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ACTU wins first national family and domestic violence leave in the world

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has today won a first round victory to get working people access to paid family and domestic violence (FDV) leave.

Working people across Australia will soon have access to FDV leave after the Fair Work Commission (FWC) handed down a decision that unpaid leave should be available in modern awards, as a basic standard for all workers.

The FWC accepted the ACTU's argument that FDV is a significant community issue, that it disrupts workforce participation, that it disproportionately affects women and that it requires a workplace response.

The FWC commission also applauded the ACTU for being an agent of 'social utility'.

Unfortunately the FWC stopped short of paid leave at this stage but it has left the door open for this in the future.

The FWC proposes to provide a period of unpaid FDV leave in modern awards, as well as access to personal/carers leave for FDV purposes.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"The ACTU is disappointed that the FWC has not awarded paid leave at this time, but this decision is the first step in the fight to ensure working people trying to deal with or recover from family and domestic violence have both job and financial security."

"Australia will become the first country in the world to have a nationally enshrined right to family and domestic violence leave."

"The Australian union movement is at the forefront of changing the rules to make working people's lives better and the FWC acknowledged this when it commended the social utility of the ACTU's claim, but we acknowledge there is more to do in this critically important area."

"The FWC accepted that family and domestic violence is a social and workplace issue with widespread impacts, and that workplace rights must keep pace with community expectations."

"Family and domestic violence leave predominantly impacts women, leading to financial hardship, job insecurity and ultimately safety risks for families and people affected."

"While the FWC has not been able to hand down a decision for paid leave at this time, it has left the door open for it in the future and we will fight until it is a workplace right for all."

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