

Gaps in Australia's PPL system – inequities and opportunities



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Successes in Australia's PPL scheme

- In the last 3 years, Parental Leave Pay has been provided to about 750,000 parents.
- The government scheme seeks to be inclusive of different work histories and contexts.
- PPL evaluation completed in 2014 found the scheme was:
 - Extending the time that parents take off work (including a small but important increase for fathers)
 - Increasing the rate of mothers returning to work (child turned 1)
 - Some improved maternal health and opportunity to breastfeed

PPL scheme gaps / limitations

- Need for longer duration of PPL for both mothers and fathers
- Fathers' and Partners PPL provisions and low uptake
- Variation in employer-paid PPL across organisations
- Lack of superannuation while on parental leave



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Fathers' and Partners' PPL

What does fathers time away from work look like in Australia?

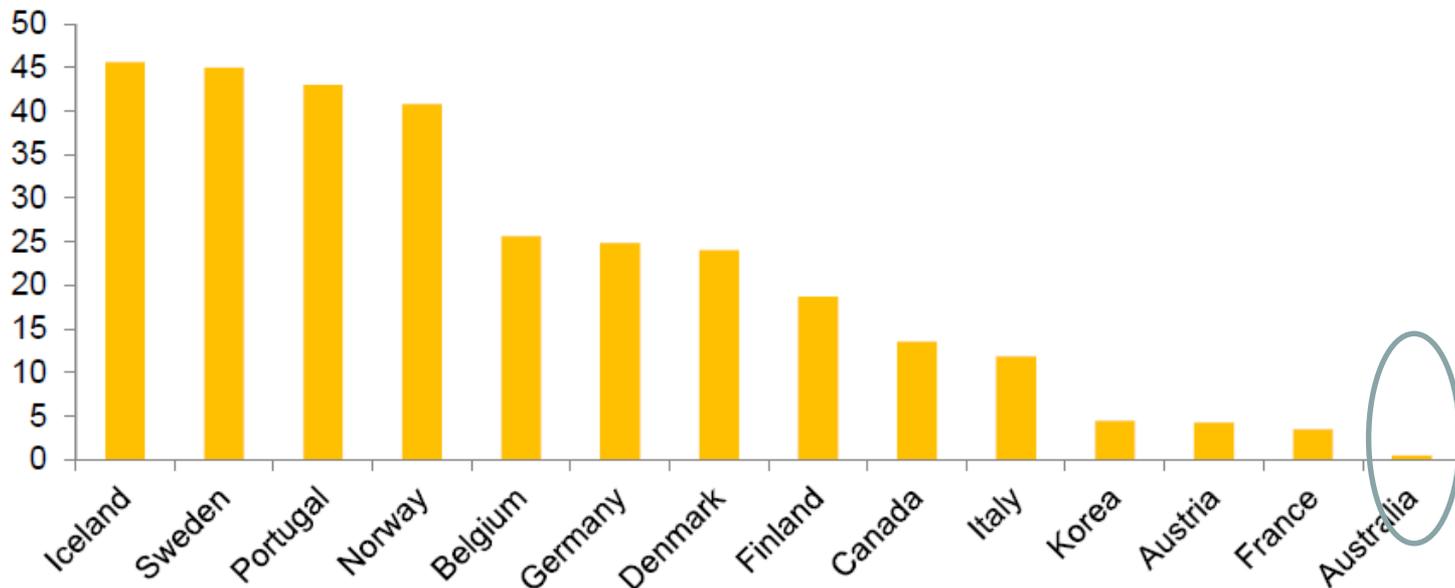
- Most dads (around 80%) do take some time away from work
- The average length of time taken off remains short (10-14 days)
- The time they take off is often supported by annual leave, and some PPL (but hardly ever as the 'primary carer')
- *For Dads the MIX includes*
 - Parental Leave pay
 - Dad and Partner pay
 - Employer-funded pay



Fathers' and Partners' PPL

- *Parental Leave Pay* - 18 weeks PPL at the minimum wage to the primary carer (<95% uptake is women).

Table 3: Share of men using publically administered paid parental leave, 2013



Source: OECD Family Database (2016), Use of childbirth-related leave by mothers and fathers, retrieved: <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2-2-Use-childbirth-leave.pdf>, viewed 30 June 2017

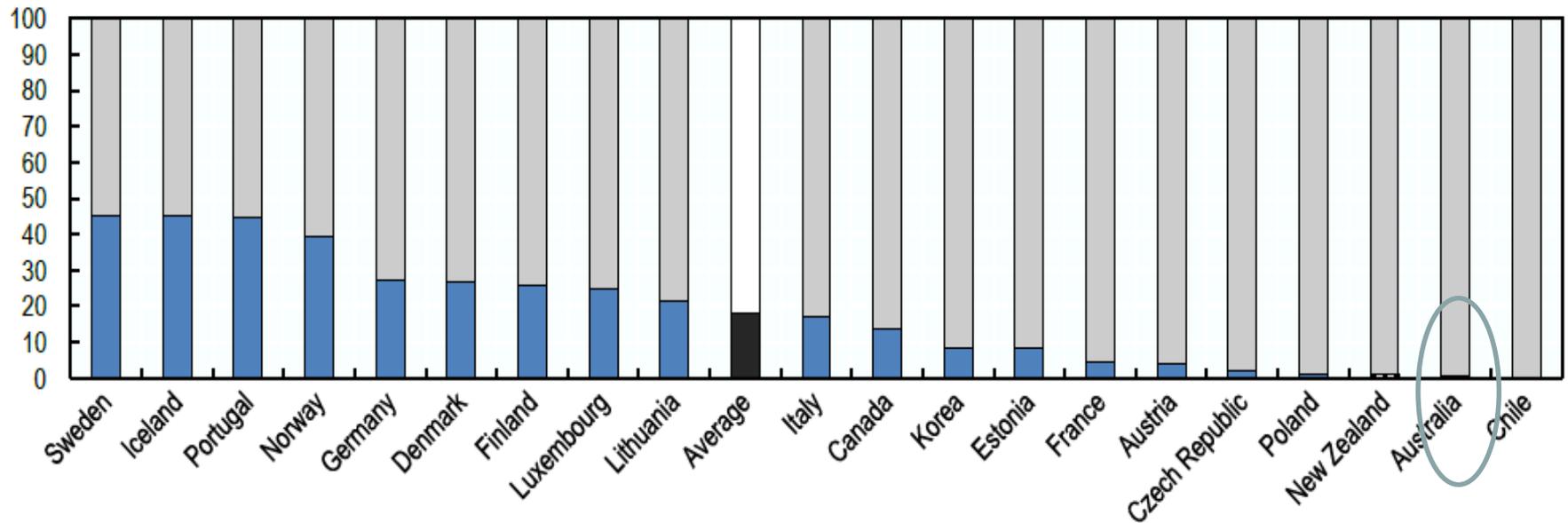
Fathers' and Partners' PPL

■ Men

□ Women

Panel B. Gender distribution of recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave/benefits

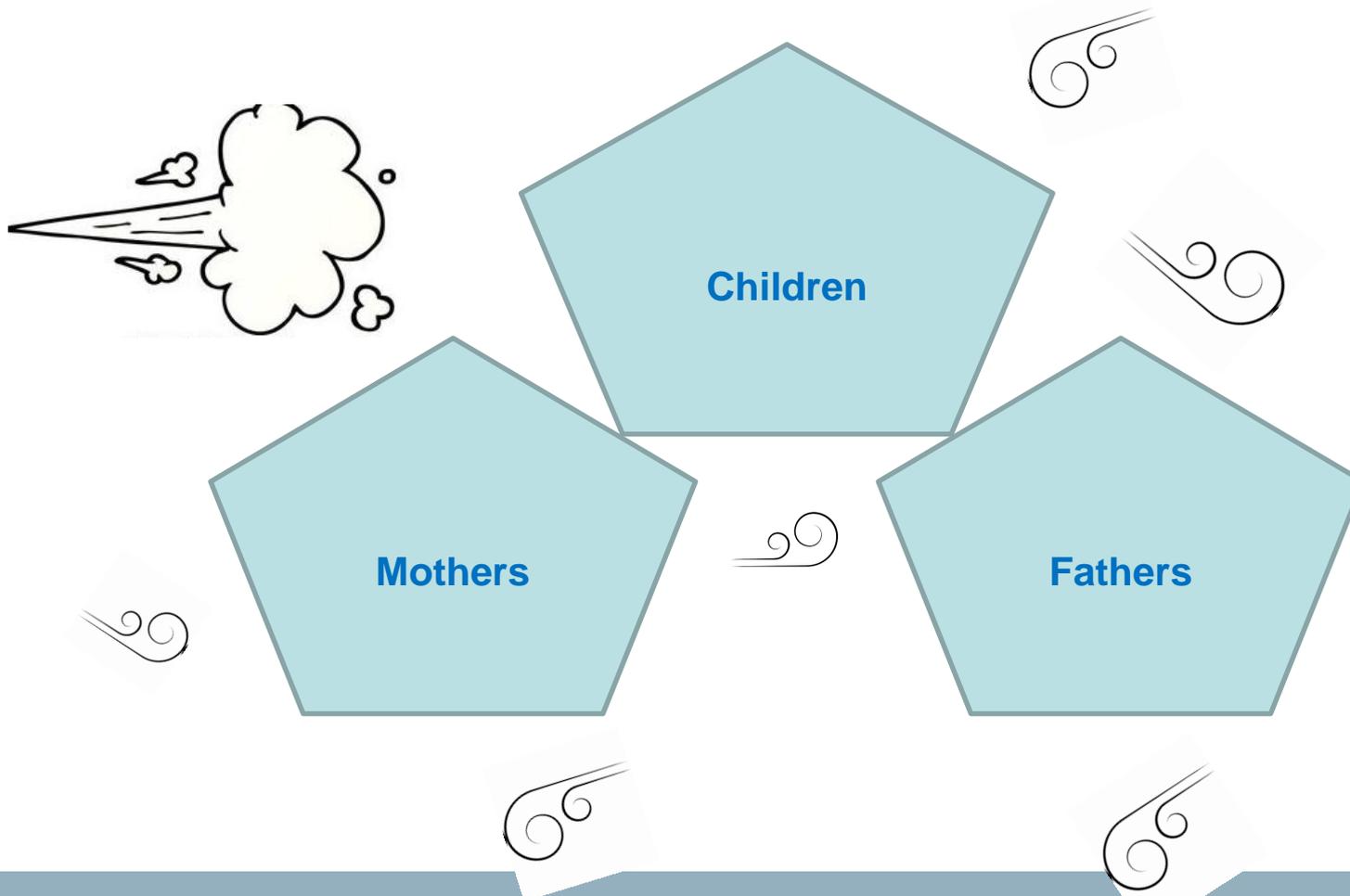
Share of users/recipients (%)



Fathers' and Partners' PPL

- *Dad and Partner Pay* - 2 weeks DAPP at the minimum wage for fathers and secondary carers.
- Problems with uptake? PPL online evaluation survey (April 2013) found 36% of those eligible were taking DAPP, and about 50% for those who were aware of the payment.

Prefaced on our understanding that
fathers' care is *important to the family*

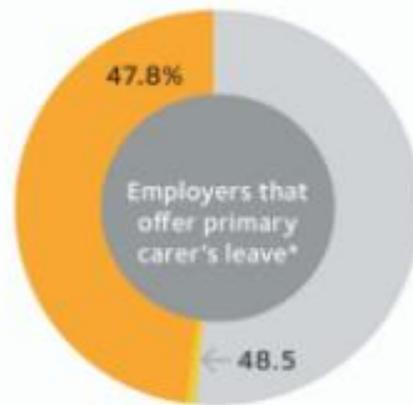


Employer funded PPL

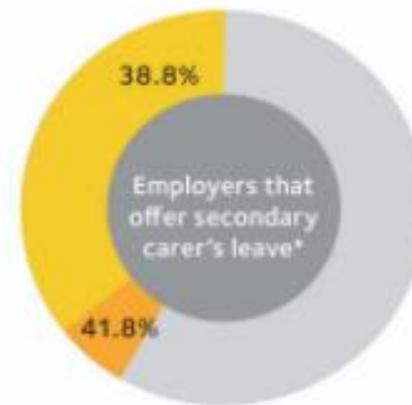
- *Employer funded PPL* – is not a legislative requirement, but is often regulated through industrial agreements and/or workplace policies.
- WGEA data from 2017-2018 shows that in larger organisations (with ≥ 100 employees):
 - * 48.5% offered PPL for *primary carers* (94.9% uptake women) average length is about 10 weeks across all industries.
 - * 41.8% offered PPL for *secondary carers*. average length of secondary carer's leave offered is 1.6 weeks.

Industry/workplace inequality in PPL

Access to parental leave is not improving



5-year difference
-0.7pp

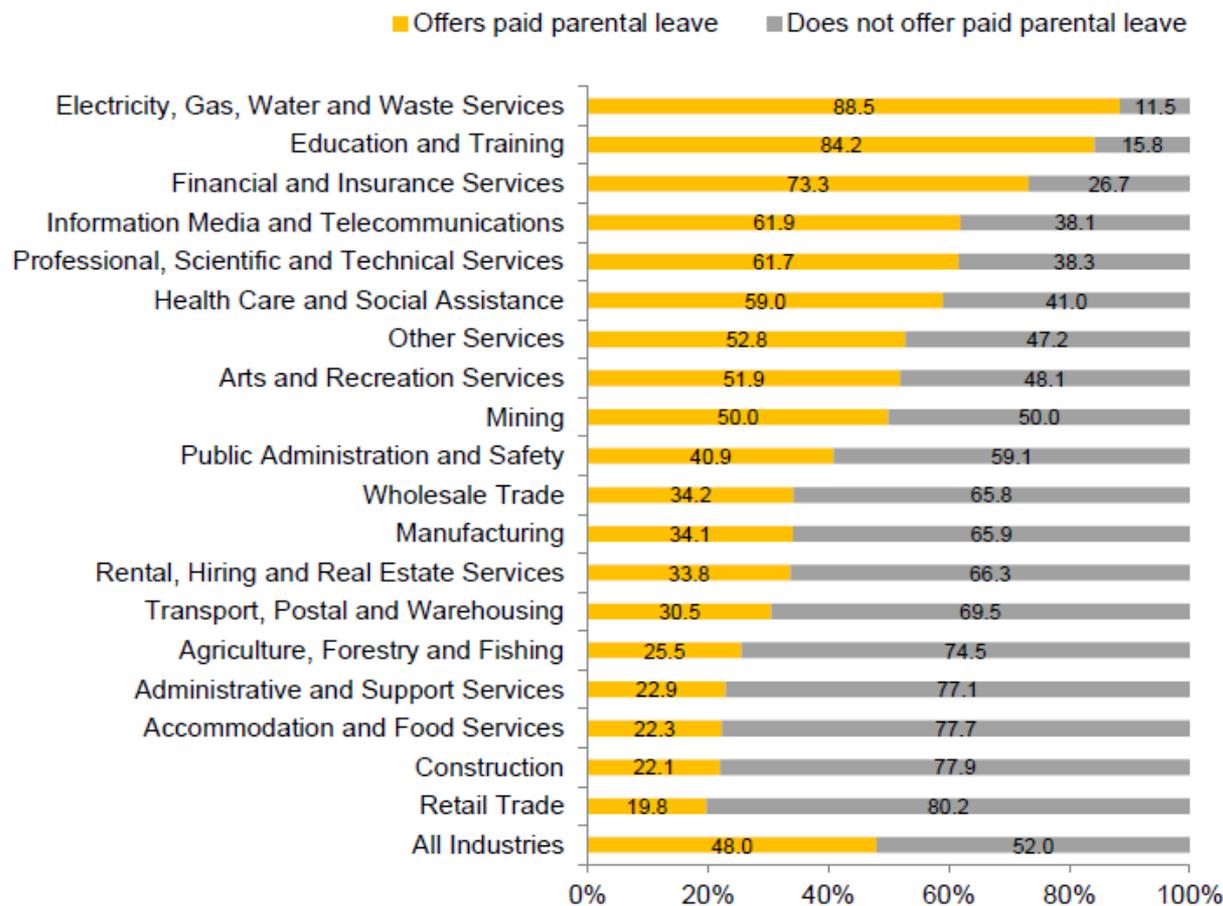


5-year difference
3.0pp

2013-14 2017-18

Industry/workplace inequality in PPL

Table 1: Proportion of organisations offering paid parental leave by industry 2015-16



Source: WGEA (2016), Agency reporting data (2015-16 reporting period).

Final acknowledgements

- *Dr Amanda Cooklin (La Trobe University): close colleague in developing these ideas, along with Emma Walsh (CEO parents at Work and other).*
- *PPL Evaluation Team: who are the foundation of this work.*
- *This presentation uses data from:*
 - The Workplace Gender Equity Agency (WGEA). <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>
 - “Insights Guide: Towards gender balanced parental leave”
 - “2017-2018 Gender Equality Scorecard”

