

Friday, November 23, 2012

One million workers now have access to family violence leave

One million Australian workers now have access to leave to deal with effects of family violence, thanks to union negotiations, ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver announced today.

Attending the White Ribbon lunch in Melbourne today, Mr Oliver said unions would continue working to extend the protection to as many workers as possible.

“Victims of family violence are often vulnerable, traumatised and left with little support. The last thing they need is to risk losing their jobs,” Mr Oliver said.

“Maintaining paid work and independence is crucial for people trying to escape the cycle of family violence, and these agreements recognise this.

“We have found that many employers are aware of the issue and willing to include this leave in agreements. This is a positive sign of the growing awareness of family violence and its effects on the community.

“The work that the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse have done to promote this issue should also be commended.”

The ACTU Congress in May this year passed a resolution that family and domestic violence is a workplace issue in which unions can play a role to assist victims maintain paid employment and escape family violence.

Family violence leave provisions should provide additional paid leave for employees experiencing family violence, as well as flexible work arrangements if necessary.

They must also ensure confidentiality of employee details, and that employees who have experienced family violence are not discriminated against.

“Unions have a proud history of showing leadership on the campaign to eliminate violence against women and children. This is a problem that needs a united effort from everyone in society, and that includes unions and employers,” Mr Oliver said.

“Employers have a responsibility to support workers who are dealing with the effects of family violence, the same way they support workers who are sick or injured.”

Unions around Australia are participating in White Ribbon Day events to generate greater awareness and adoption of workplace initiatives to support cultural changes aimed at eliminating family and domestic violence.

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