

Responses to the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care's questions in relation to Family Friendly Workplaces

1. [In relation to FFW] ... there is sometimes a gap between policy of what a company might deliver and some of the practical reality on the ground. Can you fill us in on any audit [done to assure the program is working]?

Once an organisation has completed their initial certification (given benchmark measurement and feedback in relation to where they are currently, aligning to the national standards) an action plan is completed and approved by the organisation's leadership team with a commitment of what is going to be done to improve current policies, practices and education.

In reference to an audit assuring the FFW certification is working successfully, a yearly review of the action plan is required to continue the certification. This audit includes meeting with an FFW consultant to review their intentions established 12 months prior when they were officially first certified. The FFW consultant then signs-off on what they have actioned based on initial set intentions.

For example, founding partners of the FFW Program, Deloitte Australia, have recently gone through the audit process to be re-certified for their second year as a Family Inclusive Workplace.

As part of their commitment to their ongoing action plan (a requirement of the FFW certification) Deloitte has recently implemented the following:

- **Return to Work Support:** An additional support payment for a period of 12 months and revised performance targets for new parents returning to work
- **Parental Leave Policy upgrades:** Five days of fertility leave, 10 days of miscarriage leave and the removal of the 12-month eligibility clause between Parental leave entitlements
- **Flexible Work:** an extended 'Family Flex' policy enabling parents of school-aged children to work more flexibly during the school holidays.

Based on these actions Deloitte Australia was re-certified for their second year.

FFW encourages and requires organisations to measure the impact of policies and practices they put in place. Measurement enables assessment and amendment of organisational strategy, policies and practices, to sustain workplace culture. Measurements by employers are encouraged in the form of employee data of FFW policies (i.e. men taking parental leave, carers taking up flex leave policies, wellbeing programs being accessed etc), and employee feedback surveys for qualitative data to see how the policies are being received.

FFW has developed a social impact framework and is in the process of developing tools to help us measure the outcomes of Family Friendly Workplace initiatives embedded by employers. This includes an employee survey. [Click here to find out more about the social impact framework.](#)

2. [Under FFW] how do you practically assess the outcomes for workers and employees?

As mentioned above, employers are advised to measure impact through data analysis and employee feedback surveys across all areas of policy to assess employee satisfaction and wellbeing, and program/policy effectiveness.

FFW will then assess the feedback and data provided by the employer and then advise accordingly on further improvements and actions that can be included in their action plan. FFW action plans are not a static document - it is a requirement that they are regularly reviewed based on measurement data

to support the organisation to develop its FFW culture and processes for better outcomes for all working families.

3. What are the criteria that those companies or workplaces are hitting and then how you evaluate how they pan out on the ground?

The criteria employers are required to meet are based on the National Work + Family Standards as defined by UNICEF Australia and Parents At Work. See [detailed criteria of the standards here](#).

The evaluation takes place through the FFW consultant reviewing FFW survey data completed by the employer. A report is then written in response to this data to support organisations to write and submit a minimum 12-month action plan and a two-year certification that is reviewed annually.

As stated previously, employers are required to measure data in order to determine the impact of the action plan initiatives on the organisation and its people.

The social impact framework can be utilised by employers to measure their data against. See the [Bridging the Work + Family Divide report](#) which features the FFW social impact framework and its relevance to organisations.

4. Is FFW done for a fee? If so, what and how

There are different pathways to certification and dependant on an organisation's progress and size, certification fees range from \$3000-\$7500 AUD.

5. How did you locate the 70 companies? Did they select you, or did you go out hunting them?

Organisations enter certification via a number of avenues:

- Current clients of Parents At Work who are eligible for certification
- Referrals from other organisations or advocates in the FFW and Parents At Work network
- Media coverage
- Standard marketing practices
 - Events including employer focused roundtable events and 'How to Get Certified' webinars hosted by Parents At Work or FFW
 - Email marketing
 - Social media marketing
 - Incoming enquiries via the FFW and Parents At Work websites

6. I want to know who the 70 companies are, and I want to know what you do when people fail those criteria.

There are 77 certified Family Inclusive Workplace companies including:

- Accenture
- AGL
- ANZ
- APRA
- Art Processors
- Australian Pacific Airports Corporation
- Baker McKenzie
- BMS
- Built Holdings
- Cardno
- Carsales.com
- Catholic Care Sydney
- CBRE
- Commonwealth Bank
- CHU
- Clayton Utz
- Cobild
- Colin Biggers & Paisley
- Core Projects
- Deloitte
- Data#3
- Department of Regional NSW
- Dyson
- Endeavour Energy
- Genea
- Grant Thornton
- The GPT Group
- Group M
- HCF
- HESTA
- HSBC
- Hudson Institute of Medical Research
- IBM
- IKEA
- ING Bank
- Investa
- Jemena & Zintra
- KFC
- KPMG
- L'Oreal
- Leidos
- Lion
- Macquarie Group
- Marsh
- Medibank
- Mercer
- Microsoft
- MSD
- Multiplex
- NBC Universal
- Netwealth
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Novartis
- Oliver Whyman
- oOh! Media
- Organon
- PepsiCo
- Pernod Ricard Winemakers
- PEXA
- QBE
- Queensland Department of Education
- Ranstad RiseSmart
- Sandoz
- Sanofi
- Steadfast Group
- Sydney Airport
- RES Australia
- RPS Group
- Sanofi
- Tafe NSW
- Transport for NSW
- UM
- UNICEF Australia
- Viva Energy
- Volvo Cars Australia
- Workday

What normally occurs when an organisation does not meet the criteria after completing the Readiness Check/Survey is that an FFW consultant will support with advice on the types of actions that may need to occur within the organisation before re-applying.

This may include support via the Parents At Work Employer Membership network whereby organisations receive expert advice on best practice family friendly workplace policy, practices and services. Once an organisation is ready they are welcomed into the certification journey.

Based on the readiness survey, Family Friendly Workplaces does not allow an organisation to start the certification program unless they meet minimum criteria.

In the rare case where an organisation is accepted into the program and its action plan fails to meet the minimum standards, that organisation is supported to make the necessary changes in order to become certified.

7. What is the flexible workplace criteria that people need to meet to pass that part of your test [for each of the pillars of the program]

The criteria for organisations to create flexible workplaces covers embedded support for flexible work practices to enable employees to combine work with life/caring responsibilities.

Standard	Criteria Summary for Assessment
A Flexible Work Policy/Framework exists	A formalised flexible work policy or framework exists and is inclusive of all employees. The policy encompasses provisions for flexible location and hours in which work is performed in both a formal and informal context. There are a range of flexible work arrangements offered allowing employees to facilitate, combine and achieve work and family life commitments. Policy is reviewed at a minimum every 2 years.
Flexible Work is promoted and supported, there are	The organisation utilises varied communication methods to promote flexible work within the organisation. There are diverse examples of

examples of flexible work in the organisation	flexible work arrangements showcased via employee stories at every level of the organisation.
Technology and tools are provided to enable flexible work	Flexible work is enabled by providing employees the relevant technology and or tools necessary to perform their work flexibly, where necessary. Employees have access to work tools and training to embed flexible work practices.
Leaders are enabled to manage a flexible workplace and workforce	The organisation provides leaders with a framework and guidelines on how to effectively embed flexible work in their team. Leaders are encouraged to facilitate flexibility and hybrid ways of working consistent with the organisation's policy or framework. Leaders understand where they can seek support in structuring jobs to enable flexible work approaches.

See full detailed criteria of the [standards here](#).

8. In terms of the leadership of the 70 different companies, would you be able to give us the shape of the leadership structure—how many men and how many women are in those roles—because that's important. And of those 70 companies that are family friendly, how many men in leadership positions have actually taken, in their own life, a significant chunk of time out of the workplace to provide care for a child or for an elder, or because of a chronic illness. The children thing is probably more likely, but I'd like to get the lie of the land there, because I think you've got an interesting set of people for whom clearly this is something that they need too. They've come to you with the reputation, so I'm hoping we're going to find some positive data, but I want to understand that. Have you had any who've failed?

Leadership structure varies based on organisational size, industry and culture. Usually the CEO and other executives are engaged in the project with action plans needing to be endorsed by senior leaders (CEO, HR Directors, People Leaders etc) before certification can be approved. Of the 76 certified companies, 15 (or 20%) have female CEO's.

See the [Bridging the Work + Family Divide report](#) for a breakdown of the industry sectors and overview of the types of organisations that have completed certification thus far.

Many organisations are reporting an increase in the number of men taking parental leave and other flexible work roles due to caring commitments. Within these organisations there are many senior executive leaders demonstrating this through their own lived experience. Examples are Richard Tew, Country President, Novartis (Founding Partner of FFW) who is a strong advocate for both men and women utilising Novartis' family friendly workplace policies.

"At Novartis, we understand that one of our greatest strengths is our people, and being a family friendly workforce has been absolutely critical to that. As a working father myself for almost 20 years, and someone who still has a young daughter at home, I have seen immense change in both people's expectations and the standards of workplace flexibility when it comes to supporting families in all their different forms".

~ Richard Tew | Country President and General Manager Novartis Pharmaceuticals

[Read more from Novartis here.](#)

George Thompson, Head of Daily Banking, ING is another male executive advocating for men to embrace the family friendly workplace policies available to them. Hear from George in an interview with him in 2021 shortly after ING were certified as a Family Inclusive Workplace:

“Since my leave there have been several others that have also taken parental leave and used ING’s policy in a way that works best for them and their family.”

~ George Thompson

[Read the interview with George here.](#)

There are many other examples of male executives from certified organisations advocating in the FFW space, however, exact numbers by way of data analysis are not available to us at this point in time.

It is clear that many organisations and their employees are calling for standard policies that support working parents and carers to balance their work and caring commitments. Many leaders speaking in the family friendly space are aware of this and hence have responded by embracing the Family Friendly Workplaces certification program.

In terms of having had an organisation fail, to this day there has not been a single organisation start the process that will not become a certified Family Inclusive Workplace, however, some organisations may take longer to complete the journey than others.

9. How quick is it between coming in and certification? What changes have you asked companies to make?

Organisations generally take between 10-20 weeks to progress through the certification journey.

See below for a step-by-step guide to the certification and evaluation process.



In terms of the changes we ask organisations to make, this is dependent on where the organisation is at in relation to each of the four FFW categories (standards) and are therefore tailored to the organisation's strengths and opportunities.

An example may be removing gender labels from a parental leave policy; introducing a policy for Domestic and Family Abuse and Violence; and enabling carers to meet their caring commitments through flexible work opportunities and/or incorporating wellbeing programs that support employees to thrive at both work and at home.

To view the FFW Employer Guide that organisations receive at the beginning of their journey [click here.](#)

10. How long is the FFW contract for? Perhaps you could provide the contract details

The Australian Government provided funding in the 2022-23 Women's Budget Statement to help FFW expand to even more Australian businesses over the next three years. Contractual arrangements are not currently in place but will be developed using standard procedures of the Office for Women, and we understand the commitment will be subject to confirmation through the upcoming budget of the Albanese Government.