

Submission to the Review of the National Employment Standards

Topic: Annual Leave Entitlements

Overview

This submission addresses Australia's minimum annual leave entitlement and how it is structured under the National Employment Standards.

Annual leave quantum

Australia's current minimum of 20 days of annual leave no longer reflects modern work intensity or expectations around employee wellbeing. Increasing the minimum entitlement to 25 days would better support recovery, reduce burnout risk, and align Australia more closely with leave entitlements offered in comparable economies.

Structure of leave entitlements

In addition to increasing the total amount of leave, consideration should be given to how leave is made available. The current accrual-based model can discourage meaningful leave-taking, particularly for newer employees.

A model similar to that used in the UK, where employees receive their full annual leave entitlement at the start of the leave year, would provide greater flexibility and improve employees' ability to plan and take extended breaks.

Benefits for employees and employers

A defined annual leave period with expiry encourages employees to actually use their leave, supporting mental health and aligning with Australia's evolving psychosocial safety obligations. From an employer perspective, a front-loaded, time-bound entitlement enables clearer cash-flow planning and avoids the long-term accumulation of leave liabilities.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I support increasing the minimum annual leave entitlement to 25 days and adopting a front-loaded annual leave model similar to the UK.