

Friday, 15 October 2010

Unions spread the word to remind working families to apply for new Paid Parental Leave scheme

Unions will be spreading the word about the new Paid Parental Leave scheme to begin in January to ensure that all workers are aware of their new entitlement and how to apply for it.

Speaking at the launch of a public information campaign alongside Prime Minister Julia Gillard today, ACTU President Ged Kearney said unions wanted to celebrate the historic achievement of a PPL scheme and to also make sure no workers missed out.

“After 30 years of campaigning by unions and community groups, it’s very exciting that the new 18 week scheme is now less than three months away,” Ms Kearney said.

“It’s long overdue, and will encourage higher workforce participation by the two-thirds of women who currently have no access to paid parental leave.

“All employees, women especially, need to be fully aware they will be entitled to paid parental leave from January 1 next year.

“It’s vitally important as the onus will be on the employee to make an application to receive paid leave. Most employers will do the right thing by informing their staff, but some may not or may simply be unaware of the change.”

“We would hate to see working women and their families miss out because they are unaware that they now have this important workplace right or are unsure how to access it.”

Ms Kearney helped launch a public information campaign today at Holden in Port Melbourne, one of more than 150 employers who have registered with Centrelink to provide Government-funded parental leave to their employees.

The Government scheme provides all parents of babies born after 1 January, 2011, with payment of \$10,258.20 for 18 weeks leave.

Parents expecting on or after 1 January can begin applying for payments now.

Ms Kearney said unions would visit workplaces to provide further information about the scheme.

She said unions would use collective bargaining to build on the solid foundation provided by the national PPL scheme towards the goal of full income replacement for six months of paid leave for all new working mothers.

Some employers already provide this entitlement, and through collective bargaining unions will seek to top up the government scheme to extend it to all workers.

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