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## Unions vote to push for leave for workers who experience domestic violence.

White Ribbon Ambassador and ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said Australian Unions will support a special resolution at the ACTU Executive on Tuesday for paid domestic violence leave to be included as a minimum entitlement in the 2014 modern award review.

“Australia is already leading the world with over 1.2 million workers benefiting from access to leave should they be unfortunate enough to experience domestic violence. We think this should be extended to protect many more workers,” Mr Oliver said.

“The most recent ABS Personal Safety Survey found that over 17 per cent of Australian women had experienced physical or sexual violence from a previous or current partner and that around 60 per cent of them were in paid employment.

“Victims of domestic violence are often vulnerable, traumatised and left with little support. The last thing they need is to risk losing their jobs.

“Maintaining paid work and independence is crucial for people trying to escape the cycle of family violence, and these protections recognise this. “Many workplaces already have paid domestic violence leave in their enterprise agreements.

“This is a positive sign of the growing awareness of domestic violence and its effects on the community.

“White Ribbon Day is about men talking to men and saying it’s not okay to be abusive and I’m proud to be a part of that. I will be adding my voice to the call to never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.”

Mr Oliver said family violence leave provisions provide additional paid leave for employees experiencing family violence, as well as flexible work arrangements if necessary. They must also ensure confidentiality of employee details, and that employees who have experienced family violence are not discriminated against.

“Unions have a proud history of showing leadership in the campaign to eliminate violence against women and children. This is a problem that needs a united effort from everyone in society, and that includes unions and employers,” Mr Oliver said.

Unions around Australia are participating in White Ribbon Day events to generate greater awareness and adoption of workplace initiatives to support cultural changes aimed at eliminating family and domestic violence.

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