

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

The SDA knows that our members are among Australia's hardest workers, often with the lowest pay. And we take that message to the Federal Government every time we talk to them on your behalf.

It pleases me to say that the Federal Government not only listens, but has taken significant action over the past few years to help families and workers who are struggling to make ends meet.

If we look at just some of the changes the Government has made to help workers while still protecting Australia's economy, it's plain to see that practical support and assistance is being provided where you need it most. We, the SDA, want to make sure you, our members, also know what's available to you.

PARENTAL LEAVE

In January 2011, the Federal Government introduced 18 weeks Paid Parental Leave, open to full-time, part-time and casual workers. This was a huge, historic reform, and to date, more than 150,000 families have benefitted from the scheme. Perhaps your family was one of them? Certainly, for many of our casual or part-time members, and even some full-time members, the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme was a benefit you'd never before been entitled to.

SCHOOLKIDS BONUS

Right now, families on the Family Tax Benefit A will also receive the new School Kids Bonus – a total of \$410 for primary school kids and \$820 for secondary school kids. The bonus will be paid automatically twice a year, just before the start of Term 1 and Term 3 – so you can count on money being there for all those uniform, books, stationery and other costs that come up.

CHILDCARE REBATE

The Federal Government has also increased the childcare rebate, so that you can now claim up to \$7,500 each year. The rebate is also available fortnightly, putting money back in your pocket more quickly and usefully.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Looking ahead, the Government plans to introduce Dad and Partner Pay in January next year, building on its Paid Parental Leave scheme. This will give dads or partners two weeks' paid leave, so that right from the start, they can bond with their child and support their partner. Just like the Paid Parental Leave scheme, Dad and Partner Pay will be open to eligible full-time, part-time and casual workers.

Of course, it doesn't stop there.

The SDA will continue to share the needs and realities of its members to the Federal Government, and keep you informed about any new benefits or changes.

For now, we feel it's important our members know about all the assistance and support currently available in these challenging times.

FIND OUT MORE

If you want to find out more about any of the benefits mentioned above, here's an easy list of who to contact:

Paid Parental Leave

Call the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150**

Visit the website:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/Centrelink/parental-leave-pay>

For those not eligible for Paid Parental Leave, it's worth checking whether you may be able to access the Baby Bonus.

Baby Bonus

Call the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150**

Visit the website:

<http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/baby-bonus/>

Family Tax Benefit A and B

Call Centrelink on 132 468

Visit the website:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit-part-a-part-b>

Dad and Partner Pay

Visit the website:

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/paid_parental/Pages/default.aspx

Schoolkids Bonus

Call Centrelink on 132 468.

Visit the website:

<http://families.fahcsia.gov.au/families-and-children/news/2012/schoolkids-bonus-and-education-tax-refund-qas>

Joe de Bruyn

National Secretary-Treasurer

Shop Distributive & Allied Employees Association