

Public Service Association of New South Wales

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Ms Vicki Telfer
Executive Director
NSW Industrial Relations
GPO Box 5469
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Telfer

Parental Leave Entitlements

The Public Service Association has long advocated for equitable leave entitlements for foster carers and parents who have children via surrogacy.

We are writing to seek your support in the extension of full parental leave entitlements to all parents equally.

Under current arrangements, most employees in the NSW public service who have children via surrogacy arrangements or foster children (including long term foster care arrangements) are unable to access the same parental leave entitlements as parents who adopt children.

Fourteen weeks of paid parental leave is available to the birth parent or to the primary carer of an adopted child, as well as one week of paid parental leave for the non-birth parent or secondary carer in the case of adoption. By contrast, parents who have children via surrogacy arrangements are only entitled to one week of paid other parent leave.

Similar provisions apply to foster carers, including long term foster carers who perform a valuable function that benefits children and the community. The NSW Government, as the largest single employer in Australia, should lead by example and support the work of foster carers with decent and equitable parental leave provisions.

Changes made in 2012 to the Personnel Handbook expressly exclude surrogate and foster parents from accessing the parental leave entitlements.

For a number of years the Association has raised this issue repeatedly. Regrettably, no resolution has been reached.

We ask for your support and consent to a variation of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award. If you wish to discuss any of the abovementioned, please contact my office by phone on (02) 9220-0970.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Gardiner', written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Anne Gardiner
GENERAL SECRETARY

6 October 2016