



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Minister for Women
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
PO Box 6100
Senate, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

11 March 2016

Dear Minister Cash,

By way of introduction, my name is Frances Crimmins, and I'm the Executive Director of YWCA Canberra, a feminist not-for-profit organisation that has been providing services and representing women's issues 1929.

I am writing regarding recent coverage of domestic violence leave provisions for public service employees.

While the Australian Public Service Commission has clarified that existing domestic violence leave provisions will not be removed, I understand that these crucial leave arrangements will not be introduced to other agencies. This discussion has provided an important opportunity to clearly outline the importance of domestic violence leave provisions outside of existing personal or miscellaneous leave.

A crucial form of support for women escaping domestic violence is being able to access leave from work, to provide time and financial support when accessing legal advice or support services, arranging alternate accommodation, appearing in court, and supporting their children. Being secure in their income and working arrangements is a critical aspect of women feeling safe and able to continue rebuilding their lives after domestic violence.

While I am aware that affected employees will be able to access miscellaneous or personal leave should they experience domestic violence, this is simply inadequate.

Specific domestic violence provisions not only benefit the health and wellbeing of staff, but it sends a clear statement to the community that family violence requires action and commitment by everyone. It's a declaration that domestic violence should not be regarded with secrecy and shame, and sends a strong message to those affected that they are supported.

On a practical level, employees should not be forced to use standard forms of existing leave when they are affected by domestic violence as it penalises those who have already been victimised. As the largest employer in the ACT, it is essential that the Australian Public Service leads the way on this issue as it does proudly in many other facets of employee conditions and support.

As the Minister for Women and the Minister responsible for the public service, I look forward to receiving your response on this important issue.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frances Crimmins', written over a light-colored background.

Frances Crimmins
Executive Director