

## Workers seek 10-days paid reproductive leave: ACTU

Australian unions are campaigning to win ten days of paid leave so that workers can take time to deal with a range of reproductive health issues, such as IVF treatment and post-vasectomy recovery.

Unions are calling for the expansion of the National Employment Standards to provide access to 10 days paid reproductive leave to help workers manage fertility treatment, pregnancy, breastfeeding, menstruation, breast and prostate screening and issues related to perimenopause and menopause.

Unions are also looking to expand the rights to flexible work arrangements to include reproductive health issues.

The Queensland Government has already agreed to 10 days reproductive leave for all its public servants. Entitlements to reproductive leave have also been won by workers through bargaining in industries, such as healthcare, finance, education and the community sector.

Unions will pursue arrangements that are flexible enough to enable women in different life stages to access the leave in a way that works for them. This may include access to leave to address sexual and reproductive health issues, such as endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome. It could also be accessed to return to work post-childbirth.

Men will also be able to access reproductive leave for fertility treatment, prostate screening, as well as time to undertake and recover from a vasectomy.

The policy being debated at this weeks ACTU Congress includes protections against being discriminated against due to reproductive health issues.

Workers should be able to request flexible working arrangements to deal with their reproductive health because failure to do so can contribute to lower rates of workforce participation for women.

### Quotes attributable to Michele O'Neil, President, Australian Council of Trade Unions:

“Reproductive health can impact all workers and will affect most workers at some stage in their life.

“Too many workers have been penalised or forced to bow out of employment because of reproductive health issues.

“Unions will campaign for a universal paid 10 days leave to enable all workers access to this important category of leave.

“Working people have already campaigned, and won, this entitlement at some workplaces but we want to see this extended as a basic entitlement to all Australian workers.

“The leave would be available to women and men and unions will be stepping up this campaign for everybody.”

**ENDS**

**Media Contact:** David Imber 0413 274 204