Unions win support for paid FDV leave

After years of tireless effort from unions and community activists, the Fair Work Commission recently made an in-principle decision that 2.66 million workers covered by modern awards should have access to 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave.

This is a historic step forward for workers' rights in Australia, and has been won by working people against an intransigent former federal government which joined with Pauline Hanson's One Nation to vote against paid family and domestic violence leave as recently as October 2021.

The incoming federal government will have to decide whether to extend paid family and domestic violence leave to all workers covered by the National Employment Standards (NES) ensuring the right covers an additional 8.44 million workers.

While the NES covers the vast majority of Australian workers, award provisions only apply to one in four.

ACTU President Michele O'Neil said: "This is an historic win and a generational achievement for millions of women who have fought for this against the resistance of this and previous coalition governments."

"Already this year, 18 women have been killed by their current or previous partner. Access to paid family and domestic violence leave saves lives. No worker should ever have to choose between their income and their safety.

"The difference between this entitlement being in the award system and the NES cannot be overstated. Failing to include it in the NES would deny access to millions of working people."

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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