

Monday 14 November, 2016

## Case for paid family and domestic violence leave commences at Fair Work Commission

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) on Monday (14/11/16) commences its case in the Fair Work Commission for a new modern award entitlement of 10 days' paid family and domestic violence leave.

Australian Unions are holding a national day of action to mark the beginning of the case and to remember the 66 women who have been killed by a partner or family member so far in 2016.

Domestic violence campaigner Rosie Batty will join ACTU President Ged Kearney and Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Luke Hilakari outside the Fair Work Commission from 9:00am. A press conference will be held at 9:15am before the hearing commences at 10:00am.

The ACTU's claim includes 10 days paid leave per year and an additional two days unpaid leave per occasion. The new entitlement will make it easier for survivors of family and domestic violence to remain in paid employment and manage stressful and time consuming tasks like finding a new home and attending court.

Research into workplaces that already have family and domestic violence leave in place show it has significant benefits for the employees affected by domestic violence, their employers and workplaces.

The ACTU's case is supported by a wide range of interest groups, including the National Retail Association, the Victorian Government and the Human Rights Commission.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"We have a moral imperative to do something to address this insidious issue that is taking women's and men's lives and tearing families apart."

"People should not be hoodwinked into thinking this is an economic issue - providing access to paid family and domestic violence leave will enable women, men and children to escape the cycle of violence and save lives."

"If we don't do something now we will be guilty of turning a blind eye to the single biggest contributor to death, illness or disability of women between 15 and 44 years of age."

"Australian Unions will not stand by and watch as innocent people lose their lives or their livelihoods because the Federal Government and big business think it's not their problem'. This is a problem for every single of us."

"Family and domestic violence affects one in six women and two thirds of these women are in paid employment. We know that employment is one of the most significant factors in determining whether a person stays, leaves or returns to a violent relationship."

"Cultural change is not enough, action must be taken to support workers affected by violence and establishing a basic standard on paid leave will ensure that all workplaces do this."

"The National Retail Association, the retail sector's peak body, backed our submission, saying the ACTU's claim would simply formalise what many employers already do, but it would ensure employers have legal and moral guidelines to follow."

### Quotes attributable to Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Luke Hilakari:

"Family violence leave is taken by an employee experiencing family violence in order to attend to matters arising from their situation, like doctors' appointments, meeting with legal support and police, having the locks changed, or settling children into a new school. No Australian worker wants to have to go through

that, but if they do, they should expect the support and understanding of their employer.”

“If we’re serious about addressing domestic and family violence, then that means we need real action to support people escaping family violence. It’s reasonable to expect that women shouldn’t have to worry about losing their job while they’re trying to escape a violent partner.”

“We’ve seen a huge change in community expectations in the past few years. Where, years ago, many of our members were a bit confused by the idea of family violence leave, now they are right behind it. There’s the understanding that family violence can affect anyone, and that people going through family violence need our full support as a community”.

“The claim for paid domestic and family violence leave is absolutely in line with what any reasonable person would expect of an understanding employer. It is beyond shameful that Australian businesses are seeking to block this important, life-saving reform from Australian workplaces”.

### **National Day of Action – Media Event**

Prior to the hearing, Australian Unions will hold vigils and rallies across Australia, in Melbourne at the Fair Work Commission and at other venues in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart and Canberra.

Melbourne: From 8:45am at the Fair Work Commission - 11 Exhibition St, Melbourne. Press conference with Rosie Batty and ACTU President Ged Kearney at 9:15am. The hearing commences at 10am.

Sydney: From 12:30pm at the Fair Work Commission - 80 William Street, East Sydney.

Brisbane: From 9:30am at Energy Queensland - Level 1, 26 Reddacliff Street, Newstead.

Adelaide: From 10:30am at the Riverside Centre, North Tce (offices of the Fair Work Commission in the walkway between the Riverside Centre and the Intercontinental Hotel).

Canberra: From 8:00am at the Fair Work Commission Office - 17-21 University Avenue, Canberra.

Hobart: From 10:30am at the Family Law Court - Davey Street, Hobart.

ENDS

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