

FAIR WORK COMMISSION

Fair Work Act

Section 156 – 4 Yearly Review of Modern Awards

Family and Domestic Violence Leave (AM2015/1)

Witness Statement of Jessica Stott

I, Jessica Amy Stott, Women's Support Worker, of 372 Spencer Street West Melbourne in the State of Victoria, say as follows:

1. I am currently employed as a Women's Support Worker at Women's Information Referral Exchange (**WIRE**). I am authorised by WIRE to make this statement on its behalf.
2. I make this statement on the basis of my own knowledge, save where otherwise stated. Where I make statements based on information provided by others, I believe such information to be true.

Background and qualifications

3. I have worked in my current role since May 2013. Prior to this time, I volunteered as a Phone Support Worker and Team Leader at WIRE. I have also worked in volunteer counselling roles at Switchboard and Victorian AIDS Council.
4. I am a qualified Women's Support Worker. I have a Bachelor of Behavioural Sciences (Psychology) from La Trobe University. I have completed professional development in Suicide ASIST, Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF), Therapeutic Group Work, Trauma Informed Therapy and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness.
5. In my role as Women's Support Worker at WIRE, I am responsible for the following:
 - (a) Support, information and referrals to women face to face, by telephone and email.
 - (b) Coordination of programs such as legal clinics and computer classes.
 - (c) Coordination of volunteers for programs and other tasks.
 - (d) Outreach education to community groups.
 - (e) Coordination of the public access area of WIRE, the Women's Information Centre.

6. I have contact with women every day of work at WIRE, commonly on the topic of family violence.

7. As a Women's Support Worker I work with an empowerment model. Within in this model, women are encouraged to share their stories in their own words. When working with a woman I will validate her experiences and affirm her strengths. I will support her to prioritise her needs and clarify her next steps, before providing her with information and referrals to support her in her choices.

8. The following are some examples of situations that clients have discussed with me. As these women are clients of WIRE, I am unable to disclose any personal information. However, I have provided these examples for the purpose of assisting the Fair Work Commission to understand the sort of workplace issues that arise for the women who consult WIRE.

9. [REDACTED]

10. [REDACTED]

11. [REDACTED]

12. [REDACTED]

13. [REDACTED]

14. [REDACTED]

15. The woman was not aware of her industrial rights, and nor was fighting for her industrial rights a priority. The sole focus was escaping her husband's violence.

16. [REDACTED]

17. [REDACTED]

18. [REDACTED]

19. She said that the impact of the violence on her mental health had contributed to her unemployment, resulting in financial hardship and further isolation.

20. [REDACTED]

21. [REDACTED]

22. [REDACTED]

23. [REDACTED]

24. [REDACTED]

25. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

26. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

27. Without support from her manager the woman may not have been able to keep her job while separating from her partner.

..... Jessica Stott
Jessica Stott

Dated: 10th November 2016