

News

## **Push for up to 10 extra days of paid leave for reproductive health**

Story by Freya Noble 9News.com.au DATE

A new campaign is pushing for up to 10 extra days of paid leave a year for workers to manage reproductive health issues like menstruation, menopause and undergoing IVF.

Dubbed "reproductive leave", the Queensland Council of Unions is asking for the additional time so employees are not forced to eat into their sick days.

"What we're asking for is for those kind of type of workers, where they've got chronic and debilitating pain and conditions, should have some flexibility," Jacqueline King from the QCU told 9News.

The proposal, titled "it's for everybody", would also extend to include preventative healthcare such as hysterectomies, vasectomies, and breast, cervical and prostate screenings.

"It's going to impact workers at any point in their working life and it's not something that has been considered by state or federal legislation yet," Jessica Heron from Maurice Blackburn Lawyers said.

Rachel Steel said she would have benefited greatly from such a program.

During the first year of her electrical apprenticeship she was diagnosed with endometriosis. She had to take time off work for appointments and treatments and deal with debilitating pain.

"The follow-on effect from that was an investigation into fertility, so having IVF in my second year," Steel said.

"[You end up using] sick leave and your personal leave, which is something I exhausted throughout my conditions, which adds a lot of pressure."

While no commitment has been made, the Queensland government is considering the changes, with the union hoping the state could pave the way for national action.

"We're hoping it will be the catalyst," King said.