

# Creating a **Parental Leave Program**

A step by step guide to creating a 'stay in touch' program to engage and retain parents-on-leave.



# Introduction

This HR Toolkit is intended as a useful guide for HR Practitioners to create a Parental Leave Program to support employees during parental leave and to facilitate a smooth return to work transition.

The purpose of implementing a Parental Leave Program is to advocate consistent practices across your organisation in the management of employees planning, taking, or returning from parental leave.

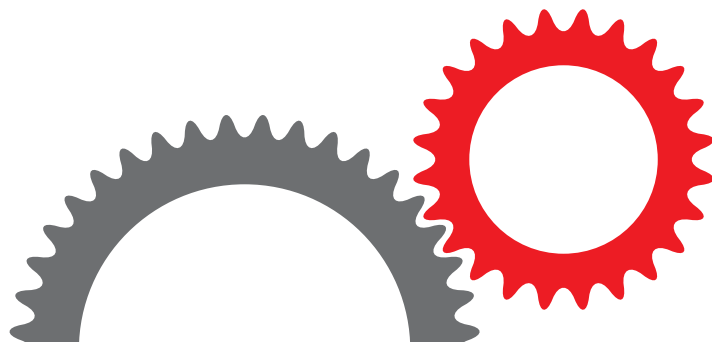
The intent of the Toolkit is to help your organisation engage and retain talented employees on parental leave. It offers practical information on strategies and processes for how employees and managers can stay connected and engaged throughout the parental leave process. This step-by-step Toolkit will also save your organisation time and money because it delivers a planning process for your HR team to implement.

Research and surveys have consistently identified that employers do not typically have a communication program in place for parental leavers, and this has the potential to negatively impact the retention rate of employees returning from parental leave. In general, most parents on leave want to have access to internal communications, and have the choice to attend meetings and other events.

The combination of a changing employment landscape and new national employment regulations means that employers have to be more accountable in providing flexible working arrangements and staying in touch with parents on parental leave. The National Employment Standards (due to be enforced in January 2010) has a section on 'Requests for flexible working arrangements', and the Productivity Commission's draft report has an eligibility provision for parents on parental leave to 'keep in touch' with their employer. These legislative changes make this Toolkit an essential tool for every HR practitioner.

The information and templates contained in this Toolkit have been designed by HR and Parenting experts who understand the challenges, thinking, and career decision-making support new parents need.

Our other Toolkits include the **Working Parents Toolkit** and the **Flexible Work Proposal Toolkit**. See section 5.1 for more information on these Toolkits.



# How to use this Toolkit

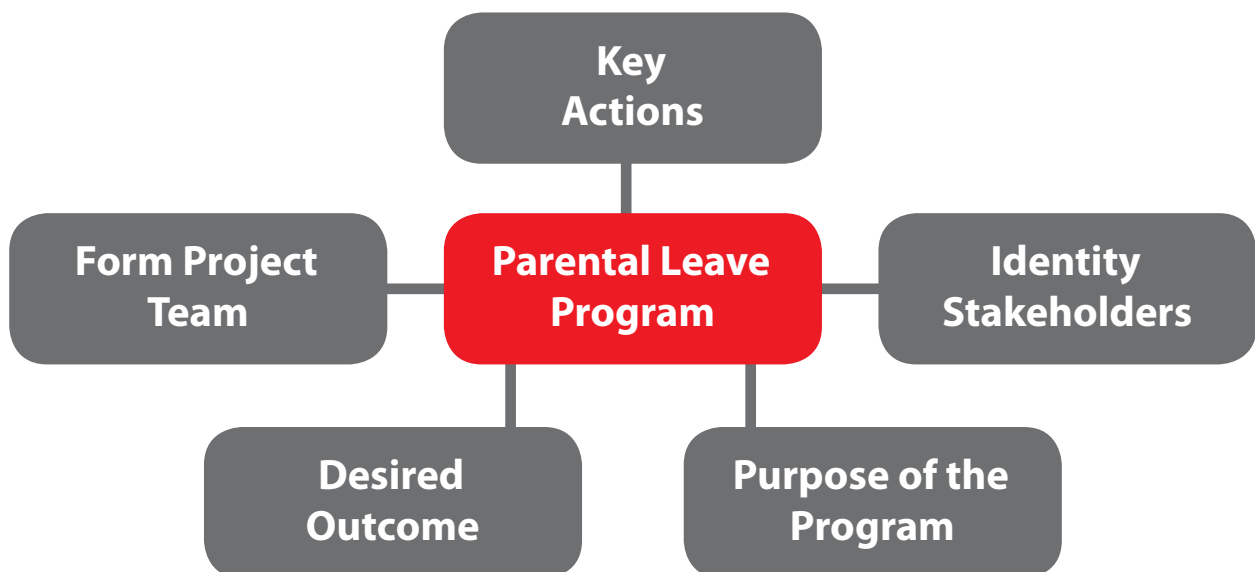
Follow the step-by-step instructions laid out in the Toolkit. Included are templates and checklists to use as a guide and can be customised to suit your organisation. We recommend you review this Toolkit in conjunction with key stakeholders who will sponsor and support a Parental Leave Program in your organisation.

To begin the process of designing your Parental Leave Program, it is vital that you have the support from your organisation, in particular your senior management team. To begin with, consider the following:

1. Establish a Parental Leave committee or project team.
2. Identify the key stakeholders – the key people in your organisation who will play a planning and support role to design and implement the Parental Leave Program.
3. Identify who will benefit from the program and research their needs.

The role of a committee / project team is to agree on the purpose and objectives of implementing a Parental Leave Program in your workplace and then plan the initiatives and deliverables that will be required to achieve it.

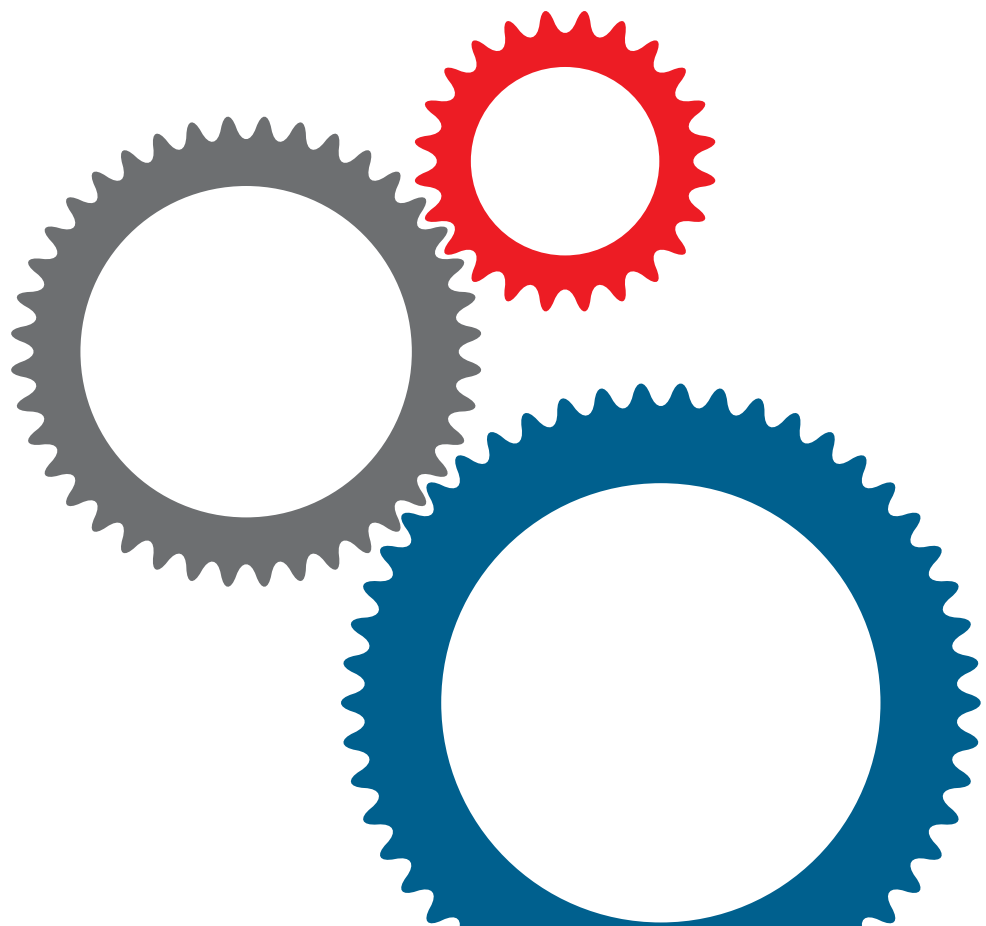
Mind map what you will need to begin introducing a Parental Leave Program in your workplace.



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For more information about the Parental Leave Program Toolkit, Working Parents Toolkit or Flexible Work Proposal Toolkit, contact:

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