



Katy Gallagher MLA

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Dear community member

I am writing to members of the Community Services and Child Care sectors in the ACT to inform you of the ACT Government's proposed scope of the new Portable Long Service Leave (PLSL) Scheme for the ACT Community Sector.

The Community Services and Child Care sectors are vital industries in the ACT, performing a range of critical health and community services, and employing a significant portion of the workforce. I am pleased to advise you in this letter about the ACT Government's proposed Portable Long Service Leave Scheme that will cover Community Services and Child Care sector workers.

The Portable Long Service Leave Scheme has been developed in recognition of the increasing demand placed on the sectors' services, and the impacts this has on their workforce.

The Portable Long Service Leave Scheme will support Community Services and Child Care sector workers in a number of ways. It will protect the basic entitlement to long service leave for all Community Services and Child Care sector workers even where this is accrued by service to multiple organisations, similar to government workers' entitlements to Long Service Leave even if accrued by service to multiple government agencies.

The proposed Scheme will provide long service leave benefits consistent with those required under the *Long Service Leave Act 1976*, which is a basic benefit of 6.07 weeks after 7 years service in the sector.

I expect the Scheme will be applied across different organisational structures, for profit and not for profit, and in both community and private sectors. It will also be made available across different working arrangements, including full-time, part-time, casual and short tenure arrangements such as contracting. I propose the Scheme will include organisations whose funding sources can include the ACT and the Commonwealth Government.

The Scheme is consistent with a key recommendation made by the ACT Community Sector Taskforce in its 2006 report *Towards A Sustainable Community Services Sector In The ACT* for the ACT Government to legislate a mandatory Portable Long Service Leave Scheme for the Community Sector.

Extensive consultations found strong support from unions and employees for the Scheme. The Portable Long Service Leave Scheme was seen to be an appropriate strengthening of employees' entitlements, with support was also being expressed by small to medium employers and employees.

An Actuary Study to identify the cost of the Scheme was undertaken and found that the proposed scheme for the ACT should cover the costs of delivering the leave benefits to workers while meeting its ongoing administration costs.

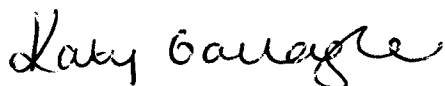
I expect that the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme will assist in the development of more career options for Community Services and Child Care sector workers and, by helping to facilitate movement between organisations, potentially provide more variety in work and greater prospects for promotion. The Scheme will assist workers to optimise their work-life balance by enabling them to take breaks between positions while retaining their attachment to the sector. The Scheme acknowledges loyalty to the sector, rather than just one organisation, thus enhancing mobility and facilitating the creation of a sustainable career path.

I anticipate the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme will be operational from 1 July 2010. The report of the consultations on the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme and the Actuary Study can be accessed at the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services website at www.dhcs.act.gov.au.

The ACT Government is committed to implement the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme in the best interest of the Community Services and Child Care sectors and their employees.

I hope this information has been of assistance to you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely



Katy Gallagher MLA
Minister for Community Services

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