



What is Long Service Leave?

Long Service Leave (LSL) is a period of additional paid leave granted to employees who have completed an extended period of service with an employer. This entitlement is rather unique to Australia, with only a few other countries having a similar employee benefit. In the Northern Territory, LSL accrues after 10 years of continuous service.

Entitlement

Long Service Leave is set out in [By-law 8](#) of the Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA) managed by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment (OCPE).

A full time employee's entitlement is three (3) calendar months after completing 10 years of continuous service, where a month is counted as 30 days. This means an employee accrues 90 calendar days (65 working days) after 10 years of continuous service working full time.

The LSL entitlement in the NT is one of the longest in the country with only South Australia being equal. Other jurisdictions receive 8.67 weeks (meaning 60.69 calendar days; 43.35 working days) or less at 10 years of service.

Weekends

Long Service in the private sector is governed by the NT Long Service Leave Act 1981 and accrues at 1.3 weeks per year of service for a total of 13 weeks (65 working days) at 10 years.

The Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) uses calendar days because the nature of so many of its employees work shifts, overnight, weekends and have rostered weeks off (e.g. nurses, fire fighters). That is why LSL is counted to include a weekend. Daytime weekday-only workers (e.g. teachers) are not losing any entitlement, it just makes it simpler to manage a public service wide system.

Using your LSL

Any employee is required to use LSL within three years of their 10 year entitlement and 20 year entitlement accruing. Your employer can direct you to take this entitlement. You can take your LSL at full pay or half pay, doubling the time you can take off. (Note: If you do take LSL at half pay it 'slows' your accrual of Recreation Leave and Personal Leave).

LSL is intended to provide lengthy breaks from work. Permission to undertake secondary employment whilst on LSL is limited. Seek further union advice.

Unlike other NTPS employees, teachers and other school-based employees have the option to take LSL for periods of 3 days. This fact, along with the higher level of NT LSL, means NT teachers and school-based AO's have the best LSL arrangements in public education systems across Australia, and arguably many other industries/sectors.



Continuity of Service

Rules on continuity of service means you can have a break/period outside of teaching of no greater than 12 months before you break continuity. However, unpaid personal leave, full-time union duties with a union representing public service employees, and defence service leave will not break continuity of service if you are absent for longer than 12 months. Workers Compensation will also not break continuity of service but does not count as service.

Recognition of Prior Service

The Northern Territory Government counts work with “recognised employers” as counting towards service. A recognised employer for our context is, e.g. any work performed with a state education department in Australia. You can apply to have prior service recognised once you have completed 2 years of employment with NTPS.

A full list of recognised employers is contained in [Determination 9 of 2025](#) Please note that Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute are also included.

Allowances

While on LSL, employees are entitled to their ordinary salary in relation to their designation. If the employee is on approved allowances (e.g. HDA) and those allowances span the course of the LSL, the employee will receive the allowances for the entire period of leave. However, if their allowance/s cease within the LSL period, they will only be paid up to the approved period. Other allowances that are altered whilst on LSL are teaching allowances, Northern Territory Allowance, Remote Incentive Allowance and Remote Retention Allowance.

December/January leave period: This period will be deemed as recreation leave as it is the only period in which teachers may utilise their recreation leave entitlement.

Payments before 10 years

Employees are eligible for payment in lieu on cessation of employment at one (1) year of service where they have retired, ceased on or after attaining 55 years of age, on redundancy, or on death.

Employees are also entitled to payment on resignation after completing seven (7) or more years of service. You receive 22.5 calendar days at seven years, 45 calendar days at eight years, and 67.5 calendar days at nine years.

Illness during LSL

If you fall ill during your LSL and have medical evidence the CEO may grant personal (sick) leave and re-credit your LSL to use another time.

References and further information:

Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment
By Law No. 8 : <https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/>

