



Employee Fertility Benefits for Rainbow Families

In Australia we have enjoyed significant progress in LGBTQ+ inclusion as more workplaces introduce inclusive policies and practices for their employees. The benefits for business and their people have been substantial, and tangible.

LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives have been proved to drive better business results through improved talent attraction, increased employee experience, productivity, innovation, community engagement and customer loyalty.

There is one area of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion that is on the horizon for leading Australian employers and yet to be embraced. Inclusive fertility benefits are a new concept here, while leading organisations in the USA are already well ahead by supporting their people, including their LGBTQ+ employees, to start or grow their families.

Employee fertility benefits designed for American and global companies may not be immediately transferable to the Australian business landscape. But to remain competitive, in an increasingly global

and mobile environment, this presents an untapped inclusion opportunity for Australian employers to explore.

A Family Equality Council survey in 2019 found approximately 3.8 million LGBTQ+ millennials in the USA are considering starting or expanding their families, with more than 60% planning to use assisted reproductive technology or fertility treatments.¹ The increasing number of LGBTQ+ people accessing fertility services in Australia would suggest a similar trend.

Let's be clear, the desire for parenthood is independent of sex, sexuality or gender identity and there are many different paths to parenthood.

Thanks to artificial reproductive treatments (ART), there are now more options available for family building for the LGBTQ+ community. But we also know that for many LGBTQ+ people, undergoing fertility treatments, including IVF and surrogacy, can seem daunting, stressful and a significant financial outlay.

The time is now for more workplaces to get involved and take LGBTI+ inclusion practice to the next level. Research recently conducted by Grace Papers and Pride in Diversity found there are considerable gaps in both visible and inclusive parental leave policies, as well as employee awareness of their entitlements for all family structures, including leave for IVF treatments. Research survey data led to a recommendation that:

Organisational policies and programs should incorporate explicit statements recognising their application to all family situations and all forms of parenting. To create inclusive policies that will be used by those who need them, we recommend leaders consult with employees to understand their lived experience.²

Introducing fertility benefits programs into current HR, D&I and health and well-being initiatives, driven by Pride Networks and with the support of leadership, will speak volumes and enhance visibility to employees and job candidates across the country. The results will produce even greater levels of talent attraction, retention, employee engagement, health, belonging and wellbeing. And, as employees across Australia have already shared with Beyond Gender, this will be “a game changer”.

A comprehensive workplace Fertility Benefits Program can be created in consultation with a support team, including a fertility service provider, and an external LGBTQ+ workplace partner.

Dr Devora Lieberman, City Fertility's NSW Medical Director and fertility specialist, agrees there are many opportunities for employers to support their staff through the fertility journey, as part of a broader array of inclusive family-friendly initiatives and health and well-being benefits.

“For anyone, planning and starting a family is a deeply personal, emotional, exciting and sometimes stressful experience. Employers can help their staff navigate that journey, no matter their family structure,” she says.

“If utilising a fertility provider, I recommend LGBTQ+ people engage a fertility service or specialist that is welcoming and inclusive. They want to work with someone who is comfortable having conversations with people based on their own unique circumstances, whether they are wanting to know about Partner IVF, needing services like egg and sperm donations, surrogacy support or fertility preservation. Some of the laws are complex, and the journey can be time-consuming and expensive”, Dr Lieberman says.

City Fertility, has recently launched a Fertility Benefits Program for Australian employers to support employees through their fertility journey, drawing inspiration from international experience which has shown that inclusive fertility benefits for all employees will have significant value for both business and their people, including LGBTQ+ employees and their families.³

City Fertility, and its dedicated fertility offering for LGBTQ+ people, Rainbow Fertility, is a proud partner of Beyond Gender. City Fertility is also a member of Pride in Health and Wellbeing, and is currently on the journey to becoming a fertility leader in all aspects of LGBTQ+ inclusion and belonging for both their customers and employees.

For more information on how your organisation can include fertility in your existing employee benefits programs, launch a Fertility Benefits Program for your LGBTQ+ employees, or simply to start the conversation, contact City Fertility and Beyond Gender.

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¹Family Equality Council's LGBTQ Family Building Survey, 2019

²Grace Papers and Pride in Diversity Research Report (2021): “An Inclusive Approach to Parenting. Exploring the intersection of care, career and sexual orientation”

³Adamson, Dr David, “More Employers Offering Fertility Benefits Means Happier Employees Who Stay”, Huff Post, 4 December 2017



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