

HSU will continue push for paid pandemic leave for aged care and disability support workers

The Health Services Union (HSU) will continue its campaign for paid pandemic leave for all aged care and disability support workers who must self-isolate due to COVID-19 testing or infection.

The Prime Minister's announcement for a \$1500 pandemic leave disaster payment is a reactive Band-Aid fix for Victoria and is not enough to work as a preventative measure for the whole of Australia throughout this pandemic.

"The Prime Minister's announcement is better than nothing, and hopefully will be a relief to some workers in Victoria, but it doesn't go far enough," HSU National Secretary Lloyd Williams said.

"The disaster payment doesn't match the worker's regular income, which in essential health and social care sectors like aged care and disability is already woefully low. Our concern is that if the payment leaves a worker short, they'll be less likely to access it and more likely to show up to work.

"We need to prevent workers across Australia from having to make that decision."

With the devastating impact on the aged care sector and emerging cases of COVID-19 in the Victorian disability sector, the HSU has focused its efforts on extending the paid pandemic leave to all aged care workers and disability support workers.

"Insecure and low paid work, workers with multiple employers and workplaces, and vulnerable participants and residents are rampant in both the aged care and disability sectors," Mr Williams said.

"We cannot make the same mistake twice.

"Paid pandemic leave for all aged care and disability support workers is not just the right thing to do, it is a critical public health measure.

"We've been calling for this since March, it's time the government gets ahead of the virus.

"No more short-sighted fixes, as a matter of urgency, the Federal Government should commit to supporting and funding paid pandemic leave for all."

The HSU wrote to the Fair Work Commission yesterday requesting that they review the case of paid pandemic leave for disability and home care workers.

The HSU and its Victorian disability branch the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU), also sought urgent meetings with the Federal and Victorian Governments imploring them to bring together all stakeholders to address the issues in the disability sector.

ENDS

HSU National Secretary Lloyd Williams is available for further comments.

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About the HSU | The Health Services Union (HSU) is a growing member-based union with over 90,000 members working across the health and community services sectors in every state and territory of Australia.

