

Portable Long Service Scheme - FAQs Attributes

What is driving the development of a Portable Long Service Leave (PLSL) Scheme?

The implementation of a PLSL Scheme for the ACT Community Sector is intended to improve retention for the Community Sector as a whole. By enhancing existing workplace stability, the Scheme will assist in reducing the risks of worker burn-out, which will aid retention.

Who is eligible?

It will be a mandatory Scheme, with broad application, and will cover Community Sector and Child Care workers. The Scheme will be applied across different organisational structures, for profit and not for profit, and in both community and private sectors. It will be made available across different working arrangements, including full-time, part-time, casual and short tenure arrangements such as contracting. The Scheme will include organisations whose funding sources can include the ACT and the Commonwealth Government.

The aim is to recognise the varied nature of employment in the Sector, which is characterised by short-term positions, high mobility and part-time and casual employment. To be eligible as an 'employer' requires more than one employee, thus removing arrangements between individuals from the Scheme's scope.

Who will benefit most from the Scheme?

The Scheme will support Community Sector and Child Care workers in a number of ways. It will protect the basic entitlement to long service leave for all ACT Community Sector and Child Care workers even where this is accrued by employment in multiple organisations. This is similar to the arrangement for public servants who may have worked for more than one department.

The Scheme is intended to benefit employees and sector sustainability as it contributes to the development of career options for workers and opportunities for greater prospects for their promotion.

What are the main aims of the Scheme?

The Scheme aims to improve retention for all sector employees, with sector loyalty another key objective.

What will it cost?

An independent actuary study to identify the potential cost of the Scheme was undertaken by DeeDeeRa Actuaries, and is available at the website of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/home>. The Study recognises that the Scheme will provide a basic benefit of 4.33 weeks pro rata after five years service in the sector.

What consultation was undertaken with the Community Sector around the proposed scheme?

Community consultation, including the release of a discussion paper in

July 2008, was undertaken by independent consultants Urbis in two stages, with employers, employees, peak organisations and unions consulted.

Following the initial consultation with the Sector in early 2009, a second stage to focus on staff attitudes was undertaken by Urbis and both are described in their report which is available at the website of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/home> .

What was the feedback provided during these sessions?

There was a general consensus from employees and union stakeholders that the Scheme would foster an environment which encouraged worker loyalty to the sector as a whole. The Urbis consultation found that peak organisations are generally supportive, although amongst the larger peaks there was a range of opinion.

Wouldn't a national approach be preferable?

The ACT is leading the development of a portable long service leave scheme. Other jurisdictions are investigating similar schemes for the Community Sector. No national scheme is available at this stage.

Are there other measures to help improve Community Sector workplaces?

As part of the ACT Government's integrated approach to support sector viability, the introduction of the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme is being augmented by the Industrial Relations Review of the Community Sector. The purpose of this review is to identify current wages and conditions of community sector workers and provide industrial relations advice to the sector. The outcome of the Review is intended to work in concert with associated reforms including the PLSL to retain a skilled workforce that fosters a more sustainable community service sector in the ACT.