

Considering reproductive health in the workplace



A how to guide for union officials

Start by asking the manager or Human Resources representative

Do you offer your employees any entitlements to help them manage their reproductive health?

- If they answer yes, ask what policies they have in place to support workers
- If they answer no, let them know that additional policies to capture 'reproductive health reasons' are important because:
 - one million Australian women are estimated to have endometriosis
 - one in six Australian couples experience fertility issues and one in eighteen babies are now being born as a result of IVF treatment
 - one in four men over the age of forty are having a vasectomy
 - between two thirds and three quarters of Australian women will have a termination
 - breast cancer is the most common form of cancer diagnosed for Australian women with around 8 deaths prevented for every 1000 women screened every two years
 - the National Cervical Screening Program has halved cervical cancer incident and mortality since its introduction in 1991, and
 - one in seven Australian men will experience prostate issues and early diagnosis and treatment can help before it causes symptoms or spreads.

Currently...

employees have access to 10 days paid leave for a personal injury or illness. Research supports the fact that reproductive health issues are rarely an injury or an illness. They're better categorised as a natural physiological response of being human.

Flexible work arrangements...

are also reserved for people with a disability or people 55 years of age or older (other than in the Qld public sector). This excludes people with painful periods, those going through peri-menopause, or early onset menopause, many of whom would greatly benefit from a flexible work arrangement to manage symptoms. The benefit to the employer is you get the best of your employee for their contracted hours, but at a time that suits you both. It's a win-win.

Further benefits to employers include

- Reduced absenteeism and increase productivity
- Protecting your organisation from quiet quitting (when an employee checks out and stops performing)
- Demonstrating you're an organisation that values reproductive health related issues and planning, and demonstrates this to your employees, and
- A valued employee is a quality employee. Inclusive workplaces make for healthier, happier workers, improving outcomes for everyone in the organisation.

1800 111 222
mauriceblackburn.com.au

