

Flinders University SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

November 2024

Overview

Flinders University were awarded a SAGE Cygnet Award for demonstrating their progress towards equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the impact of this work.

This document showcases Flinders University's initiatives to enhance parental and caregiving support. It highlights actions to improve accessibility, awareness, and inclusivity of resources and benefits, aiming to reduce barriers faced by parents and carers.

Actions

- Extended paid parental leave from 18 weeks to 25 weeks, and updated policies to include gender-neutral language.
- Enabled superannuation payments for all fixed-term staff (regardless of contract length) and part-time staff under 0.5FTE, reducing economic disadvantages for these employment groups, which are predominantly women.
- Created a "Family and Caring" webpage, guide, and forums to improve awareness of caregiving supports.
- Upgraded breastfeeding and parenting facilities to meet best-practice standards

Barriers

- Awareness gaps among staff and supervisors about available parental and caregiving supports.
- Gendered language in policies led to inequities in leave access and uptake by men and women.
- Fixed-term and part-time staff, particularly women, faced systemic disadvantages in accessing superannuation benefits.
- Staff feedback indicated inadequate facilities for breastfeeding and caregiving.





Impact

- Gender-neutral policies contributed to inclusivity, but partner leave uptake remains low, particularly for men.
- Upgraded breastfeeding facilities received positive feedback, improving user satisfaction.
- Enhancements to resources improved user experience but revealed gaps in support for carers of children with disabilities.
- Improved awareness and accessibility of parental and caregiving supports, with opportunities to further promote caregiving initiatives and partner leave uptake.

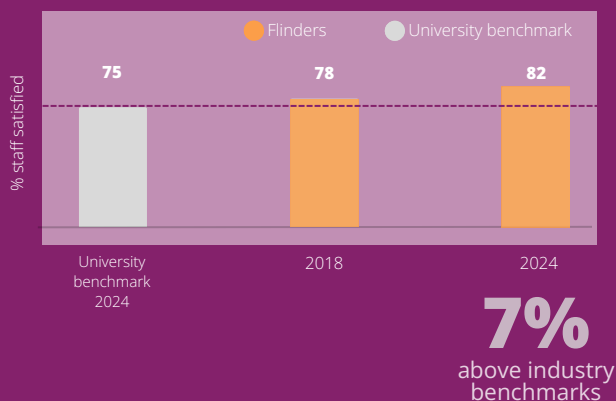
Outcomes

- Following parental leave policy changes, some women are accessing partner leave and some men are accessing primary carer leave, reflecting early progress towards equitable caregiving roles.
- Satisfaction with benefits rose from 78% (2018) to 82% (2024), exceeding university benchmarks by 7%.
- There was a reduction in the gender pay gap (total remuneration, including superannuation) following policy changes. This showcased progress toward addressing financial inequities.

“ The ability to take 50 weeks of half pay and then 2 weeks of annual leave to make up the balance of my 52 weeks parental leave was invaluable. It meant I would be paid for my entire leave as well as not losing service entitlements.

Flinders University staff member

82% of staff are satisfied with superannuation & parental leave benefits
↑ up from 78%



Limitations and future actions

- Promote partner leave and caregiving support more actively in forums and internal communication.
- Address specific needs of women caring for children with disabilities through targeted policies
- Maintain and monitor best-practice accreditation for breastfeeding-friendly workplaces.
- Expand data capture and reporting capabilities to refine policy impacts and address demographic needs.

More Information

Read the the full application:

<https://sciencegenderequity.org.au/application/cygnnet-award-application-supporting-parents-and-carers-flinders-university>

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