



Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

15th August 2022

Dear Committee,

Re: Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2022

I am writing to you on behalf of Gateway Family Services. We are a not for profit organisation providing counselling, case work, parenting support and community development services to children and their families in the Blue Mountains and Penrith LGAs in NSW. Gateway currently has 25 employees (most are part time) and a small pool of casual employees and contractors.

Our work centres on supporting the healthy development and wellbeing of children and their families. Sadly many of the families we work with have been effected by family and domestic violence (FDV).

Gateway strongly supports the Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Bill in its entirety and urges the senate to pass the Bill in the next sitting period. We recognise that access to this type of leave will reduce a significant barrier for victims of abuse to leave violence and start their recovery. We also recognise that staying connected to a safe and supportive work place reduces the long term financial burden that so many victims face and provides emotional support and continuity at a time that this is so desperately needed.

We know that leaving violence takes courage but it also takes many hours of planning and dealing with support services which only operate during business hours. Our staff often support our clients to develop safety plans, to make statements to police, to seek medical care and documentation of injuries after an assault, to attend court for ADVOs, to meet with schools to ensure their children's safety and so on. We know firsthand the many hours these appointments can take and we have seen the difficult choices some clients have to make between getting paid and putting food on the table or attending appointments that will help keep them and their children safe.

Gateways support for Paid Domestic and Family Violence Leave has been longstanding. In 2020 our board approved this leave for all GFS staff as we recognised the minimal potential cost to the organisation was greatly outweighed by the potential cost of having to replace a worker who had to leave their position due to the lack of support such leave would offer.

*We acknowledge with great respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people of this land.
We pay respect to the Darug and Gundungurra people - their Elders, past and present,
and to the children of today who are elders of tomorrow.*



Gateway recognises that maintaining an employee's confidentiality when they apply for DFVL is important. We were able to access lots of information and guidance in developing systems to maintain privacy and this has not been an issue for our organisation.

The time leading up to and immediately after a person leaves a violent relationship is one of heightened risk. It is essential that leave entitlement be for the actual expected rate and not the base rate as any changes to an employee's pay slips may be noticed by the perpetrator and alert them that their victim is preparing to leave.

Gateway Family Services supports the Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Bill. We know that this legislation will make a significant difference to the lives of children and their families. We urge the Senate Committee to recommend the Bill be passed in its entirety as a matter of urgency.

Sincerely,

Sophie Corbett

Clinical Lead

Gateway Family Services

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GATEWAY FAMILY SERVICES

An activity of Blaxland Uniting Church

E: admin@gatewayfamilyservices.org.au

Web: www.gatewayfamilyservices.org.au

70 Old Bathurst Road, Blaxland, NSW, 2774

PO Box 3051, East Blaxland, NSW 2774

Phone: 02 4720 6500

ABN: 15 607 266 742