

Friday 25 November, 2016

ACTU launches 16 days of action on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Australian Unions today embark on 16 days of activism in concert with White Ribbon Day and the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The 16 days of action will be marked by activists around the world to stop and prevent gendered violence and to demand that it is seen as a human rights abuse.

The ACTU is currently fighting in the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for 10 days family and domestic violence leave to be included in all modern awards.

Australian Unions believe employers have a critical role to play in helping women and men who are victims of family and domestic violence stay safe and stay employed.

Our 16 days of action will culminate on a national day of action ahead of the COAG meeting on December 9, where state Premiers are expected to discuss inclusion of paid family and domestic leave in the National Employment Standards.

Earlier this week we also welcomed a report from the Male Champions of Change (MCC) supporting paid domestic violence leave in Australian workplaces.

The report, *Playing our part: Lessons Learned from Implementing Workplace Responses to Domestic and Family Violence*, says that every workplace in Australia has a role in reducing the prevalence of family and domestic violence and paid leave is integral to the response.

The 17 signatories to the report included CBA chief executive Ian Narev, Telstra chief executive Andy Penn and MCC Convenor, Elizabeth Broderick, among many other senior business leaders.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“The United Nations has called violence against women a ‘global pandemic’. In Australia, we are seeing the devastating impact this is having on our wives, sisters, daughters, friends and colleagues every single day.”

“The time for action to be taken to prevent and reduce this scourge on our society is now and employers have a significant role to play in helping employees both stay at work and stay safe.”

“It is a fact that employment is one of the most significant factors in determining whether a person stays, leaves or returns to a violent relationship.”

“Australian unions are committed to seeing 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave included in the modern award to keep people safe and in employment.”

“We were extremely pleased to see business leaders come out in support of paid domestic violence leave this week, including the chief executives of the Commonwealth Bank, Telstra and Qantas.”

“At the FWC hearings, ACCI and AiG have tried to downplay the role of employers in dealing with family and domestic violence, saying there is no role for business in addressing this issue.”

“However, the recent report shows that the leave is important, can be implemented fairly and is most beneficial to employees and the business.”

“All employers now need to get on board and support paid family and domestic violence leave for all Australian workers.”

ENDS

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