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Architecture practice pioneers Paid Parental Leave in construction industry

Construction is notoriously the most male-dominated industry in the country. Women in construction make up less than 15 per cent of the entire workforce. The number of women in architecture (as a subset of construction) sits slightly higher at around a third of total workers.

There's been a great deal of work done in recent years to improve gender equity in architectural workplaces, but the pressures of family life remain a key contributor to disparate gender numbers.

Architecture and design studio, [TURNER](#), has introduced an impressive Paid Parental Leave policy to encourage a greater work-life balance amongst its team.

TURNER now offers up to eighteen weeks of paid leave to any parent regardless of gender. The length of leave scales up in weeks based on years of service. And they pay super on top too.

TURNER's Head of People & Culture Sika Fernandez says she was conscious not to only offer paid leave to mothers though the practice's team is 63 per cent female, with women accounting for 48 per cent of all senior leadership roles.

She says this promotes equality and is a small step in slowly changing the culture of fathers taking minimal leave upon the birth of their children.

"All parents should have the right to spend time with their new child, and this may help open up the conversation around which parent returns to work and when. If Paid Parental Leave was consistent across the board for every parent, we might see more women return to work earlier and feel less pressure to be the primary caretaker in the first months," she says.

Sika says she's extremely proud of the policy, which she's worked on passionately in recent years. "I'm very happy to be one of the only architecture practices to offer this level of leave."

Sika says TURNER's Paid Parental Leave policy is just one of the initiatives she's spearheading within the practice. Flexible working arrangements, free counselling services (extended to employees' immediate families), ample staff culture events and training opportunities are on offer for the practice's staff. TURNER was also one of the sponsoring members of Architects with Pride, which brought together the LGBTQI+ communities of the built environment industry to celebrate the 2023 World Pride and Mardi Gras Festival.

Sika says employee retention and happiness are at the core of the practice's culture.

"Our goal is to become an employer of choice for the architecture and design industry. We're a great team and we love what we do. We want to make sure the talents of our team are recognised."

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For more information and high-resolution images please contact:

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