Campaign is for everybody



Image source: *It's For Everybody* campaign website.

UnionsWA, including the SSTUWA, has joined the union movement and ACTU in the *It's For Everybody* campaign.

The union movement is advocating for 10 days of paid reproductive health leave and flexible work rights into the National Employment Standards. We hope to do this at our next bargaining round, too.

All workers, regardless of sex or gender, will experience reproductive health issues at some point throughout their working lives. That's why Australian unions are calling for 10 days of paid reproductive health leave and flexible work rights to be included in the National Employment Standards.

The proposed leave entitlement would target a range of issues, including, but not limited to:

- Menstruation.
- Pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding and lactation.
- Contraception.
- Miscarriage and pregnancy loss.
- Perimenopause and menopause.
- Chronic conditions such as poly-cystic ovarian syndrome and endometriosis.
- Hormone therapy.
- Fertility treatments, IVF and assisted reproductive health services.
- Hysterectomy.
- Termination.
- Preventative health care such as screenings for breast, cervical and prostate cancer.

The impact of winning this entitlement will be significant in managing reproductive health issues and enabling women in particular to remain in the workforce.

While we know this leave is for **everybody**, it will be of no surprise to you that disproportionately women are more likely to use this leave.

Any further entitlement that quarantines personal leave is a win for our members. We know that our women members have more caring responsibilities, hence end up using more of their leave entitlements for other than their own needs.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 26.8 per cent of working women retire under the age of 55, and on average, women are retiring seven years before men – also alarmingly, 12 years before their desired age of retirement due to menopause symptoms.

The Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees estimated in 2023 that menopause likely cost women in the 50-54 age group more than $15 billion per year in lost earnings and superannuation for every year of early retirement.

The value of lost productivity cost from reproductive health conditions is estimated at $21.3 billion per year.

Millions of Australian women are impacted by chronic conditions such as endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome, with the economic cost of absenteeism and reduced workforce participation estimated to be several billion dollars.

To help address the gender pay gap, reduce reproductive health stigma, support workers' health and wellbeing, and create more inclusive workplaces across the country, workers need access to paid reproductive health leave.

So, what will paid reproductive health leave do?

The benefits to employees from access
to this paid leave entitlement will be wide-ranging.

For example, allocated time and flexible work options to manage issues arising from reproductive health and access to preventative health screening mean increased wellbeing, workforce participation and economic security, a better quality of life and increased early detection of health issues for workers and their families.

The benefits to community include **breaking down stigma** related to reproductive health, increased gender equality, closing the gender pay gap between men and women workers and increased participation of women in the workforce and in leadership positions.

For more information visit itsforeverybody.au



By Sharmila Nagar
Vice President

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