

Know Your Agreement

Family and Domestic Violence Leave, and Sexual Abuse Survivor's Support

Clauses 33 & 34

Our new Agreement increases the entitlement to paid family and domestic violence (FDV) leave to up to 20 days per school year, and introduces Sexual Abuse Survivors Support as a new provision.

Family and Domestic Violence Leave (FDV leave)

Under the previous Agreement, the entitlement was to up to 10, 13 or 15 days FDV leave, depending on an employee's category of employment. This Agreement also extends a new entitlement to 10 days' paid FDV leave for casual employees.

These provisions reflect increasing awareness of the toll taken by such horrible situations and the resources required to rebuild. It takes money and time to escape dangerous domestic situations, and to re-start your life.

Such leave can assist workers to:

- make arrangements for their safety, or the safety of a close relative (including relocation)
- attend court hearings
- access police services
- attend counselling
- attend appointments with medical, financial or legal professionals.

Reporting on the campaign to enshrine paid domestic and violence leave for all workers last year, we wrote, "Family and domestic violence is a national crisis – and those seeking to flee it need support to escape often perilous situations".

"The tragic numbers are well known: on average a woman is killed each week by a partner, ex-partner or family member in Australia.

"Hundreds of thousands report facing violence at home – figures that have surged during the pandemic, as many women were trapped further into abusive relationships. The true picture is likely to be even worse."

Workplaces play a key role in supporting a woman facing family and domestic violence.

Paid family and domestic violence leave can give a woman – and it nearly always is a woman – the time, support and job security she needs to escape and recover from an abusive relationship.

It takes paid leave to leave – it costs \$18,000 on average to escape a violent relationship in Australia, and economic security is a key factor determining whether a person subjected to family or domestic violence can escape from a dangerous situation.

Family and domestic violence means violent, threatening, or other abusive behaviour by an employee's close relative that:

- seeks to coerce or control the employee
- causes them harm or fear.

A close relative is an employee's:

- spouse or former spouse
- de facto partner or former de facto partner
- child
- parent
- grandparent
- grandchild
- sibling
- an employee's current or former spouse or de facto partner's child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling, or
- a person related to the employee according to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander kinship rules.

Sexual Abuse Survivor's Support

The CEMEA also includes a new entitlement to up to 20 days' paid leave for employees, other than casual employees, who have been victims of historical sexual abuse.

Eligible employees can access this leave in connection with attending and preparing for legal proceedings, accessing support services, or other activities approved by the employer. Employees who support a person experiencing historical sexual abuse may use their personal leave entitlement to accompany the person to court, hospital, support services or to care for children.

Historical child sexual abuse is a term used to describe child sexual abuse that happened to someone (now an adult) when they were under the age of 18. This could mean the abuse happened years or decades ago - in many cases, the abuse is not disclosed for many years. Reporting historical child sexual abuse is confronting and often very difficult for survivors. Acknowledging, understanding, and dealing with the emotional impacts of child sexual abuse can be an incredibly difficult process.

Resources

If you are in immediate danger, call 000 for Police and Ambulance help.

If you need advice, support and information, you can call:

- **1800RESPECT / 1800 737 732**
This is a 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- *Bravehearts is an organisation dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse. Bravehearts Information and Support Line Freecall 1800 272 831*
- **1800RESPECT (24 Hours): 1800 737 732**
- **Lifeline (24 Hours): 13 11 14**
- **13YARN Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support (24 Hours): 13 92 76**
- **PoliceLink (24 Hours): 131 444**
- **Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277**
- **Blue Knot Helpline: 1300 657 380**