

Friday 30 September 2022

Isolation supports must continue as long as frontline workers are required to isolate

The pandemic has laid bare the significant risk posed to public health by the erosion of paid sick leave entitlements across the workforce caused by the rise of insecure work. The Albanese Government must look to change our workplace laws to reduce the number of workers without paid leave and consider if current leave arrangements for casuals are appropriate.

The ACTU welcomes the National Cabinet continuing support payments for those frontline workers still required to isolate, but is concerned that there are too many insecure workers without any paid sick leave.

Unions have campaigned for and won paid pandemic leave across thousands of unionised workplaces across the country. Unions will continue to campaign across all unionised workplaces to have paid leave for workers so they can stay at home if they're Covid positive.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Workers shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table and isolating while they are sick with a highly transmissible disease.

“Unions have always, and will always, support Covid isolation orders being tied to expert public health advice.

“Isolation payments must remain in place for all frontline workers who continue to have Covid isolation requirements, and we welcome the National Cabinet's decision to do so. Without them, workers in healthcare settings could spread the disease to our most vulnerable.

“The pandemic has highlighted that Australia's workforce has a problem with insecure work with tens of thousands of workers having no sick leave. The Albanese Government must look to change our workplace laws to reduce the number of workers without leave and consider if current leave arrangements for casuals are appropriate.

“Today's decision does however leave many thousands of workers without paid leave and not covered by support payments. Unions will continue to campaign in unionised workplaces for employers to provide paid leave for workers can stay home and isolate if they're Covid positive”.

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