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Local Government

ASU to launch and celebrate Australian-first Family Violence clause at Surf Coast Shire

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By ASU-Victorian Authorities & Services Branch

On Monday, October 18, the Australian Services Union will launch an Australian-first Family Violence Clause at the Surf Coast Shire, which is being heralded as the best of its kind in the world. In an agreement negotiated by the ASU and the Shire, employees will have access to 20 days leave per year if they are experiencing family violence. The clause aims to ensure the security of employment for workers experiencing family violence, as well as providing workplace support to enable them to be safe at home and at work.

Media Opportunity: Launch of world's best Family Violence Clause for Surf Coast Shire

Who: ACTU President Ged Kearney, ASU Branch Secretary Brian Parkinson, Surf Coast Shire CEO Mark Davies, Surf Coast Shire Mayor Libby Coker, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse Project Officer Ludo McFerran

Where: Surf World Museum, Surf City Plaza, Beach Road, Torquay (Melway reference 505 K4)

When: Monday, October 18, 9am to 9.45am

Two thirds of family violence victims are employed, with the annual direct cost of domestic violence to employers from absenteeism, staff turnover and lost productivity totalling at least \$500 million*. Intimate partner violence alone is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged between 15 and 44**.

ASU Branch Secretary Brian Parkinson - who, along with ACTU President Ged Kearney, will speak at the launch - was proud of the work done by the union to implement a Clause that is peerless in this country.

"The ASU is proud to be the first Australian union to have a family violence clause incorporated into an Enterprise Agreement. Around 50 per cent of our members are women and this new Clause will respond to their workplace needs. The clause includes measures to create a workplace supportive of those experiencing family violence, such as family violence training."

Ludo McFerran, from the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, says the Clause will prove to be a big step in reducing family violence among workers at the Shire.

"The Surf Coast Shire has set a world-class standard in supporting employees who may be impacted by domestic and family violence. Research shows that 10 per cent of women employees could be affected by domestic and family violence. Our goal is that women can be safe in their homes and at work. The

connection is so important because economic independence is critical to reducing violence against women and children."

The ASU is also planning to serve the Family Violence claim on the City of Greater Geelong, who will also begin discussions for their new EBA shortly.

* Source: Impacts and Costs of Domestic Violence on the Australian Business, Henderson & Associates 2000

**Source: Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development

For further information

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