

Human Resources  
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Sydney, NSW 2000

24 September 2018

Mr Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

I write to you as Secretary of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment, regarding the Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2018.

Domestic and family violence is a serious and widespread problem in Australia which affects all communities and workplaces. In 2015, the Commonwealth Bank developed a Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Strategy and have committed to be part of a movement to end domestic and family violence in a generation. The five pillars of the Strategy are:

1. Provide a safe place to work;
2. Support customers in crisis;
3. Champion gender equality;
4. Promote financial independence; and
5. Advocate for change.

As part of our FDV Strategy, Commonwealth Bank encourages employees who are victims of domestic violence to come forward for support. Employees of the Commonwealth Bank Group, other than casual employees, may be granted Domestic Violence Leave in certain circumstances which would usually fall outside the scope of Personal/Carer's Leave. Commonwealth Bank will provide the following Domestic Violence Leave:

- If an employee is experiencing Domestic Violence, they will be entitled to 10 days per year of paid leave for the purposes of attending medical and support services appointments, seeking legal assistance, preparing for and attending legal proceedings, counselling, relocating or any other activities related to Domestic Violence. This entitlement may be taken as whole or part days; and
- An employee who is supporting an Immediate Family Member or a member of the employee's household who is experiencing Domestic Violence, will have access to 5 days per year of paid leave for the purpose of providing support to that person.

For the purpose of this policy, 'Domestic Violence' refers to physical, psychological, sexual, economic and emotional abuse, in a close relationship, family or domestic situation and 'Immediate Family' means spouse, de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the employee or a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of a spouse or de facto partner of the employee. An employee should advise their manager as soon as practicable that they require Domestic Violence leave and may be required to provide documentation to support the application for leave. To ensure privacy, Domestic Violence Leave is recorded as 'Special Leave with pay'.

As well as providing Domestic Violence Leave, the Commonwealth Bank continues to strengthen internal policies to inform, educate and support staff to ensure they have the tools required to overcome domestic violence as either a victim, perpetrator or bystander. Additional Commonwealth Bank initiatives are as follows:

- **Developed an intensive training module** with expert advice from the UNSW Gendered Violence Research Network which has been delivered to over 600 staff, including to staff in specialist areas such as Financial Assistance Solutions and Group Customer Relations to extend the awareness to customer identification and support.
- **Created domestic violence toolkits for employees and managers**, including how to build a personal safety plan, support and counselling contacts.
- **Reviewed our sensitive matters framework** to ensure it takes into account domestic violence and financial abuse.
- **Created a Domestic Violence First Response Guide** to assist HR coach and guide leaders to support employees who have disclosed they are experiencing violence.
- **Provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week** with counsellors available with specialist domestic and family violence training.
- **Developed a domestic and family violence video training awareness module**, which is available to all staff.
- **Hosted a Workplace Response to Perpetrators Workshop** in May 2018 to bring together business, Government, community and academic leaders to shape a workplace response to perpetrators of domestic and family violence.
- **Organised a Financial Abuse Roundtable** in July 2018 where representatives of 11 banks, the Australian Banking Association and Government advisers met to discuss how the industry can work together to address financial abuse and assist customers impacted by domestic and family violence.

The Commonwealth Bank appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry and share initiatives we have taken to support employees and address the significant impact of domestic violence.

Should you require further information please respond to me by return correspondence, or alternatively please contact Claire Dawson, Senior Manager, Government and Industry Affairs

Yours sincerely

Siañ Lewis  
Group Executive, Human Resources