



ING

Case Study:

Parental Leave Policy



Removing the Labels –

ING is the first Australian bank to remove ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ carer labels

ING is the first Australian bank to support both parents to take an equal 14 weeks of paid parental leave, and to remove all reference to ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ carer labels in its parental leave policy.

All ING employees who have been employed for 12 months or longer will now be eligible for this leave, which may be taken in one block or flexibly in blocks of two weeks up to 24 months after the birth or adoption of a new child.

The new policy aims to remove the stigmas associated with parental leave. Research commissioned in 2019 by ING showed that 50% of men felt that as a secondary carer they would have less justification to ask for more paternity leave from their employer, while two in five felt they would be judged by work colleagues or their boss if they were to take leave.

This new research further found that 76% of Australians believe that both caregivers should be allowed equal leave after the birth of a new baby, contrary to many organisations’ current parental leave policies which divide carers into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’, often only allowing primary carers paid leave.

“There’s no one way to define today’s modern family, each with a unique structure and range of challenges. Workplaces therefore have to question their own assumptions around the caregiving roles once assigned to mums and dads. Our findings tell us they no longer apply.”

Melanie Evans, Head of Retail Bank at ING

Through their research, ING identified that fathers were wanting more time with their children when born, as 27% of parents surveyed worry about missing out on bonding time with their newborn during the first few weeks, and 75% of parents feel that they need more than two weeks leave – which is often the amount given to dads.

This new research is indicative that the Australian modern family is indeed changing, and ING are striving to have family-friendly, flexible work options in place to accommodate the differing needs of their employees' families.

“By acknowledging that no two families are the same and that all parents deserve equal entitlements and flexibility,” Ms Evans says. “We hope to normalise the process of taking leave, particularly for those once considered secondary carers.

“I really hope this is the first of many changes of Australian companies and workplaces in responding to the fact that Australian families do need more access to paid parental leave and they do need more flexibility in caring arrangements.”