



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**WORLD CLASS PARENTAL LEAVE PUTS LAW FIRM AHEAD OF THE PACK**

As federal politicians continue to debate the introduction of a universal paid parental leave system, national law firm Shine Lawyers has stepped up to the plate by unveiling a new parental leave program that sets an Australian benchmark for employee support.

“We’re thrilled to be able to offer our people such extensive support through our new Parental Support Program”, said National Human Resources Manager Lara Schliebs, “It is truly world class”.

While that’s a big claim, it’s more than backed up by the firm’s commitment to pay up to an additional 20% of an employee’s salary in childcare costs until their children reach school age. Add to that 18 weeks of paid maternity leave, and the development of links to childcare centres throughout the country to ease the burden of finding a spot for employees’ children, and the Shine Parental Support Program certainly stacks up with the best of the best.

“In true Shine form it’s ‘ahead of the pack’, and will help our people make a smooth transition back to work after the birth of a child”, said Ms Schliebs, “ But just as importantly, it will continue to support them in their lives both in the workplace and at home for many years.”

It’s a smart move for a law firm whose 335 strong workforce comprises 83% women. Infact it’s already paying dividends at the top, with National Legal Partner Lisa Flynn one of the first to make use of the program.

“We welcomed our daughter Tully into the world last June, and as any working woman knows it’s really difficult to find that work/life balance” said Ms Flynn.

“The lengths the firm is prepared to go to in supporting us as new parents is just amazing, and is making it possible to strike that balance between professional and family life” She added.

The program was put together following extensive research into similar programs in Australian and abroad, and in-depth consultation with employees. Among the key findings was that young mothers often felt disconnected from family, friends and work as they came to terms with the big change that birth of a child brings.

Shine is in the process of putting the final touches on a social media intranet site, which has been developed to address feelings of isolation among new parents. The site will provide a form of social & work-related networking, to help mothers feel connected to the firm, reduce anxiety about re-entering the workforce and learn from other mothers.

“It’s not surprising when you go from such a busy working life to the comparative solitude of raising a baby at home that you feel a little lost,” said Ms Flynn “So the social media aspect of the program is a practical way that we can help out.”



*Your Voice*

*Starting as a small Toowoomba law firm in 1976, Shine Lawyers has grown to become a national plaintiff litigation specialist employing over 330 staff in 23 offices across Australia. Our reputation for taking on tough cases has led international human rights advocate Erin Brockovich to enter into a formal partnership with Shine Lawyers, the only firm in the country she works with and trusts. Over the last thirty years the team at Shine Lawyers has helped thousands of everyday Australians to gain justice in and out of the courtroom. For more information visit [www.shine.com.au](http://www.shine.com.au) or phone 13 11 99.*

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