



STATEMENT

Monday June 6th, 2022

Family and Domestic Violence Leave

Mallee Family Care has welcomed the FairWork Commission's recommendation for the inclusion of ten days paid family and domestic violence leave in the modern awards. However, the Organisation noted the need for some further clarification to ensure the entitlement is equitable.

With alarming rates of family and domestic violence (FDV) across the country, Mallee Family Care Chief Executive Officer, Teresa Jayet, says any initiatives that can support victim-survivors to access relevant services and safely leave a violent situation should receive broad community support.

"We know that retaining employment whilst experiencing family violence can be very difficult and that economic insecurity increases vulnerabilities. We need to remove the barriers that currently prevent victim-survivors from accessing help.

"Unfortunately, family violence impacts all areas of our community, including workplaces, and this requires a workplace response as part of a national plan to address the issue. Paid FDV leave is a critical mechanism for employees to maintain their employment and financial security while dealing with the consequences of family violence."

Ms. Jayet said that the circumstances of employees experiencing family violence may be such that they cannot access existing unpaid entitlements and as a result, they may not be able to arrange the time to attend court proceedings, seek medical treatment and other support services, or to relocate.

"Ultimately what this means is that they may remain in an unsafe situation, exposed to the risk of escalating violence."

With living costs continuing to rise, Ms. Jayet acknowledged that the FDV paid leave entitlement may be an added burden for small and medium size businesses and she called on government to seek ways to limit this impost.

Ms. Jayet also raised some concerns around the definition of FDV as applied to the proposed paid leave.

"As it stands, the leave doesn't extend to an employee experiencing violence perpetrated by a household member who is not related to them. Given the way we live has changed markedly over the last few decades, I call for this definition to be revised. Many people do not live in traditional nuclear families, rather, they live in shared households. In my view, if you're subject to



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violence by someone you know, in your own home, you are a victim-survivor of family and domestic violence and you should have access to the same supports, regardless of familial links.”

Mallee Family Care has long advocated for a cohesive plan to tackle the rising levels of family violence and Ms. Jayet says the FairWork Commission’s review has helped to highlight the impact it has not just on the people directly involved but the broader community.

“Any discussion that keeps the pressure on government to address family and domestic violence is worthy,” she said



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