

12 November 2019

## **Perinatal Depression and Anxiety in Australia taking a toll on Parents**

Perinatal depression and anxiety is costing Australia \$877 million annually according to a PwC analysis prepared for Gidget Foundation Australia and the Perinatal Mental Health Consortium. This is supported by the findings of the recent National Working Families survey undertaken by Parents at Work & Karitane of more than 6,000 Australian families, where 60% of parents and carers said they are finding it difficult to look after their physical and mental health as they juggle work and family commitments and one-third noted the combination of work and family responsibilities contributed to stress and tension in relationships with their partners and children.

Arabella Gibson, CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia, said “This week as we mark Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Week, one in five mothers and one in ten fathers or partners across the country will be experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety - that’s over 100,000 Australians every year. Over 50% of new parents will experience adjustment disorders. The PwC analysis quantifies the widespread immediate and ongoing health, economic and wellbeing impacts of perinatal depression and anxiety on both parents and children.”

Karitane CEO, Grainne O’Loughlin said parents taking stress home from work impacts on not only their wellbeing but the wellbeing of their children, particularly when there is a lack of employer support.

“We know that The First 2,000 Days shape a child’s future and during this time children develop many of the skills and abilities that help them grow into healthy, productive adults. Bonded attachment, where a child feels a strong positive connection with a parent or caregiver, is critical for a child’s brain development, their ability to form relationships and is proven to improve education outcomes as well as reduce the risk of mental illness later in life.

“The 2019 National Working Families survey found half of all parents returning to work after parental leave report significant fatigue; a third are worried and anxious; and one in five report feeling depressed. We need to find ways to better support parents and families at this crucial time, and employers have a wonderful opportunity to be part of the solutions,” she said.

Parents at Work CEO, Emma Walsh, said most individuals reported that their job helped them feel personally fulfilled but highlighted the need for more support to better manage the pressures of work and care demands.

Top priorities included a need for more flexibility over when and where they worked, reduction in job pressure and overall workload and help with care services such as having access to child care at work, or being offered child care rebates from their employer,” she said.

Karitane, Parents At Work and Gidget Foundation Australia collectively support families during this critical time and are calling on business, government and community leaders to unite and promote the importance of family-friendly workplace policies by investing in measures that support employees with caring responsibilities.

This includes investing in inclusive paid parental leave for all parents to improve the opportunity for families to share caring responsibilities; easier access to flexible work to support breastfeeding, parenting responsibilities, meet childcare needs and balance work and family commitments in the first 2000 days of a child’s life.

Ends.

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View the [2019 National Working Families Report](#)

View the [The Cost of Perinatal Depression and Anxiety to Australia Report](#)

For more information visit

[Karitane](#)

[Gidget Foundation Australia](#)

[Parents At Work](#)

Parents requiring support can contact:

Gidget Foundation Australia Ph: 1300 851 758

Karitane Ph: 1300 CARING