

## Creating a workplace supportive of employees impacted by domestic violence

25 November 2014

Employers can take practical steps to ensure their workplace is supportive of employees affected by domestic or family violence, according to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The Fair Work Ombudsman was one of the first Australian employers to become a White Ribbon Workplace last year after establishing policies for operating at best practice in relation to preventing and responding to violence against women.

White Ribbon is the world's largest male-led movement to stop violence against women.

It seeks to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence against women through prevention initiatives and an annual campaign beginning today, on White Ribbon Day.

"There is growing awareness of the need to support employees affected by domestic or family violence but many employers don't know where to start," says Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Clark, a White Ribbon Ambassador.

"By making a few simple changes, employers can provide a safer and more supportive environment for anyone affected by domestic or family violence."

Mr Clark says employers can consider:

- Raising awareness of domestic and family violence by displaying education material and offering information to staff about where they can go for support,
- Putting in place a process for alerting staff to intruders, and increasing workplace security,
- Having more than one person working in areas accessible to the public,
- Offering flexible start and finish times to employees impacted by domestic or family violence, and
- Changing or redirecting phone numbers and emails for employees who may be at risk.

Mr Clark says the Fair Work Ombudsman also offers special leave to any of its own employees who are affected by domestic or family violence.

"Adopting these initiatives can make a big difference to workers impacted by acts of domestic or family violence and lead to increased retention and workplace productivity," Mr Clark said.

"Any form of violence impacts a person, and in many cases going to work is not an escape as the victim remains accessible in person, by phone and by email. These are areas that an employer can assist with.

"I encourage all employers to support the White Ribbon cause and consider what changes they can make in their workplace to assist any employees impacted by domestic or family violence to stay safe, and remain employed."

Anyone experiencing domestic or family violence can call the National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line on 1800 737 732 or visit [www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au) (http://www.whiteribbon.org.au) .

Employers and employees seeking information and advice about workplace laws can visit [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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Media inquiries:

Tom McPherson, Media Adviser

Mobile: 0439 835 855

[tom.mcpherson@fwo.gov.au](mailto:tom.mcpherson@fwo.gov.au) (mailto:tom.mcpherson@fwo.gov.au )

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