



**Karitane Submission 4:  
Pre-budget 2021-22 Submission to Federal Government**

**Family Friendly Workplace  
Accreditation and National Working  
Families Survey**

## Key recommendations

- The consortium of Karitane, UNICEF Australia and Family Friendly Workplaces be resourced to establish National Work and Family Standards, allowing Australian businesses to be accredited as Family Inclusive where their parental leave, flexible work, wellbeing and family care policies, practices and promotion create a Family Friendly Workplace culture.
- The government supports Family Friendly Workplaces and our partner Western Sydney University to deliver an annual National Working Families Survey, to gain national insight and assessment of the established National Work and Family Standards, along with workplace impacts on families, including care and wellbeing as a result of workplace COVID-19 practices and changes.
- The government supports an \$800k investment over 3 years to support the Family Friendly Workplace Accreditation and National Working Families Survey

## Opportunity

The Commonwealth to provide support to the established consortium of Karitane, UNICEF Australia and Family Friendly Workplaces to deliver workplace National Standards, workplace Accreditation and a National Survey, allowing for a coordinated national approach on how organisations can provide optimal support for the needs of working families.

## Context

Without doubt, COVID-19 has presented challenges – and opportunities – to the way we work in Australia, and around the world. More than ever, flexibility has been a key need for working parents, to ensure children’s physical, mental and emotional well-being is met by responsive care-giving.

Prior to the pandemic, Australia’s first National Working Families Survey, conducted in 2019 by Karitane, Parents at Work and Advancing Parental Leave Equality Network (APLEN) uncovered a number of troubling insights into Australian parents’ relationship with work. It found that 62% of respondents reported significant difficulties managing their physical & mental health due to competing work & family pressures; 46% said that their commitment to their job was questioned if they made use of family-friendly work arrangements; and 38% wanted their employer to enable more access to caring support. Further to this, in Australia 95% of primary parental leave is taken by mothers and 34% of women who leave work to have a baby don’t return.

Australia does not currently have a national work & family policy framework. As a result, employers are expected to develop their own approaches to support families to manage work and caring responsibilities. Without benchmarks to guide them in the development of these policies & processes, they often fall short, further entrenching gender biased policies and processes, and limiting career development opportunities for employees with caring responsibilities. This particularly impacts the emotional &

financial wellbeing of women, who continue to bear the majority of the caring load in this country.

## Proposed solution

### Overview

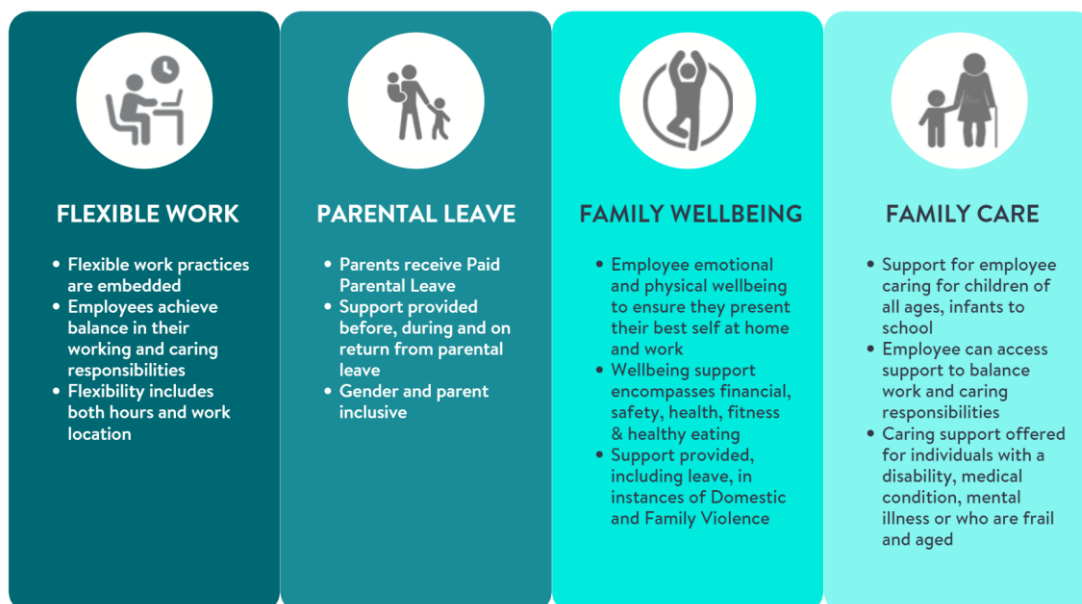
Family Friendly Workplaces created from a social enterprise partnership between Karitane, Parents At Work and UNICEF Australia, with leadership and day to day management provided by Parents At Work. Family Friendly Workplaces strives to improve gender equality and work-life wellbeing outcomes for families through:

- the introduction of a set of certifiable national work and family standards;
- sharing global best practice;
- Provision of development, coaching and support to organisations;
- Delivering an Annual National Working Families Survey.

### National Work and Family Standards

National Standards developed through the Family Friendly Workplaces program will be the first of their kind in Australia. They will be developed in consultation with ambassador organisations and groups including: Diversity Council Australia, WGEA, Australian Human Rights Commission, Family Business Council, MCC, Karitane, PANDA, Gidget Foundation Australia, Carers Australia, Domestic Violence NSW and a small number of corporates including Commonwealth Bank, Deloitte, QBE, and Randstad. The National Work and Family Standards will also be reviewed by UNICEF New York.

Standards will be established across the following key categories:



### Family Friendly Workplace Accreditation

Utilising the National Work and Family standards and criteria, Australian organisations will be able to assess their current policies, practices and workplace culture against baseline and aspirational benchmarks.

Organisations who meet minimum criteria and can show they have an action plan in place to meet or exceed baseline benchmark standards and criteria will be recognised with a **Family Inclusive Workplace Certification**. Organisations whose cultures are globally leading and meet aspirational benchmarks will be awarded an **Employer of Choice for Families** recognition.

The utilisation of the accreditation process is to enable organisations to receive the support and encouragement needed so as many organisations as possible across Australia can be recognised as Family Inclusive. It is the aim of Family Friendly Workplaces to grow the number of Family Friendly Workplaces, starting with the top 200 ASX listed organisations and large family businesses across Australia.

### ***The need for Annual National Working Families Survey***

The first Australian National Working Families Survey was conducted in 2019. This provided valuable insight into organisational family practices and the impact on working families. The survey provided tangible insights already highlighted.

A lot has changed since 2019 with the COVID-19 pandemic. Wellbeing, caring and the ability for families to reconcile their work and family commitments has become significantly more difficult. Organisations are seeking to understand the policies, practices and promotion of support they should put in place to make a difference for their employees in balancing their work and life commitments.

An Annual National Working Families survey allows for ongoing insight into how working families are managing their work, family, life and wellbeing challenges. It highlights for government opportunities for policy change and for organisations what is working and what needs further consideration. In addition, this survey can provide tangible measures of the impact of implementation of the National Work and Families Standards.

### ***National Benefits for Supporting Family Friendly Workplaces***

There are multiple long-term benefits for this program of work to be undertaken by Family Friendly Workplaces – for individual families, organisations/employers and the communities in which they operate, and Australian society more broadly. These include:

- Increased women's participation in the workforce & supporting their ability to progress their career into leadership
- Retention & attraction of high performing employees, particularly women, through family inclusive practices & culture
- Positive inclusive cultural outcomes, leading to loyalty & increased employee engagement
- Increased business productivity through engaged workforce, reduced turnover & higher attendance
- Improved social and mental health outcomes for parents and children, including child development during the crucial First 2,000 days

Beyond the benefits outlined, work is planned (subject to funding) for the development of a social impact framework to further show the social benefit for organisational investment in Family Friendly Workplace culture development

## **Key Proposed Milestones**

The below provides an outline of key milestones for Family Friendly Workplaces, which to date has been philanthropically supported with in-kind and financial contributions from participating organisations. A financial sustainability fund is required to complete the proposed scope of works.

Currently there is a plan for the National Working Families Survey to be completed every 2 years, although given the pace of workplace change there is significant benefit in this being conducted annually.

- **May 2021** – Launch of Family Friendly Workplaces and accreditation of founding partner organisations (see below)
- **Aug 2021** – Run the National Working Families Survey to provide benchmarking data on the shifts in workplaces since the first survey in 2019
- **Nov 2021** – Announce results from National Working Families Survey and announce any Employers of Choice for Families
- **May 2022** – Have accredited at least 50 organisations
- **May 2023** – Have accredited at least 150 organisations
- **Aug 2023** – Run the National Working Families Survey to provide benchmarking data on the shifts in workplaces since the first survey in 2019 & 2021
- **March 2024** – Review National Work and Family Standards
- **May 2024** – Annual Family Friendly Workplaces Awards, during National Families Week. Have accredited at least 265 organisations

## **Funding**

Currently Family Friendly Workplaces is unfunded as a social enterprise start up. Given the importance of this work, a unique program of work including the creation of the National Work and Family Standards and an Accreditation program are planned. Current sponsors include: Karitane, UNICEF Australia, Commonwealth Bank, Deloitte, QBE, Randstad Rise Smart and Kids Co.

The funding outlined below will allow for further embedment of the Family Friendly Workplaces activities, along with the running of the Annual National Working Families Survey

	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Family Friendly Workplaces	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
National Working Families Survey		\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

A total investment of \$800,000 over 3 years

## Partner Summary



Karitane has over 98 years of experience providing help and advice to parents and families during the early years of parenting. Karitane's healthcare professionals guide, support and educate families to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for their children.



Parents At Work is a membership-based organisation providing work and family education and policy advisory services. Parents at Work aim to bridge the work and home divide by embedding flexibility, wellbeing, parental transition and wider caring services to enable workplaces and their people to thrive.



UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, basic education for all boys and girls and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. In Australia, UNICEF works with government and advocacy bodies to defend children's rights and support international development programs. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.