type or level; educate clients/customers and the community about flexible work.
7. **Get resourced:** Equip people with the tools they need (eg IT, team-based processes); provide appropriate resourcing for flexibility; review policy and systems that may impede flexibility implementation; explore new ways of meeting clients' needs and consult clients and customers about this.
8. **Get ROI:** Engage in risk (eg not being flexible) vs return (eg retaining a skilled workforce) discussions; make the connection between flexibility and increased individual, team and organisational performance; measure the impact of flexible work and show the financial returns.



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9. **Get proactive:** Look for opportunities to integrate flexibility into day-to-day business operations; focus on 'why not flexibility' rather than looking for reasons to 'block' flexibility.
  10. **Get team-focussed:** Consider the impact of flexible work on the whole team; focus on support from within and across teams; welcome team-based feedback on the impact of flexibility; create flexibly autonomous teams.
  11. **Get career-focussed:** Create flexible career opportunities; integrate flexibility into senior roles.

## LEADING STRATEGIES FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Implementing strategies about pregnancy, parental leave and return to work can pose some particular challenges for small businesses. The National Review consulted with employers from small businesses and organisations who shared some practical, no-cost strategies to effectively manage pregnancy, parental leave and return to work. The small number of staff and tight-knit work environments can foster closer relationships and greater understanding between employer and employee.



Some positive workplace practices and strategies of small businesses and organisations include:

**Recognising that parents are an asset:** Many small businesses provide niche goods and services and thus require staff with specific skills and experience. By valuing all employees as an asset to their organisation, small businesses understand that retaining pregnant women and parents is an imperative for the long-term success of the business.

**Having open conversations:** Open communication directly between an employer and employee, instead of through Human Resources, can facilitate trust and help to avoid confusion and uncertainty when an employee is pregnant, on parental leave and returning to work on flexible arrangements. Similarly, open conversations with all staff help to manage expectations and encourage a supportive work environment.

**Keeping in touch:** A small business employer can provide employees on parental leave advanced notice of any changes to their work or opportunities for training and professional development, such as working on projects from home. Employees on parental leave can also be invited to bring their baby to work and to team meetings and social gatherings.

**Simple, no-cost solutions:** One small business owner allocated a spare room in the office to enable his employee to breastfeed her baby and express on return to work.

**Providing some leeway:** Flexibility with shifts and allowing employees to cover for each other to accommodate early or later start and finish times can also be very supportive of new parents.

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

When one of your employees **announces their pregnancy** be aware of any risks and hazards such as;

- Manual handling – lifting and twisting, muscles are often weaker during pregnancy as ligaments are more relaxed.
- Heavy workloads and work intensity – bending, stretching, working on ladders.
- Slips, trips and falls - centre of gravity changes when pregnant.
- Low or high blood pressure - due to increased production of blood in the body when pregnant, can lead to light headedness and fainting.
- Prolonged standing – varicose veins, swelling of legs, ankles and feet, pelvic floor prolapse, lower back pain. Higher risk of blood clotting.
- Hazardous chemicals – can affect both mother and foetus through skin absorption, ingestion, and inhalation. A pregnant woman will breathe more frequently and deeply making her more vulnerable to the effects of the chemicals.
- Exposure to infections and viruses eg Rubella (German measles), chicken pox.
- Fatigue.
- Shift work - irregular work hours may be associated with a slight increase in the risk of spontaneous abortion and reduced fertility.
- Heat stress – lack of air-conditioning and dehydration, especially concerning when toilet breaks are refused by the employer so employees do not drink enough water for fear of needing to go to the toilet.





- Biological hazards – occupational exposure, such as nurses who are at a greater risk of being exposed to Hepatitis B and HIV.
- Hygiene practices - exposure to salmonella, toxoplasmosis (veterinary sciences).
- Gestational diabetes- special requirements, such as regular and frequent rest breaks, will be needed.
- Bullying and harassment – increased likelihood of experiencing bullying and harassment when pregnant and returning to work.
- Stress and depression.
- Morning sickness – nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to smells and foods.

#### Risks and Hazards – Returning to Work

- Post caesarean recovery and complications – heavy lifting.
- Stress and post natal depression.
- Bullying.

#### Risks and Hazards – When Breastfeeding

- Exposure to chemicals which can pass through into the breast milk and into the infant.
- Work patterns, irregular hours, long hours, effect on supply.
- Fatigue and shift work can affect supply.
- Exposure to heat and cold in the workplace - heat stress and dehydration can affect supply of breast milk.



#### Risks and Hazards Reproductive health - Fertility of women and men

- Exposure to hazardous chemicals (for example insecticides – farming, pharmaceuticals, factory workers, fruit pickers and packers).
- Radiation.
- Lead exposure.
- Fatigue.
- Shift work/night work – effect on fertility.

## TALKING ABOUT MATERNITY LEAVE

Often Managers don't know what they can and can't say when they find out one of their employees is pregnant or needs parental leave. Issues that may be relevant for a pregnant employee, for example:

- Expectations for work arrangements during pregnancy
- Planning for pre-natal visits (frequency and duration)
- Pregnancy related illness, including morning sickness, and how to approach associated absence
- Workplace safety and any accommodations that will be made, if relevant
- Planning for parental leave including scheduling a separate meeting to discuss details.



## TIPS FOR THE INITIAL PLANNING MEETING

- Have the right attitude. Offer congratulations.
- Be understanding that decisions impacting family choices are important and can sometimes be emotional.
- Be open and honest in terms of needs and expectations. Discuss the need to balance individual and organisational needs right up front. The more that the arrangement is set up as a partnership, the more successful it will be.
- Be prepared and informed. Create a check list that covers off on key issues. Issues to consider for an initial planning meeting include:
  - Employment rights and obligations, including Health and Safety (if relevant)
  - Policies relating to maternity leave (duration and pay)
  - The employee's plans and expectations, including 'unknowns' (such as exact return to work date and whether the employee will want to return part-time or to flexible working arrangements)
  - Options for cover during maternity leave
  - How to keep in touch during maternity leave, including frequency and type of communication
  - Access to equipment such as mobile phones or laptops
  - Access to professional development opportunities while on leave eg training, job opportunities
  - Options for returning to work, including how to identify flexible working options if required
  - Timeframes for decision making (eg when will she make a decision regarding return to work date) and key dates and potential reasons for changes in dates and decisions (eg return date may be dependent on availability of childcare).
- Involve the right people. In addition to the employee and his/her direct manager, make sure any relevant individuals are involved or aware, for example, the Human Resources department, or in the case of small businesses and organisations, the owner or general manager.



## MAINTAIN GOOD COMMUNICATION WHILE ON LEAVE

The following are some examples of ways to do this:

- Make sure a particular person in the workplace is given responsibility to forward important information about the workplace to the employee on leave, such as any important changes to the structure of the employee's workplace.
- Forward staff newsletters, updates and important emails to the employee's home email account where appropriate, or arrange for them to have remote access to their work email account where practical and where the employee has agreed.
- Invite all employees on parental leave to attend any social events (for example holiday functions), planning days, training or team building days which occur during their leave.
- Arrange for contact with the employee when they are nearing the end of their leave to discuss the return-to-work expectations of the employee and the employer, such as hours of work, flexible working arrangements, or any adjustments that will need to be made to their role.
- Make development and/or training programs available to employees on parental leave.
- Ensure that employees on leave do not miss out on performance reviews and salary increments or bonuses while on leave.
- Encourage the use of paid 'keep in touch' days, if the employee so chooses.
- Allow employees on parental leave, who have agreed, to retain technology, such as mobile phones and laptops.



## STATISTICS OF BEST COMPANIES

### CEO COMMITMENT AT THE 100 BEST

CEOs at the 100 Best Companies show how committed they are to work-life programs in the following ways:

**Meets regularly with work-life executive to review metrics and goals**

74%

**Personally uses flexible work**

70%

**Oversees or approves management compensation plans that are tied to work life**

37%



Many of the 100 Best Companies also offer a **variety of other child-care options:**

Childcare referral services: **91%**

School-holiday childcare: **71%**

Summer-program childcare: **57%**

Before- and after-school childcare: **47%**

Before- and after-hours childcare: **43%**

Travel childcare reimbursement: **33%**

Subsidies at near-site childcare centers: **19%**

Paying for a child's caregivers to travel with parents on business trips: **9%**



## EXAMPLES OF COOL PRACTICES



All full-time employees can take six months' leave while still claiming 100% of their pay packet. The time off can be taken all at once, or split it into separate periods before their child's third birthday. Employees who've had children since the start of 2013 also qualify for the benefit.

When leave expires, parents will then be offered a month-long transition program, giving them the choice of working from home on a part-time schedule to ensure their re-entry into the workplace is a smooth one.

Morgan Stanley starts supporting parent employees right at the beginning of their journey with infant transition counselling, which helps expectant parents prepare for and welcome a new baby.

**Morgan Stanley**



Telstra has an 'All roles flex' initiative, some leaders at Telstra added a message that is automatically included at the end of emails stating 'We work flexibly at Telstra. I am sending this message now because it suits me, but I don't expect that you will read, respond to or action it outside of regular hours'.

Laing O'Rourke, (a large Australian, privately owned construction company), has introduced a paid parental leave policy as well as a suite of policies to assist employees return to work after parental leave.



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The company is offers primary carers – who have been employed by the company continuously for 12 months – 26 weeks of paid leave, 18 weeks at full pay and eight weeks at half pay. Secondary carers (after 12 months' ongoing employment) are entitled to four weeks of parental leave, two weeks at full pay and two weeks unpaid.

The organisation is also focusing on the support and connection aspects of their scheme, including keep-in-touch programs, return-to-work coaching and flexible work options for all employees.



Atlassian's, childcare options include 20 weeks of paid leave for primary caregivers when the baby arrives.

Melbourne University Parkville Campus Policy - A parking permit to allow easier access to the workplace, can be given to staff who are more than six months pregnant.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MELBOURNE**



Monash University, a large employer they provide three options:



### Option 1

- Lump Sum or fortnightly allowance
- Employees may choose to return to work and receive payment in lieu of the 60% paid maternity leave they would otherwise have received.
- Employees may choose to take this payment in one of two forms:
  - A single lump sum payment; or
  - Fortnightly payments as if they were still on maternity leave and receiving 60% of their ordinary pay for the number of weeks to which they are entitled. (This is in addition to the salary that they are earning on their return to work).
  - Superannuation is not paid on the lump sum or fortnightly payments.

### Option 2

- Employees can have child care fees paid in lieu of their 60% paid parental leave
- Employees may choose to return to work and have childcare fees paid through salary sacrificing. This is up to the value that they would have received through their 60% paid parental leave entitlement. If employees choose this option:
- They must use a Monash childcare facility; and
- The end date of their childcare cover must be no later than 52 weeks after they commenced parental leave,
- Staff are not entitled to superannuation paid on the money used for childcare benefits.
- If staff choose this option and the value of the childcare is less than what they would have been entitled to had they not returned to work, the University will not make up the shortfall.

### Option 3

- Employees may choose to return to work on a reduced fraction (subject to the agreement of the University) and top up their salary (up to 100% of pay) with the unexpired portion of their 60% maternity leave entitlement, provided that they have already taken at least 26 weeks' paid parental leave and remain on a reduced fraction.
- If they choose this option, the end date of this must be within 52 weeks of the first day of parental leave.
- Superannuation is paid on the 'top up' amount so long as the top up does not exceed the substantive fraction.



Caltex Australia found that women were twice as likely to choose to leave Caltex compared to their male counterparts, with female turnover being significantly higher at the point of returning from parental leave. One of the common barriers for women returning to work was accessing appropriate

childcare. The company responded by creating the BabyCare Bonus initiative.

The BabyCare Bonus: A 3% bonus each quarter (a total of 12% per year on base salary) is awarded to the primary carer once they return to work, up until their child's second birthday.

In addition to being an inducement for returning to work, this payment is aimed at assisting to offset the additional costs to the employees, in particular, paying for childcare.

Caltex then extended the initiative to a full package of initiatives, which aims to support the happy and effective return to work for primary carer employees. In addition to the BabyCare Bonus, the BabyCare Package now includes:





- Emergency BabyCare: Access to Dial-an-Angel mothercraft nurses or carers. This service is available for up to five times each year, to the value of \$299 per session, until the child turns two.
- Help identifying appropriate childcare: Caltex partnered with Families at Work – Work/Life Specialists to provide a specialist service that assists parents locate the type of childcare they want for their baby.
- Nursing Facilities: Comfortable nursing rooms are available at the three major Caltex facilities, and are equipped with an armchair, sink, refrigerator and lockable door.
- Parental Transition Group: A group to support new and soon-to-be parents and grandparents, which meets monthly. Employees can attend in person or by video conference. The group also has a dedicated presence on Caltex's internal social media platform, Yammer.

Initial indicative findings show that since the introduction of the BabyCare package, the company now holds significantly higher retention rates around staff taking parental leave. 93% of Caltex employees who took parental leave since the BabyCare Package was introduced in late 2012 have returned to work.

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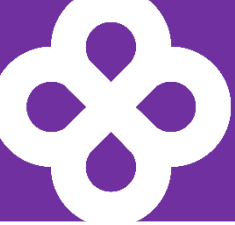
The Westpac Group's parents@work program provides parents and their managers with access to a suite of options including:



The parents@work interactive portal, accessible by all staff, where employees can access information about flexible work, company policies and government entitlements and a dedicated Q&A section supporting parents and carers. The portal also includes information about:

- Childcare resources
- Preparing for parental leave
- Staying in touch,
- Returning to work, and
- Managing your career as a working parent

Training courses - parents@work program seminars, Personalised coaching.



# IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND MANAGING THE PROCESS WELL

Phase	1	2	3	4	5
	Starting off right	Preparing for leave	Staying connected	Reintegration	Career acceleration
<b>Standard Expectation</b>	Pregnant employees should be able to continue working 'business as usual', while having specific needs accommodated	Leave and return should be clearly planned, appropriately setting expectations for both employees and managers	Parents should feel connected to the organisation during leave and the encouragement to return should be clear	Parents should be able to pick up where they left off, while being able to balance work and family commitments	Career planning and development opportunities made available – placing returning parents on same successful career trajectory as all other employees
<b>Mechanism to Support</b>	Manager and employee checklists to facilitate a positive and productive conversation about working during pregnancy; work health and safety checklist	Manager and employee checklists; discuss 'staying in touch' expectations; plan expected return dates; ensure a quick turn around on paper work and consistent follow up	Formal catch-up dates that are not cancelled; access to laptop and mobile; inclusion in development reviews; business update newsletters	Highlight flexible return options and establish a formal process for requesting and granting flexible work requests; support managers to manage flexible workers; return to work workshops and seminars; early childhood education and care services; accommodate specific needs around breastfeeding/expressing milk	Career planning; sustainable flexible program; removal of any unconscious or systemic bias



Phase	1	2	3	4	5
	Starting off right	Preparing for leave	Staying connected	Reintegration	Career acceleration
<b>Mindsets that need challenging</b>	'She's got baby brain'	'Oh, you're pregnant! You must be stepping back from your career for a while'	'She won't want to be bothered with what's happening in the business during leave'	'Have you had a good holiday?'	'She won't want that opportunity, and I don't want to load more work on her when she already has a family to balance'

Successful and productive workplaces are ones in which employers and employees are partners; in which every member is valued for their unique contributions; in which employers can develop a skilled workforce which they know will make a positive contribution to the organisation for the longer term.



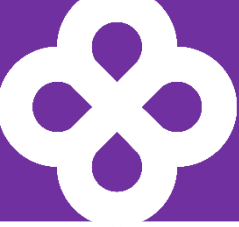
# CHECKLIST OF PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

## Flexible work arrangements include:

- ☐ Part time, job sharing, working from home and flexible work hours.
- ☐ Shifts during school hours can easily work for some roles.
- ☐ The provision of specific coaching for women returning to work following family leave
- ☐ Extended periods of employer-funded paid leave
- ☐ 'Topping up' an employee's pay during the period of Government-funded Parental Leave Pay to their full rate of pay
- ☐ Continuing to pay an employee's superannuation contributions while on unpaid leave
- ☐ A return-to-work bonus, payable after an employee has returned to work following parental leave
- ☐ The option of taking paid leave at half pay
- ☐ Non-primary carer (usually paternity) leave provisions to be taken at the time of birth or placement of a child
- ☐ Allowing the non-primary carer to access other existing leave entitlements, including annual leave and long service leave, for extended periods around the birth of a child
- ☐ Allowing employees to purchase and repay longer periods of paid leave
- ☐ Providing employees with sick/carer's leave for pregnancy-related illness as well as caring for sick children





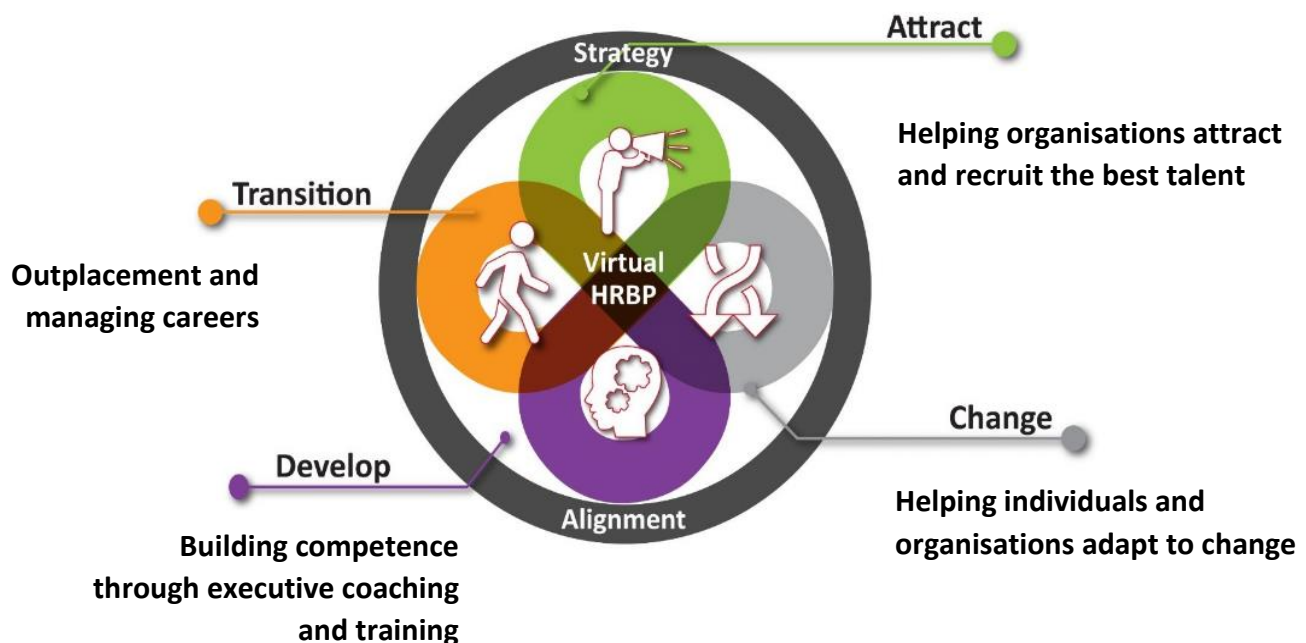


# ABOUT

## Selection Partners

Selection Partners is a talent consulting firm. We work with organisations and individuals through all areas of their careers via our four service areas; ATTRACT | CHANGE | DEVELOP | TRANSITION

We help organisations recruit talented people, we support teams and leaders as their organisations change. We provide HR Consulting services to improve capability and people practices. We develop individuals through executive coaching and a suite of training interventions. Finally, we work with those in career transition through outplacement or career coaching. We value diversity and aim to be inclusive and transparent in all our people practices. Whether its psychometric assessment, recruitment strategy, searching for key talent, coaching first time parents in return to work strategies or training leaders, Selection Partners can help.



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Our approach is to partner with organisations nationally to help them achieve their talent objectives. We focus on ***'the difference that makes the difference'***. Selection Partners is proudly an equal opportunity employer that celebrates and supports the special time in its employees lives when they grow their families.

We hope you found this eBook helpful and it provided you with valuable information to successfully support, engage and retain your valuable staff as they grow their families.

***Written by June Parker, Director Selection Partners.***

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