

Thursday 30 June 2022

Morrison Government decision set to cut paid pandemic leave despite nearly 200,000 weekly cases

The Albanese Government must act to reverse a Morrison Government decision that will cut all federally supported pandemic leave for Australian workers from today, despite ongoing waves of infection with 196,360 cases identified and 331 deaths last week alone.

Pandemic leave was fought for and won by the union movement who dragged the previous Government kicking and screaming to install basic protections for working people during a once in a 100-year medical emergency.

Without paid pandemic leave hundreds of thousands of working Australians will face an impossible choice – to do the right thing for the community and stay at home, or to keep food on the table and pay their rent.

No worker should have to go to work while sick just to pay the bills. The withdrawal of these supports will delay our recovery from the pandemic and lead directly to more people becoming sick. It must be reversed.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“For as long as it’s necessary that workers isolate while they have the virus, we need to make sure that no one is asked to do that without access to paid sick leave.

“One of the first lessons of the pandemic was how dangerous it is for any worker to be compelled to go to work sick. Paid pandemic leave is essential to controlling the virus and must be extended.

“Paid pandemic leave is essential to stop the spread of the virus while we are still seeing hundreds of thousands of cases every week, with hundreds of people dying.

“We cannot be complacent about the recovery from the pandemic, we saw under the previous Government the risks of pulling supports away too early, we cannot repeat those mistakes.

“We call on the Albanese Government to confirm that paid pandemic leave will be extended beyond the Morrison Government’s premature cut-off.”

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