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## Unions address UN as Australia leads the world in protections for domestic violence victims

ACTU addresses United Nation's delegates on the world-leading work of Australian unions in helping guard against the horrors of domestic violence.

Industrial Officer for the ACTU Belinda Tkalcevic will today represent the work of unions on a panel in New York with Australia heralded as a world leader in negotiating paid domestic violence leave for employees.

Ms Tkalcevic said, "Australian unions have been fighting for, and won, support for sufferers of domestic and family violence to stay in their jobs."

"The UN has recognised the importance of maintaining paid work and financial independence in order to escape violent relationships. It's a good feeling to know the world wants to hear about the work that we have achieved in Australia."

"Australian unions lead the world on this issue. We have bargained for 1 million workers to gain entitlements to some form of paid leave to help them escape violence at home."

ACTU President Ged Kearney said unions joined with others, including the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, to assist workers who now have access to domestic violence leave.

"This is a success story of collaboration, led by unions between the government who funded the Safe at Home, Safe at Work project, unions and employers," Ms Kearney said.

"Unions saw the critical role for them to help women keep their jobs and economic independence by being able to access paid leave to help them escape domestic violence.

"Unions were the drivers of this bargaining - almost all of the agreements were achieved because unions pushed for the clause in their bargaining. The invitation to address and take part in discussion at the UN is an example of the constructive role that unions play in the world progressing human rights and social justice and I'm very proud of that."

But there's still more work to be done, she said.

"Unfortunately not all employees have access equal bargaining power especially some of the most vulnerable low paid workers who are often in insecure jobs. We need to amend minimum safety net legislation so that all workers are entitled to paid domestic violence leave if they need it."

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