



Thursday, 20 August 2009

### Report: paid maternity leave on the rise

Sustainable national productivity and growth partly relies on equality for women in the workplace - according to Alcoa's Director of Talent, Learning and Development Jann Kinsela.

The comments follow new research released in Canberra today, by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) and Alcoa of Australia, showing an increasing number of organisations is now offering paid maternity leave.

The data were collected from 2300 organisations, representative of over one million Australian women. As an EOWA recognised 'Employer of Choice for Women', and as part of the company's commitment to promoting equal opportunity and more diverse workplace, Alcoa funded the EOWA research.

"Flexibility, equality and providing career opportunities for women are critically important for well functioning communities, and it's research like this which helps sign-post the way for businesses and society to progress," Ms Kinsela said.

50.8% of organisations now provide employees with paid maternity leave – an increase by more than 15% from 2003. However, Australia saw only a 1.9% increase in paid maternity leave between 2007 and 2008.

"EOWA is currently collecting data on how organisations plan to change their current practices and policies given the introduction of the Government funded paid parental leave scheme," Ms Steele said.

Ms Kinsela said Alcoa continues to offer 13 weeks paid maternity leave, compared with the average duration of 9.4 weeks.

"Alcoa's return to work rates following maternity leave are high at around 90 per cent, and data tells us that our ability to offer part-time arrangements for women returning from maternity leave has had a significant impact on the retention of women," Ms Kinsela said.

"But at Alcoa, we also know that providing paid maternity leave and part-time arrangements are only two parts in providing women with equality and a work/ life balance.

"Diversity initiatives and flexibility are key to business sustainability – taking these issues seriously simply makes good business sense.

"Providing opportunities for women to realise their career potential have been central strategies for Alcoa for many years now, because we know that we stand a far greater chance of attracting the right people who will be the best fit for our organisation and who will be best placed to deliver our business results."

- ENDS -

#### The Survey

The EOWA Survey was based on the responses of more than 2,300 organisations that provided their annual equal opportunity compliance reports to EOWA in 2008. The data is collected from organisations with 100 or more employees.

#### Alcoa of Australia ACN No 93 004 879 298

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australia's aluminium

The full survey results are available by clicking [here](#).

### **About EOWA**

EOWA is a Federal Government statutory authority which administers the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999). Employers of 100 people or more are required to report to the Agency on the initiatives they take within their organisations to advance women in the workplace. EOWA works with employers to improve equal opportunity outcomes for women in the workplace to create an Australia where women in the workplace can achieve their greatest potential.

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