

Embargoed to 1am, Monday, 18 October 2010

Family violence is costing the economy and society; victims need help in the workplace

An Australian-first family violence leave entitlement in a new local government agreement could become the template for all workplaces, says the ACTU.

The Australian Services Union has negotiated the agreement with Surf Coast Shire in Victoria, which gives workers access to 20 days leave a year if they are experiencing family violence.

The clause aims to ensure the security of employment for workers subject to family violence, as well as providing workplace support to help them be safe at home and at work.

ACTU President Ged Kearney, who will help launch the agreement today, applauded the visionary initiative by the ASU and the shire.

She said family violence was costing the economy more than \$500 million in absenteeism, staff turnover and lost productivity.

“Violence perpetrated by an intimate partner is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 to 44,” Ms Kearney said.

“It exacts a terrible toll on the victims, and is costly for employers.

“Anything we can do to help the victims of family violence should be welcomed.

“They need support in their workplace and the ability to take time off from work when they need to recover.

“This agreement by the ASU and the Surf Coast Shire is groundbreaking, and I would encourage other unions and employers to consider adopting a similar leave entitlement.”

MEDIA EVENT – launch of family violence leave entitlement

9am – Monday, 18 October 2010

Surf World Museum, Surf City Plaza, Beach Road, Torquay (Melways ref. 505 K4)

Speakers: ACTU President Ged Kearney, ASU Branch Secretary Brian Parkinson, and others

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