

## WG2-1, November 2021

Lauren Milne, Communications Advisor, External Relations at Energy Resources of Australia Ltd joined our call. Lauren is also a committee member of WiR (in Kate's team). Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) is one of the nation's largest uranium producers and Australia's longest continually operating uranium mine. Rio Tinto is one of its shareholders and ERA has applied their policies.

### Maternity leave/paternal leave

#### at ERA

- 4 and a half months at full pay
- 9 months at half pay
- You get a year off and can get an extended 2nd year provided it meets your workplace needs.
- While on leave bonuses & benefits continue accruing, i.e., health insurance. It reimburses for birthing expenses or medical needs of infant that exceed your plan allowance. Your leave does not get taken off from your longevity/time with the company (the more service years the more benefits). the 4 1/2 months go towards long service leave.
- This applies whether you are a mum or dad but need to be a primary carer of an infant. If your spouse or partner also works for the company you get an additional 8 weeks?
- This also applies to adoption (up to school age): covers process of adopting or after the adoption. includes surrogacy. includes 2 days paid leave for meetings to obtain approval to adopt
- The policy also covers miscarriage and still births: supports employees relevant to circumstances and preferences. It offers parental leave or compassionate leave paid or unpaid for up to 12 months
- The company offers a lot of flexibility if you want to return earlier. Higher number of female employees that have shown what coming back earlier or later mean have led the way. the company offers touch points throughout with different people.
- Her GM reminded her that employee mental health benefits applied to her as well. It worked because she is office based but might be different for a role on site that has been backfilled for a certain period of time.

\* Australian statutory paid maternity leave is 18 weeks at minimum pay

You can bolt it on to your company's one (many do it at the end of the paid leave offered by their employer)

\* Long service leave: generally, in Australia, during long maternity leave your leave does not get added or credited towards employment

\* 62.1% of mining companies pay parental leave, compared to X (couldn't catch it, 50% something) average in other sectors. Mining leads on indigenous engagement and gender diversity in Australia compared to other sectors.

#### Smaller mining companies

Generally, case by case, depends whether you are seen as a good employee

Kate shared a story of someone who wanted to extend her maternity leave but her employer is a small business and wasn't able to sustain it financially but recommended her to their network for part-time roles and she found an opportunity quickly. The Northern Territory is a close-knit community where most companies know each other

Kristy: BHP/South32 offer 6 months at full pay, are used to women taking a year and at the time of her second pregnancy and she came back earlier it created issues as the company was not prepared for that scenario or where the woman is the main breadwinner.



In NZ you only get statutory maternity leave (government). In a recent piece of work for a client, she has written up recommendations for this to be changed.?

## **Mental Health**

Mates in Mining (part of Mates in Construction) is an Australia-wide organisation that offers free 24/7 counselling service for mining employees. You can call them and name people who need to be contacted. They also train people on site on how to spot if someone is not well and how to have that conversation, and on how to be mental health aware (free course). Counsellors have all worked in the mining industry and know what it can feel like and the jargon miners use.

The minerals Council of Australia recently launched a mental health app

EAP is mandatory in Australia and you can lean on it for counselling.

At Energy Resources Australia, the business has 12 employees who are trained counsellors, male/female, on the ground/leaders/apprentices, office/site, leaders. Spread among different people the burden is not just on one person. It also means others don't see you going into a room or talking to that person means x - it removes the stigma when counsellors operate across the business. mental health is taken very seriously: if you are not OK you are not safe and can put the operation and your colleagues in danger.

Kristy mentioned working with an organisation that has a booklet and does site visits and presentation on mental health topics? i didn't catch its name.

There isn't much in NZ and Australia leads.

---

I am not sure about the accuracy of everything I wrote down - please check in with Lauren for confirmation.

---

## **Homework**

- regulations in your country regarding employee access to counselling services and maternity & paternity leave
- Is counselling an accepted practices in different cultures and norms?
- Get access to companies' policies

---

Links from FIFO wife book

[www.miningfm.com](http://www.miningfm.com)

[www.myfifofamily.com](http://www.myfifofamily.com)

[www.fifofocus.com.au](http://www.fifofocus.com.au)

[www.thefifowife.com.au](http://www.thefifowife.com.au)

[www.fifolifemobileapp.com](http://www.fifolifemobileapp.com)

some may contain mention or links on the topics of discussion of November.

## WG2 -2

**Mental Health**

Are employees using Employee Assistance Programme for mental health? Does it cover it?

Liliana from Lundin Gold shared that her company Lundin Gold developed a programme called "Let's Take Care to be well" - "Cuidemonos para estar bien". They engaged an external provider that confidentially reached out to employees via a survey to start with to assess staff's mental health and well-being. This was analysed and turned into action: 1. psychological interventions for severe cases like people who had lost loved ones etc. 2. Opened a hotline people could call and 3. organised a webinar series with frequent meetings on mental health, exercise and nutrition. In total over 500 hours of psychological help were offered and many have taken it up. There is a lot of communication about and reminders sent. It is led from the top and really embedded in the company. It is an internal programme with a name which she thinks also helped. Everyone is very engaged and 87% of employees participated in the 2nd survey. The company intends to keep it.

Luz also from Ecuador from Fortescue says her company has a similar programme going. An on-site psychologist is available and employees are offered up to 6 sessions. During Covid FIFO lengthened to 20 days in the field. After 14/15 days employees were spiralling downwards. They introduced a day off at day 15 during longer rosters and other activities. they held webinars on emotional intelligence, family, FIFO etc. They did follow-up surveys and employees are better. Now FIFO rosters back to 14/6-7. Important to reinforce the programme now that a full return to work is considered.

**Parental leave:**

Liliana/Lundin: Maternity: in Ecuador, legally, women get 3 months off and 2 hours of breast feeding per day until the child is 1 year old is protected by law. It has to be daily though which doesn't work for women on FIFO. In practice, they accumulate them and give to the mother. At Lundin Gold you don't return to site until the baby is 6 months old. At site there are lactation rooms and mothers are regularly seen by occupational doctors.

Adoption is also enshrined by national law but surrogacy isn't.

Paternity leave is regulated and depends whether birth was normal and 1 baby = 10 days or whether the father has twins/triplets and/or his wife had a c-section then he gets 15 days.

the company gives the choice for fathers on shift work/quarantine on when to take it. Most keep the days and prefer a longer leave.

You can extend your maternity leave by another 9 months (to a year) but get no pay - both parents/genders can apply.

Maternity/paternity pay is composed of company salary and social security and for the maternity/paternity leave (3 months/10-15 days) generally adds up to 100%

Liliana shared confidentially that she used surrogacy herself and the company gave her the same time off as standard maternity leave

Gladys/I shared that in the UK parental leave has gone from 12 days to 18 weeks I believe; the law changed I believe in 2016 or thereabouts. In certain countries like Germany, Scandinavia, Belgium etc both parents can use parental leave and it doesn't have to be straight at birth/from birth like in Ecuador so you could do it when the child is 1 or 2 say.

I mentioned that Rio Tinto probably has the best parental leave in the industry as it applies to all its operations. We said we needed more full details on that. I can ask if need be.



I mentioned the intersection between mental health and (dis)ability. 95% of disabilities are not visible to the naked eye and employees afflicted can have good and bad days, moods, performance etc which can affect their teams in return etc. Not sure if you had that in somewhere. If you already discussed it apologies. It is different to cancer or other illnesses where everyone knows and there is a treatment plan. there could be for other ones too but many live with chronic conditions which can be in the public domain or not.

\*\*\*\*\*

I said to Ashley at the beginning that I had something to add about toilets. And that is that when it comes to toilets gender alone in certain parts of the world is not enough. So, you could build your female toilet in Ghana or Mali but women won't use it. Religion and customs do play a role. In any country with a large Muslim population, you need to think of a toilet differently and you will need different elements like water supply inside the cubicle rather than only outside in communal area. Also, the position of where it is located is probably important but water is essential. This doesn't only apply only to women; men don't tend to have or use urinals.

<https://muslimgirl.com/lota-lota-islamic-toilet-etiquette-struggle-west/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/islamic\\_toilet\\_etiquette](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/islamic_toilet_etiquette)

<https://toilet-guru.com/islamic.phphttps://religionunplugged.com/news/2020/5/6/islamic-and-hindu-toilet-customs-wipe-out-need-for-toilet-paper>