

News Release

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More staff taking parental leave for longer

More ANZ employees are staying at home for longer as their family's primary caregiver since the bank announced it was extending parental leave last year.

In July 2018 ANZ committed to giving staff up to 26 weeks of paid parental leave, two years ahead of the Government's legislative extension. Since then there has been a small increase in people taking parental leave but the average length of time taken has increased.

"We're thrilled our people are taking advantage of the extended parental leave to be at home with their families," says ANZ General Manager Talent and Culture Michelle Russell.

"In 2018 dads took an average of four-and-a-half months' parental leave, up six weeks on 2017. At the same time 60 percent of mums who took parental leave took more than 12 months, up 14 percent on the previous year."

Dave Gascoigne, Head of Digital Marketing at ANZ, recently returned from almost five months' parental leave. His son, was five months old when Mr Gascoigne became his family's primary caregiver so his wife could return to work.

"I remember feeling a bit nervous before staying at home full-time with three kids but it was the best thing I've ever done," Mr Gascoigne says.

"I found sole parenting massively geared towards females. I'd hear about mums' retreats and coffee groups, and I was always one of the only dads at the playground or school pick-ups.

"Fortunately, I made some great friends with some of the mums at school and learned we were all having similar parenting experiences."

Mr Gascoigne acknowledges it's not always practical for dads to be the primary caregiver but encourages those who can to take the opportunity.

Ms Russell says it's pleasing to see more men using employee leave benefits beyond parental leave, too.

"We've seen an 8 percent increase in dads taking leave to support their families this year."

As part of ANZ's commitment to achieving a more gender equal workforce the bank is sponsoring 'Kiwi Dads', a photography exhibition and forum.

The event is designed to start conversations between workplaces and men and their families with a goal of encouraging more men to stay at home with their children. It also aims to break down stereotypes of men caring for children.

“We hope this exhibition opens the door to encourage more men to take up primary caregiving responsibilities,” Ms Russell says.

“Not only is it a positive experience for fathers and children, it also helps create a shift in equality – when men are more equal at home, women can be more equal at work.

“We know spending time with family is important to staff because it’s important to us too. We think it’s also helped keep our staff around for longer.”

Of ANZ’s almost 8,000 staff, almost 75 percent of current employees have been with the bank for more than three years.

ANZ’s parental leave benefits:

- ANZ offers staff 26 weeks of paid parental leave if they are the family’s primary caregiver.
- ANZ continues KiwiSaver contributions for staff for the entire time they’re on parental leave – up to two years.
- Staff can take an extra two weeks paid family leave.
- Staff continue to receive performance reviews while on parental leave.
- Staff accrue annual leave at full value while they are on parental leave, so many staff incorporate this accumulation of leave into reduced hours when they return to work (for example be on full pay but take one day of annual leave per week)
- ANZ recently introduced Loyalty Leave giving staff who have worked with the bank for longer than three years and two days’ leave each year.

ANZ employs almost 8,000 staff across New Zealand of which almost 60 percent are female.

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