

Union push for national reproductive, menstrual pain leave

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Unions will push for 10 days' paid reproductive health leave across the country, allowing workers to claim time off for IVF treatment, menstrual pain, vasectomy recovery and prostate or breast cancer screening.

Following a campaign by Queensland unions, Premier Steven Miles on Monday announced public sector workers would be able to access reproductive leave by September, costing taxpayers up to \$80m each year.

Unions will now push to have the leave entitlements inserted into the National Employment Standards, with Queensland Council of Unions secretary Jacqueline King to seek the support of the ACTU congress early next month.

Ms King said there had been no formal discussions with the Albanese government yet, but after the congress she planned "to seek a commitment from the federal government to introduce and legislate for it in 2025".

"I think every worker deserves to have a safety net," she said.

"We shouldn't just have that apply to areas that have enterprise agreements, we should be actually uplifting everyone right across Australia."

Public servants in Queensland affected by chronic pain and conditions such as endometriosis or menopause will be able to access extra leave, as will those needing to undertake preventive screening for breast, cervical and prostate cancer.

Business groups have already flagged opposition to expanding leave entitlements, after [proposed changes were first](#) reported in The Australian in March.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry [has said the matters were](#) appropriately dealt with through existing personal leave entitlements.

More than 1000 delegates, representing workers from every industry and sector in Australia, will attend the ACTU congress in Adelaide from June 4 to 6, when unions will set a policy course for the next three years, including the federal election.

Speaking to The Australian at Brisbane's Labour Day march, ACTU secretary Sally McManus said there was "momentum" building for national reproductive health leave, but would not pre-empt a decision by the congress.

"I know that Queensland unions have led this, actually a whole lot of unions around the country are negotiating reproductive leave in agreements," Ms McManus said. "So I think that there is some momentum around this, but of course it'll be a matter for congress, what gets decided after the debate there, and whether or not it's something that the whole movement adopts."

The Queensland government will include reproductive leave in employment directives by September and plans to insert the entitlements in state employment standards by 2025.

"My government will lead the nation in introducing 10 days of reproductive health leave for all Queensland public sector workers," Mr Miles said.

"This means the women and men on our hardworking frontline have access to dedicated leave for things like IVF, endometriosis, vasectomies or reproductive cancer screening."

Federal Workplace Relations Minister Tony Burke was contacted for comment.

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