

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALMOST 1 MILLION EMPLOYEES COVERED BY BEST PRACTICE PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE CASE OF A STILLBIRTH

Almost 1,000,000 employees across Australia are now covered by specific paid leave provisions in their employee agreements if they are ever unlucky enough to experience the tragedy of stillbirth.

The important milestone is a result of Stillbirth Foundation Australia's targeted push to encourage corporate Australia to strengthen and clarify their paid parental leave policies for parents of stillborn children.

In 2018 the Stillbirth Foundation forged a partnership with WORK180, an organisation that helps employers support diversity and inclusion in the workplace, to establish a registry of employers that provide equal paid leave for parents of stillborn babies.

The [registry](#) now includes 58 businesses, including 20 ASX-listed companies, covering 947,241 employees. While the Federal Government has recently legislated equal unpaid parental leave entitlements for families of stillborn babies, these major Australian employers are leading the way for paid parental leave equality.

Foundation CEO, Leigh Brezler said these organisations have taken a leadership role and should be commended for ensuring their leave policies are best practice.

"We congratulate these organisations that are leading the way in recognising the impact stillbirth has on families and ensuring their workplace policies are best practice," Ms Brezler said.

"Stillbirth is an event that is far too common, with six babies a day being stillborn in Australia.

"Despite this relatively common occurrence, many employer-funded parental leave policies are not clear about what support is offered to the parents of a stillborn baby.

"Many companies currently address stillbirth on a case-by-case basis. Having policies in place that afford equal paid parental leave in the instance of a stillbirth removes undue stress and supports bereaved parents during their time of immense grief and loss.

"Moreover, stillbirth needs to be recognised in the parental leave policies of Australian businesses, given that they are often written in the sole context of caring for a baby.

"Today, 55 employers have done just that, which is simply brilliant news. It is a great step in the right direction.

"We invite all Australian employers to extend their paid parental leave policies to parents impacted by stillbirth."

Ramsay Health Care is one company which has signed up to the Registry and its Group Chief People Officer, Colleen Harris said:

"Our philosophy of *People Caring for People* underpins everything we do at Ramsay Health Care. For many years, Ramsay has supported our employees by providing full paid parental leave entitlements to those who are tragically impacted by stillbirth.

"Our employees are also supported through access to free and confidential counselling through our Employee Assistance Program."

Along with Ramsay Health Care, Scentre Group is also a member of the Registry and its Director of Human Resources, Janine Frew said:

“Scentre Group aspires to be the place where talent thrives. We recognise that supporting parents and their families is essential to providing a work environment that enables the flexibility to balance work and parenting commitments.

“We know this support is even more critical in challenging moments such as unexpected stillbirth. Scentre Group extends paid parental leave during this extremely difficult time to ensure that our people are fully supported.”

Ms Brezler said the Foundation will continue to work with governments to address inequities facing families impacted by stillbirth.

To find out more about Stillbirth Foundation Australia visit: www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au

Media contact: Nick Trainor 0407 078 138